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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES



Land Disputes as a result of increased Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Mudzi. A case study of Makaha

By

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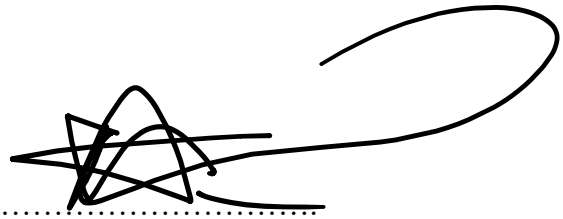
ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines land disputes arising from increased artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) in Makaha, Mudzi District, Zimbabwe, aiming to identify key stakeholders, determine causes, assess livelihood implications, and review existing administrative measures. Employing a qualitative exploratory research design grounded in Political Ecology theory, the study collected data through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires from 50 participants including farmers, artisanal miners, traditional leaders, local government officials, and NGO representatives. The findings reveal that traditional leaders are the most recognized stakeholders, yet all existing dispute resolution mechanisms received low effectiveness ratings. Primary causes of disputes include lack of clear land ownership documents, illegal mining, political protection for illegal miners, economic hardship, weak law enforcement, and corruption. The livelihood impacts are severe and multidimensional: land loss, food insecurity, income loss, poverty, displacement, physical violence, psychological distress, livestock losses, children withdrawn from school and water contamination. The study concludes that land disputes in Makaha constitute a livelihood catastrophe driven by governance failures, legal prioritisation of mining over agriculture under the Mines and Minerals Act, institutional fragmentation, and corruption. Recommendations include legal reform to rebalance mining and agricultural land rights, establishment of specialised dispute resolution mechanisms, anti-corruption measures, livelihood restoration programmes, formal integration of traditional leaders into statutory systems, and creation of community-based land use forums. Without fundamental institutional reform, land disputes will continue to devastate farming communities in Zimbabwe's mining frontiers.

Declaration Form

I Austin M. Dondo B222183B hereby declare that this dissertation is my own solemnly work and that it has not been copied or lifted from any sources without acknowledgement.



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DECLARTION

I, Austin M. Dondo, hereby declare that:

This dissertation titled "Land Disputes as a Result of Increased Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Mudzi: A Case Study of Makaha" is my original work. It has been submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts Degree in Peace and Governance at Bindura University.

I further declare that:

1. This work has not been submitted previously for any degree or examination at any other university.

2. All sources of information, whether published or unpublished, have been properly acknowledged through appropriate citations and references.

3. The research was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines and all necessary permissions were obtained from relevant authorities including Mudzi Rural District Council.

4. The views expressed in this dissertation are my own and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any organization or institution.

Signed: _____

Name: Austin M. Dondo

Student Number: B222183B

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family for their unwavering support, patience and encouragement throughout my academic journey

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The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance, support, and encouragement of many individuals and institutions.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASM – Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining

BSAC – British South Africa Company

CNALA – Comprehensive National Agricultural Land Audit

EMA – Environmental Management Agency

EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organisation

FTLRP – Fast Track Land Reform Programme

ICL – International Land Coalition

MDC – Movement for Democratic Change

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

NLHA – Native Land Husbandry Act

NTJWG – National Technical Joint Working Group

RDC – Rural District Council

SLF – Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

UK – United Kingdom

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNECA – United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

UNHRC – United Nations Human Rights Council

ZBC – Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation

ZLC – Zimbabwe Land Commission

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

Globally, 40 million people participate in the Artisanal and Small-scale Mining sector, and in Latin American countries, the sector supports tens to hundreds of thousands of workers (Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development 2017). Despite the profound socio-environmental impacts ASM have on environment, the activity has been criticized for being a major cause for land disputes even in many countries such as Peru.Extortion of local landholders for access to their lands was common, and those who confronted miners often faced violence and death.

Land is a critical and finite resource in Zimbabwe, serving as the foundation for livelihoods, identity, agriculture and economic development, particularly in rural communities. Over the past two decades, Zimbabwe has witnessed a significant increase in ASM. This growth was largely driven by economic challenges, unemployment as well as the liberalization of the mining sector following the Fast Track Land Reform Program of 2000. Mudzi Rural District Council, located in Mashonaland East Province, has experienced a surge in ASM activities, particularly gold panning. Makaha area in Mudzi has become a hotspot for artisanal mining due to the presence of alluvial gold deposits. This created tension between farmers and miners as there was competition for land.

Land disputes have also been experienced in the African context as a result of increased artisanal and small-scale mining activities. This can be evidenced by the existence and involvement of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in mining related disputes. The existence of International Land Coalition (ICL) can also be used to prove that land disputes have been a major challenge being faced by people all over the world. These

organizations play crucial roles in managing mining related land disputes, ensuring that whatever transactions that happen are not violating the laws that govern the management of land. The United Nations Human Rights Council investigates all cases to do with land disputes such as forced displacements and land grabs. (Hilson, 2002) highlights that this organization receives complaints from the involved people or any other stakeholders then they do quick research to understand the background and root causes of the dispute. UNHRC also provides guidance on land use as well as educating the involved parties on how to deal or avoid land disputes. The International Land Allocation also plays a role in managing artisanal and small-scale mining related land disputes. This can be evidenced by the dispute involving Ogoni land communities in Nigeria. They complained that artisanal and small-scale miners had been illegally and unlawfully conducting their mining activities on their land. According to (J.M. Macnachie, 2011), the community also filed complaints that their mining activities were affecting their wellbeing as they were causing water pollution through their use of chemicals such as cyanide. The UNHRC accepted the case and ordered the state to provide full details around the dispute. The state was also advised to ensure that miners submit their EIA documents of assessments conducted by the responsible government department. This move worked in a positive way as it forced the Nigerian government to introduce a task force that would deal with all issues to do with artisanal mining as well as to review its land policy. Ethiopia is also one of the African countries where artisanal and small scale mining is very common. It has been considered as a way earning a living for decades and has significantly contributed to development of the country. However, just like in any other countries, ASM has been associated with land disputes and conflicts with some of them most of them being displacements and some of them even being physical conflicts that would even lead to fatalities and deaths. In Oromia, between 2015 and 2020, there were at least 50 deaths recorded attributed to physical confrontations due to land ownership disputes, (Mencho, 2022).

Artisanal and Small-Scale mining has also been a major topic in other countries in Zimbabwe. Artisanal mining in developing countries is both legal and legal, (Shoko, 2002). While acknowledging that it is conducted in both legal and illegal forms, he argues that most common artisanal mining activities are illegal. According to Marowa (2013), the ASM industry has played a key role in improving livelihoods in Zimbabwe through employment creation. He highlights that it at least provides temporary employment to both skilled and unskilled people. However, he also highlights that it causes quite a number of challenges such as increased land grabs, forced displacements and violent fights. At some point, these land disputes increased after the emergence of Mashurugwi. They terrorized the mining communities forcefully taking peoples mines (Chipuramga, 2019).

In Mudzi Rural District, artisanal and small scale mining is also common and so are land disputes associated with it. Mudzi District is a district where most of the people depend on mining and agriculture. They have been quite a number of cases and reports on land disputes as a result of increased artisanal and small-scale mining.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The aim of this study was to examine the land disputes as a result of increased ASM in Zimbabwe, particularly Mudzi District.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Zimbabwe has a rapid growth of population in the recent years and that has resulted in increased competition and scramble for land and other natural resources ranging from displacements and dispositions. The Ministry of Lands and Agriculture as well as the Ministry of Mines have employed various strategies to avoid and mitigate these land disputes. According (UNDP,2019), there is serious increase in land disputes. Despite the provisions of the 1992 Lands Acquisition Act and all other efforts, land disputes have continued to happen

as people continue to be displaced as a result of ASM especially in areas like Makaha in Mudzi District where mining is the main source of livelihood. Local authorities have also been reporting a surge in land disputes related arrests in areas such as Mazowe RDC, Bindura and Mudzi RDC. This clearly shows that existing laws have failed to serve their purpose and this brings the need to have them amended. As such this research is of paramount importance as it digs deeper into the increased land disputes as a result of ASM as well as ways of dealing with those disputes.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To investigate who the major players in management of land disputes are and their roles.
2. To determine the causes of land disputes
3. To assess the implications of land disputes on people's livelihoods.
4. To review the administrative and land use measures that have been employed by the government and other stakeholders in Mudzi.

1.5 Research Questions

1. Who are the major players in management of land disputes?
2. What are the major causes of land disputes in Mudzi District?
3. What are the implications of land disputes resolution management on development?
4. What administrative and land use measures have been employed by the local authority to reduce and stop land disputes in Mudzi District?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is significant and important as it helps identify key gaps in the management of land, land disputes as well as identifying the mechanisms used in identifying and solving these disputes. The findings of this research will enable central government, local government,

investors, political parties and general citizens improve their approach to conflict prevention and conflict resolution with respect to the management of land. This study is also significant because it may help people understand and get to know the role played by each and every player in the management of land disputes between farmers and artisanal and small scale miners in Makaha, Mudzi District. The study is also significant in the sense that resolving land disputes may provide farmers with tenure security and sustainable agricultural practices which would then lead too high productivity and address food security problems being faced in Mudzi District.

This study is significant as it would help with providing peaceful ways of dealing with these land disputes between farmers and artisanal and small-scale miners in Makaha, Mudzi through identifying the root causes as well as all stakeholders of the land in Makaha. Adding on, this study is also significant because its contributions on land disputes and their management mechanisms can be used by the local authority in understanding the major and root causes of these disputes. Local authority can also use this study in revision of its land policy to ensure that land disputes resolutions mechanisms are fair to both farmers and artisanal and small scale miners. This study is also significant as in the future, scholars and researchers doing a similar study can get an understanding of the situation of land disputes in Makaha, Mudzi District. This study aims to address the socio-economic challenges being faced as a result of land disputes as well as their impact on development within Mudzi District.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

This study was carried out only focusing on Makaha area in Mudzi District, Mashonaland East Province. The findings of this research were only relevant in Makaha Mudzi and would not be useful in other surrounding areas like Kotwa, Chimukoko, Kondo, Nyakadecha, Mavhurazi and Nyamapanda. This study would only be focusing on land disputes that are experienced between farmers and artisanal and small-scale miners in Makaha, Mudzi

District. The study would also be focusing on ways and players involved in the management of those land disputes experienced between farmers and artisanal and small-scale miners. Another delimitation is that the study would only be focusing on land disputes that transpired from 2010 up to date so as to cope up with changes that might have taken place in the location of the study. Another delimitation is that this study would only be focusing on land disputes only and no other broader issues like environmental impacts of agricultural and mining activities within the district.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The study faced quite a number of challenges that include access to information. This was so because people in artisanal and small-scale mining were reluctant in engaging in a formal conversation to talk about some illegal activities that they carry out while doing their mining activities. This was mainly because they doubted the intentions of the researcher whereby, they thought the researcher was on some investigation mission. Another limitation of the study was language barrier. The respondents used the jargons that they use in their line of work and the researcher found it hard to translate into formal language. Also, some of the respondents couldn't respond in English so the researcher had to translate their answers into English.

1.9 Definition of key terms

Land

Land can be defined as an area with a specific location, boundaries, and area.

Land dispute

Cotula (2006), defines land dispute as disagreements between individuals, groups or organizations over the rights to own, use, access or control land and related resources.

Heike Wehrmann (2008) defines land dispute as a social phenomenon involving a minimum of two parties with distinct interests in land property rights.

Conflict

Coser (1958:8) defines conflict as a situation in which at least two actors or their representatives try to pursue their perceptions of mutually incompatible goals by undermining directly or indirectly the goal seeking capacity of one another.

Artisan small scale Miners

Artisanal and Small-Scale mining can be an individual or collective activity that is highly labor-absorptive and involves the exploitation and raw material processing of mineral deposits (Bryceson, 2015). Artisanal and small-scale mining refers to mining practiced by individuals, groups or communities often informally(illegally) and in developing countries, a common definition for this sector has not been adopted as its legal status, defining criteria, and local definitions vary from country to country (Hruschka, & Priester 2002).

1.10 Dissertation Outline

This dissertation is divided into 5chapters:

Chapter One gives the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the research, research objectives, research questions and significance of the study. This chapter also outlines the assumptions surrounding this research as well as the limitations and delimitations of the study. This chapter generally provides a brief background on the land situation in Makaha Mudzi District.

In Chapter two, the research dives deeper into the existing literature, providing the opinions of various scholars to come up with one solid piece of research and this will be helpful in identifying key gaps in this area of study.

In chapter three, the research outlines the research methodology and design, giving details on the methods used to compile and analyse data.

Chapter four provides empirical research findings, analysis and discussion of these findings.

Chapter five, provides a summary of the study findings, recommendations on how to address the challenges of land disputes as well as recommendations for future research. It ends with a conclusion for the whole study.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter situates the study of land disputes between farmers and artisanal miners within existing academic literature and establishes the theoretical lens through which these conflicts will be analysed. The chapter is structured into eight sections. First, the theoretical framework section presents and justifies Political Ecology as the guiding analytical lens for this study, examining its main proponents, core assumptions, strengths and weaknesses, and explicit linkages to the research context. Second, the review of empirical literature is organised by the four research objectives of the study. Third, a summary of the knowledge gap identifies what is missing in the available literature and demonstrates how this study is anchored in ongoing scholarly discourse. The chapter concludes with a brief summary of its key arguments.

2.2 Theoretical Framework: Political Ecology

Political Ecology emerged in the late twentieth century as a critical response to apolitical environmental analyses that treated ecological changes as natural or technical phenomena divorced from their social, economic and political contexts (Robbins, 2012). The framework was pioneered by scholars such as Piers Blaikie, Harold Brookfield and Michael Watts, who insisted that environmental degradation and resource conflicts must be understood as deeply entwined with structures of political economy, power relations and historical processes of marginalisation (Blaikie & Brookfield, 1987). As Robbins (2012) observes, political ecology is fundamentally concerned with "the relationships between power, economy, society and environment" and insists that environmental conflicts are never merely about scarcity but always about who has the power to define, access and control resources. In recent

scholarship, political ecology has been extended to analyse mining frontiers, with researchers applying the framework to understand how power asymmetries, elite capture and state-society relations shape outcomes in resource extraction contexts (Vuola & Simpson, 2024). Vuola and Simpson (2024), in their study of mining frontiers in Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of Congo, demonstrate how political ecology illuminates the dynamics of power and authority where mining and other land uses converge, showing that local actors assert agency through strategies of forum shopping by switching allegiances between competing authorities.

The central assumption of political ecology is that environmental conditions and conflicts are not natural or inevitable but are produced through historically specific political and economic processes (Peluso & Watts, 2001). The framework assumes that access to and control over natural resources is always mediated by power relations operating at multiple scales, from the local community to the national state to global markets (Robbins, 2012). It further assumes that marginalised groups often bear disproportionate environmental burdens while lacking the political power to protect their interests, and that environmental knowledge is socially constructed and contested rather than objective and universally shared (Blaikie & Brookfield, 1987). In the context of artisanal mining, political ecology assumes that disputes over land are not simply about competing claims to scarce resources but reflect deeper structures of inequality, where some actors possess the political connections, financial resources and legal knowledge to override the claims of others (Hilson, 2017). A recent study of artisanal gold mining in Zimbabwe found that unregulated operations have intensified land-use conflicts with local communities, with the researchers concluding that these conflicts cannot be understood without examining the governance failures and power asymmetries that enable miners to operate with impunity (Nciizah, 2024).

Political ecology offers several distinctive strengths for analysing farmer-miner land disputes. First, it moves beyond simplistic resource scarcity explanations to examine how

political and economic structures create conditions of unequal access and vulnerability (Peluso & Watts, 2001). As Peluso and Watts (2001) argue, environmental conflicts are fundamentally about "who gets what, how, and why" rather than merely about shortages of resources. Second, political ecology provides tools for tracing how historical processes of colonisation, state formation and market integration shape contemporary land use patterns and conflict dynamics (Robbins, 2012). In the Zimbabwean context, this means recognising that contemporary farmer-miner disputes are not new phenomena but have roots in colonial land dispossession and post-independence land reform programmes (Musemwa, 2009). Third, political ecology foregrounds the agency of marginalised actors, showing how farmers, miners and local communities navigate, resist and sometimes subvert dominant power structures rather than being passive victims of external forces (Vuola & Simpson, 2024). Fourth, the framework's insistence on multi-scalar analysis connects local-level disputes in Makaha to national policies, provincial politics and global gold markets, revealing how distant forces shape local conflicts (Hilson & McQuilken, 2016).

However, political ecology also has recognised limitations. Critics argue that the framework sometimes prioritises political and economic explanations at the expense of ecological dynamics, treating the environment as a backdrop rather than an active force shaping human behaviour (Robbins, 2012). Others contend that political ecology's critical orientation can lead to a tendency to romanticise local resistance while underestimating the genuine livelihood pressures that drive artisanal miners, who are often themselves economically marginalised actors rather than powerful exploiters (Hilson, 2017). Additionally, political ecology's focus on power relations can sometimes produce deterministic analyses that leave little room for contingency, agency or successful conflict resolution (Peluso & Watts, 2001). A further limitation is that political ecology has been more successful at diagnosing problems

than at proposing practical solutions, with critics noting that the framework offers rich analytical insight but limited guidance for policy intervention (Blaikie & Brookfield, 1987).

Despite these limitations, political ecology remains the most appropriate theoretical lens for this study because it directly addresses the central dynamics documented in Makaha: the legal privileging of mining over agriculture, the role of political protection in enabling illegal mining, the corruption of state institutions, and the cascading livelihood impacts on vulnerable farming households (Scoones et al., 2019). The framework's emphasis on power relations, multi-scalar analysis and historical context aligns precisely with the research objectives of identifying stakeholders, determining causes, assessing impacts and reviewing institutional responses (Creswell, 2018). Moreover, recent applications of political ecology to artisanal mining contexts, including studies in Ghana, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Madagascar, demonstrate the framework's continuing relevance and analytical power for understanding precisely the kinds of conflicts observed in Makaha (Armah, 2025; Vuola & Simpson, 2024).

2.3 History of Land Distribution and Reform in Zimbabwe

2.3.1 Colonial Land Dispossession (1890–1980)

The foundation of Zimbabwe's land problem lies in the colonial land appropriation that began with the arrival of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) in 1890. As President Mnangagwa recalled in a 2024 address, the racist colonial regime started grabbing land in 1893, a process that was further consolidated by pieces of unjust legislation such as the Land Apportionment Act of 1931, and the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1950, amongst others (The Herald, 2024). The BSAC, acting under a royal charter granted by the British Crown, invaded the territory that would become Southern Rhodesia and systematically dispossessed indigenous African communities of their ancestral lands. As Alexander (2006) documents in her

comprehensive historical study, the making of the settler state was fundamentally a process of territorial conquest and racialised land allocation, whereby the best agricultural and mineral-rich lands were reserved for white settlers while Africans were confined to native reserves.

The Land Apportionment Act of 1931 represented a pivotal moment in the legal codification of racial land segregation. This legislation, which was partly modelled after the Canadian native reserve system, officially partitioned land according to race, with the ruling whites getting the most and best real estate (Newswise, 2007). The Act divided land into separate areas for white ownership, African occupation and Crown lands, with whites receiving approximately 49 million acres of prime agricultural and mineral-rich land, while Africans, who constituted over 95 percent of the population, were allocated only 29 million acres of generally poorer-quality land (Scoones et al., 2019). This was followed by the Land Tenure Act of 1969, which further entrenched racial segregation by dividing land into European and African areas of equal size (45 million hectares each), despite the vast disparity in population, with Africans making up 95 percent of the population while Europeans only comprised 5 percent (UNECA, 2025). This unequal distribution of land was at the centre of the independence war that marked the beginning of apportioning African land to Africans (UNECA, 2025).

The Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) of 1951 represented a different but equally damaging colonial intervention. Promulgated after the Second World War as part of a series of high modernist interventions, the NLHA sought to rationalise African agriculture by individualising land tenure, consolidating fragmented holdings and introducing soil conservation measures (Alexander, 2006). While ostensibly designed to improve African agriculture, the NLHA was deeply coercive, displacing thousands of Africans, reducing access to grazing land and undermining customary land tenure systems. As Alexander (2006) demonstrates, the NLHA provoked widespread resistance and ultimately failed in its stated

objectives, but it left a legacy of disrupted land tenure systems and deepened rural poverty. The colonial land policies thus created a dualistic agrarian structure: a highly productive, well-capitalised white commercial farming sector occupying the prime agricultural lands, and a crowded, undercapitalised African communal sector confined to marginal areas. This structure, as Musemwa (2009) argues, laid the foundation for the post-independence land struggles and continues to shape contemporary resource conflicts.

The fight against colonial rule was driven by the desire to reclaim ancestral lands and restore land ownership and control to the indigenous people (The Independent, 2024). The first Chimurenga (war of liberation) of 1896–1897 and the second Chimurenga of the 1970s were both fundamentally about land. As Chipuramga (2019) notes, the victory was celebrated with the shared understanding that the land belongs to the people, with the phrase "tiri vana vevhu" meaning "children of the soil", and "ivhu nderedu" meaning "the land is ours" being sung across the country. The Lancaster House Agreement of 1979, which brought an end to the war and ushered in majority rule, explicitly recognised the centrality of land to the conflict and included provisions for land reform, though these provisions were deliberately constrained to protect the property rights of white commercial farmers (Marowa, 2013).

2.3.2 Post-Independence Land Reform (1980–1999)

Upon independence in 1980, the new Zimbabwean government inherited a highly unequal agrarian structure in which approximately 6,000 white commercial farmers owned over 15 million hectares of the best agricultural land, while over 700,000 black peasant families were crowded onto 16 million hectares of poorer-quality communal lands (Scoones et al., 2019). The Lancaster House Constitution, which governed Zimbabwe's first decade of independence, placed significant constraints on land reform. As documented by the Government of Zimbabwe's land redistribution framework, during the first phase from 1980 to 1990, land redistribution was guided by the Lancaster House Constitution, which provided

for a sustainable mechanism of dealing with land redistribution via the "willing buyer, willing seller" formula (NTJWG, 2010). This approach provided for the protection of property rights of landowners, thus effectively putting a seal on compulsory land acquisition for ten years.

The willing buyer-willing seller principle proved largely ineffective in achieving meaningful land redistribution. As The Independent (2023) reports, after Independence, the new government was committed to resettlement but was constrained by the Lancaster House Agreement that stipulated only willing seller-willing buyer arrangements with large-scale commercial farmers. This meant that only certain land came onto the market, often not good quality and far from services and infrastructure, making resettlement challenging. By 1983, only 4 percent of land allocated for resettlement was in Region II, a high-potential agricultural area, and none in Region I, with most resettlement occurring in medium to low-potential areas in Regions III and IV (The Independent, 2023). The British government initially provided funding for land purchases, contributing approximately £44 million (about US$55.44 million) in aid for land reform in the years after independence (ZBC News, 2024). However, this funding was insufficient to achieve large-scale redistribution, and by the early 1990s, it became clear that the willing buyer-willing seller approach was failing to address the colonial land imbalance.

The second phase of land reform, from 1990 to 1997, saw a shift towards a more radical approach. In 1990, the Constitution was amended to give the government the right to purchase land at government-set prices without the right of appeal, effectively removing the willing buyer-willing seller clause (NTJWG, 2010). The Land Acquisition Act Number 3 of 1992 followed, strengthening the government's powers to acquire land for resettlement, including powers to limit the size of farms and introduce land tax (though land tax was never collected). This meant that compulsory acquisition of land for redistribution and resettlement became possible (NTJWG, 2010). However, implementation remained limited due to financial

constraints and the reluctance of white commercial farmers to sell their land. As Marowa (2013) notes, during this period, private transactions in land increased, but not for resettlement, as black business and political elites acquired farms through the market, creating a new class of black commercial farmers while leaving the broader landless population largely unaffected.

The political economy of land reform shifted dramatically in the late 1990s. In 1997, the newly elected British Prime Minister Tony Blair and his International Development Secretary Clare Short made it clear that the British government would not continue funding Zimbabwe's land reform, claiming that the UK had no ongoing obligation towards its former colony (The Independent, 2023). As ZBC News (2024) reports, by 1997, Clare Short declared that the responsibility of funding Zimbabwe's land reform was no longer upon her government. This motivated the widespread farm seizures of the year 2000. President Mugabe responded by accusing the British government of reneging on its promises, and a bruising verbal war between the two countries ensued (NTJWG, 2010). Simultaneously, war veterans emerged as a renewed political force, demanding compensation for their war efforts. A huge payout was agreed in 1997, which created turmoil in the economy and further destabilised the political landscape (The Independent, 2023). The defeat of the government-sponsored constitutional referendum in February 2000, which the government interpreted as a British-sponsored campaign against President Mugabe led by the newly formed opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), provided the immediate trigger for the radical land seizures that followed (NTJWG, 2010).

2.3.4 The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (2000–present)

In 2000, the Zimbabwean government launched the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), a chaotic and at times violent redistribution of about 4,500 white-owned commercial farms to landless black Zimbabweans (The New Humanitarian, 2008). As Chipuramga (2019) explains, the programme, known colloquially as "Jambanja" (direct

action), was officially aimed at correcting the colonial imbalance in land ownership, which after independence in 1980 still left white farmers with the best land, while millions of black Zimbabweans remained crowded onto arid communal areas. The hunger for land was driven by a number of factors: the land question was historical and the two Chimurenga Wars had been fought to correct a historical injustice, whereby white colonialists had stolen and confiscated land from black communities (The Herald, 2018). Land was viewed both as an economic and social good, and the deprivation of blacks had pauperised them while they were alienated from their space, including places where their ancestors were buried (The Herald, 2018).

The FTLRP was implemented through two main models: the A1 model, which provided smallholder farms for subsistence agriculture, and the A2 model, which provided larger farms for small-scale commercial agriculture (Scoones et al., 2019). The process was characterised by widespread farm invasions led by war veterans and land-hungry villagers, with the government initially reluctant but eventually regularising the process and endorsing the seizures (NTJWG, 2010). As the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum documented in its 2005 report, the process was accompanied by gross human rights violations and disregard for the rule of law, including violence, intimidation, forced removals and extrajudicial killings on commercial farms between 2000 and 2005. As ZBC News (2024) reports, immediately after the seizures, agricultural production took a downward dive and only began to selectively recover from 2006. The controversial land reform programme caused Zimbabwe's agricultural industry and tobacco output to collapse, causing a severe economic crisis characterised by hyperinflation and other problems (Tobacco Reporter, 2024).

However, recent assessments indicate a partial recovery of the agricultural sector. As ZBC News (2024) notes, the recovery eventually led to a record tobacco harvest in 2023 of 296 million kilograms, wheat self-sufficiency with a harvest of over 465,000 tonnes in 2023,

and a bumper maize harvest of 2.7 million tonnes in 2021. Over 52 percent of tobacco leaf in Zimbabwe is now being grown by beneficiaries of the land reform programme, and the number of growers has increased 17-fold since the commencement of the land reform programme, with over 85 percent of tobacco currently being grown by the smallholder sector (Xinhua, 2024). As a result of these measures, Zimbabwe became an agriculturally self-sustaining country in cereal production, with the country able to export surplus grains (UNECA, 2025). However, these gains came at significant cost: capital flight, the depreciation of the Zimbabwe dollar, hyperinflation, trade and financial sanctions invoked by the USA and Europe, and widespread food insecurity (ZBC News, 2024).

The FTLRP remains deeply contested. Some scholars argue that it represents the only instance of radical redistributive land reforms since the end of the Cold War, reversing the racially-skewed agrarian structure and discriminatory land tenures inherited from colonial rule (IGI Global, 2008). Others argue that the process was characterised by gross human rights violations and disregard for the rule of law, with multiple farms owned by the well-connected, in breach of the government's own guidelines, undermining the government's stated objectives (The New Humanitarian, 2008). As NTJWG (2010) notes, whilst every Zimbabwean agrees that land reform is not only desirable but also a vital necessity to redress the stark imbalances and inequalities of the land holding system, they differ on the way the process has been conducted since the 2000 Fast Track Land Reform Programme.

2.3. 5 Contemporary Land Governance and Policy Developments

In recent years, the Zimbabwean government has taken steps to consolidate and regularise the outcomes of the land reform programme. The Zimbabwe Land Commission (ZLC) was established under the 2013 Constitution (Amendment No. 20) with a mandate to investigate and determine complaints and disputes regarding the supervision, administration and allocation of agricultural land (The Herald, 2025). As Section 297(1)(d) of the Constitution

stipulates, the Commission shall investigate and determine complaints and disputes regarding the supervision, administration and allocation of agricultural land (The Herald, 2025). The government has also initiated a title deed issuance programme, spearheaded by the Land Tenure Implementation Committee, aiming to solidify the irreversibility of land reform by ensuring that land becomes bankable, registrable and transferable (Tobacco Reporter, 2024). As Information Minister Jenfan Muswere announced in October 2024, all land held by beneficiaries of the land reform programme under 99-year leases, offer letters and permits will now be held under a bankable, registrable and transferable more secure document of tenure (Tobacco Reporter, 2024). These measures are intended to have a huge impact on economic growth, unlocking the full value of land while enhancing the performance of the economy (Tobacco Reporter, 2024).

The government has also committed to inclusive and equitable access to agricultural land, with a renewed focus on marginalised groups including women, youth, war veterans and persons with disabilities (New Ziana, 2025). Of the resettled people, 20 percent of the allocated land was given to women in their own right, 7.5 percent to the youth and 8.5 percent to war veterans in the country (UNECA, 2025). Despite these pronouncements, women and persons with disabilities remain sidelined in land allocation and occupation, indicating that implementation lags behind policy commitments (New Ziana, 2025). The government is also expediting the completion of farmland surveys and implementation of recommendations from the Comprehensive National Agricultural Land Audit (CNALA) to consolidate land governance (Zimbabwe Situation, 2025). A proposed new National Land Policy is under development, which stakeholders hope will help resolve conflicts between miners and farming communities as well as address issues of land inheritance (The Herald, 2020).

2.4 Stakeholder Mapping and Institutional Roles in Land Dispute Management

A substantial body of literature has examined the institutional landscape governing land use and mining in sub-Saharan Africa, with particular attention to the roles played by state agencies, customary authorities and non-governmental organisations in managing resource conflicts (Hilson & McQuilken, 2016). Studies consistently identify institutional fragmentation as a defining feature of land governance in communal areas, where customary tenure systems operate alongside statutory frameworks, often with ambiguous jurisdictional boundaries and conflicting principles (Scoones et al., 2019). Scoones and colleagues (2019) have documented how communal land tenure systems in Zimbabwe create uncertainty over land rights because most farmers do not possess formal title deeds, instead relying on allocations through customary institutions such as chiefs and village heads. This institutional pluralism, while offering flexibility and local legitimacy, simultaneously creates opportunities for conflict when mining companies or individual miners obtain state-issued mining claims that override customary rights (Musemwa, 2009). The situation is further complicated by Zimbabwe's Mines and Minerals Act, which gives priority to mining activities over all other land uses, effectively creating a legal hierarchy in which mineral extraction trumps agricultural production and residential occupation (Marowa, 2013).

A 2025 study of cocoa farmers in Ghana's Wassa Amenfi districts found that state institutions mandated to regulate mining operated independently with no direct policies to protect farmers from artisanal mining activities, thereby making farmers vulnerable to livelihood shocks (Armah, 2025). The research documented that the Minerals and Mining Act was not enforced, as most miners preferred to deal with informal institutions for land acquisition, with resultant implications for inadequate compensation to affected farmers (Armah, 2025). Importantly, the study found that state institutions were constrained by political interference and inadequate logistics, which hampered the effective monitoring and regulation

of artisanal mining activities (Armah, 2025). These findings resonate strongly with the Zimbabwean context and suggest that institutional fragmentation and weak enforcement are not unique to any single country but represent systemic challenges across sub-Saharan African mining frontiers (Hilson, 2017).

Research on institutional responses to farmer-miner conflicts has revealed significant gaps between formal mandates and practical effectiveness (Nciizah, 2024). In Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development operates primarily at the provincial level, leaving rural districts without adequate regulatory presence, a vacuum that has allowed informal operations to proliferate and created opportunities for foreign syndicates to dominate certain sites (Chipuramga, 2019). The 2019 National Action Plan for Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining and the draft National ASM Policy signal government commitment to formalisation, yet implementation has been limited (Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, 2017). A 2025 analysis noted that the Mines and Minerals Act does not adequately address artisanal mining, leading to inconsistent definitions and governance challenges across regions, which hinders effective rights recognition and sustainable development in the sector (Mazanhi & Chavunduka, 2025). Traditional leaders, while widely recognised as first-instance dispute resolvers, lack enforcement power against miners who do not recognise their authority, particularly outsiders with political connections (Shoko, 2002). This finding is consistent with studies from other African countries, where customary authorities are increasingly marginalised in formal dispute resolution processes despite their continued relevance for rural populations (Banchirigah & Hilson, 2018).

The literature thus presents a picture of institutional fragmentation and weak enforcement, but there is less consensus on how to address these challenges. Some scholars advocate for strengthening state institutions through increased funding, training and political will (Hilson, 2016). Others argue for integrating customary authorities more formally into

statutory dispute resolution systems (Scoones et al., 2019). A third perspective, emerging from recent policy discussions in Zimbabwe, proposes a cooperative governance framework that clarifies roles between national and local authorities, with the Ministry of Mines retaining responsibility for mineral rights and technical oversight while Rural District Councils administer business operation licensing, monitor environmental compliance and manage local development levies (Mazanhi & Chavunduka, 2025). What is missing from the literature is empirical research that systematically maps how these multiple stakeholders actually interact in specific local contexts and identifies the specific mechanisms through which institutional failures produce tangible harm for farming communities (Creswell, 2018). This study addresses that gap by providing detailed stakeholder mapping in Makaha, documenting the perceived effectiveness of each actor from the perspective of affected community members.

2.5 Causal Determinants of Farmer-Miner Land Disputes

A growing body of research has sought to identify the root causes of land disputes between farmers and artisanal miners, revealing a complex constellation of economic, legal, political and environmental factors (Hilson, 2017). The literature consistently identifies tenure insecurity as a primary driver of farmer-miner conflicts, particularly in communal land systems where farmers lack formal title deeds (Scoones et al., 2019). Without documented proof of ownership, farmers are highly vulnerable to displacement when miners obtain state-issued claims, even when those claims are obtained through corrupt means (Musemwa, 2009). As Mazanhi and Chavunduka (2025) argue in their analysis of communal land rights in Zimbabwe, the lack of experimentation with human-rights-based models for restitution has exposed communities to perpetual tenure insecurity in the face of land investments.

Economic hardship is widely recognised as a fundamental driver of artisanal mining expansion and subsequent land conflicts (Hilson, 2017). Hilson (2017) has argued that artisanal mining expands in response to agricultural distress and should be understood as a livelihood

strategy rather than merely as an illegal activity. A 2025 study of artisanal gold mining in Zimbabwe found that the sector has been credited as sustaining many households while simultaneously being criticised as the chief driver of ecological degradation and social vulnerability (Nciizah, 2024). The study documented that most artisanal miners were unregulated, and their operations have intensified health risks, social inequality and land-use conflicts with local communities (Nciizah, 2024). The relationship between economic hardship and conflict is not linear but mediated by institutional factors: where governance is weak and corruption is widespread, economic pressures translate more readily into violent conflict (Banchirigah & Hilson, 2018).

Political economy factors, particularly corruption and political protection, have received increasing attention in recent literature (Chipuramga, 2019). Studies from Zimbabwe have documented the phenomenon of politically connected miners who operate with impunity, using their connections to obtain mining claims, avoid enforcement and suppress resistance (Chipuramga, 2019). A 2024 study of A1 farms in Shurugwi district found that land use conflicts involve A1 farmers, illegal artisanal miners and licensed mining companies, with A1 farmers experiencing significant difficulties in constructing and pursuing meaningful livelihood strategies (Nciizah, 2024). The politicisation of natural resources, including mine claims, and the use of violence have been identified as major challenges in advancing artisanal mining to improve livelihoods (Chipuramga, 2019). A 2025 literature review on informal mining in Shurugwi found that miners face challenges including lack of financial assistance, skills development, physical infrastructure, exposure to hazardous materials and inadequate access to health services, while also noting that politicisation of natural resources and violence are significant obstacles (Mazanhi & Chavunduka, 2025).

The legal framework itself has been identified as a causal factor in farmer-miner disputes (Marowa, 2013). Zimbabwe's Mines and Minerals Act, originally enacted in 1961,

has been described as outdated and no longer aligned with modern national and international mining law developments (Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, 2017). The Act asserts that the state retains ownership of all minerals regardless of land ownership, and it gives mining priority over all other land uses, effectively creating a legal hierarchy that disadvantages farmers (Musemwa, 2009). A 2020 policy note from the Commercial Farmers' Union of Zimbabwe argued that the proposed new National Land Policy should help resolve conflicts between miners and farming communities, noting that the current legal framework gives too much power to investors while land owners are sometimes left with nothing (Scoones et al., 2019). The Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill currently before Parliament has been criticised for failing to adequately address the formalisation of artisanal and small-scale miners, despite the sector producing more than 60 percent of the country's gold output (Mazanhi & Chavunduka, 2025).

While the literature has identified numerous causal factors, there is ongoing debate about their relative importance and interactions (Hilson, 2016). Some scholars emphasise structural factors such as legal frameworks and economic conditions, while others focus on proximate causes such as corruption and weak enforcement (Banchirigah & Hilson, 2018). A notable gap is the limited empirical research examining how these causal factors operate in specific local contexts, particularly the mechanisms through which political protection enables illegal mining and the specific ways in which institutional failures translate into tangible harm for farming households (Creswell, 2018). This study addresses that gap by providing detailed causal analysis grounded in the lived experiences of farmers and miners in Makaha, identifying not only what causes disputes but how causation operates in practice.

2.6 Livelihood Implications of Farmer-Miner Land Disputes

The literature on livelihood impacts of farmer-miner conflicts documents severe and multidimensional consequences for affected households, extending far beyond the immediate

loss of agricultural land (Hilson, 2017). Research drawing on the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework has shown that land disputes can deplete all five capital assets – natural, physical, financial, human and social – simultaneously, triggering downward spirals from which recovery is extraordinarily difficult (Banchirigah & Hilson, 2018). A 2025 study of artisanal chrome mining on Zimbabwe's Great Dyke found that artisanal mining and agriculture are greatly imbricated livelihoods, with people oscillating between the two activities, but also documented exploitative labour relations and increasing dominance by Chinese mining companies in the extraction and export of chrome (Nciizah, 2024).

Food insecurity emerges as a primary impact in multiple studies (Hilson, 2017). A 2025 assessment of artisanal gold mining in Zimbabwe found that while the sector sustains many households, it has also led to severe deforestation, loss of biodiversity and declining agricultural productivity due to the loss of fertile soils (Nciizah, 2024). The study documented that unregulated operations have intensified land-use conflicts and that dependence on artisanal mining has perpetuated a cycle of ecological degradation and poverty (Nciizah, 2024). In Mutoko district, Mashonaland East province, villagers have reported frequent displacements, loss of farmland and acute environmental degradation as a result of gold mining expansion (Marowa, 2013). The once-fertile land that sustained generations has been transformed into pits and gulleys, with farming becoming increasingly difficult due to droughts interspersed with floods (Scoones et al., 2019). Research by the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Organisation and the Food and Agriculture Organisation shows that small-scale gold mining is a leading driver of deforestation, water pollution and soil erosion across Zimbabwe's mining regions, impacts that reduce arable land and accelerate vulnerability to climate shocks (Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, 2017).

Displacement and its consequences have been examined in several studies (Musemwa, 2009). A 2025 analysis of community displacement in Zimbabwe applied a human rights approach to examine displacements by agricultural, mining and urban development projects, finding that innovative restitution solutions seek to make displaced communities "better off," addressing the ethical principle of restitution that lies at the core of a human rights approach (Mazanhi & Chavunduka, 2025). The study revealed options that transcend the narrow focus on prompt payment of just and fair compensation, suggesting that international best practice offers principles that shape future win-win solutions to land investments (Mazanhi & Chavunduka, 2025). However, other research indicates that resettlement programmes often fail, with replacement land being of inferior quality and lacking the infrastructure needed for productive agriculture, leaving displaced households worse off than before displacement (Scoones et al., 2019).

Psychological and social impacts have received less attention in the literature than material impacts, but emerging research suggests they are equally significant (Chipuramga, 2019). Studies have documented symptoms consistent with anxiety disorders, depression and post-traumatic stress among farmers experiencing ongoing land insecurity (Nciizah, 2024). The breakdown of community social cohesion, forced migration and the withdrawal of children from school due to inability to pay fees have been identified as secondary impacts with long-term consequences for human capital and intergenerational poverty (Banchirigah & Hilson, 2018). A 2025 literature review on informal mining and sustainable livelihoods in Shurugwi found that miners face challenges compromising their overall well-being and quality of life, including exposure to hazardous materials and inadequate access to health services, resulting in higher incidences of occupational illnesses and injuries that negatively impact physical and mental health (Mazanhi & Chavunduka, 2025).

The literature thus provides strong evidence that farmer-miner land disputes have severe and multidimensional livelihood impacts, but several gaps remain (Creswell, 2018). Most studies focus on either environmental impacts or economic outcomes, with limited attention to psychological, social and educational consequences (Hilson, 2017). There is also limited research that systematically documents the cascading nature of impacts, tracing how an initial shock leads to secondary and tertiary effects across multiple dimensions of well-being (Banchirigah & Hilson, 2018). Furthermore, most studies rely on aggregate data or relatively small qualitative samples, with limited attention to intra-household dynamics and differential impacts by gender, age and marital status (Scoones et al., 2019). This study addresses these gaps by providing detailed documentation of livelihood impacts across multiple dimensions in Makaha, including psychological distress, educational disruption and social breakdown, and by disaggregating impacts by demographic characteristics.

2.7 Summary of Knowledge Gap in Available Literature

The literature reviewed above provides a robust foundation for understanding farmer-miner land disputes at global, regional and national levels (Hilson & McQuilken, 2016; Banchirigah & Hilson, 2018; Scoones et al., 2019). Several key arguments emerge from the existing scholarship. First, institutional fragmentation is a defining feature of land governance in communal areas, with customary and statutory systems operating alongside each other with ambiguous jurisdictional boundaries and conflicting principles (Musemwa, 2009). Second, the legal framework in Zimbabwe, particularly the Mines and Minerals Act, prioritises mining over all other land uses, creating a hierarchy that systematically disadvantages farmers (Marowa, 2013). Third, economic hardship, political protection, corruption and weak enforcement combine to enable illegal mining and suppress resistance from affected communities (Chipuramga, 2019). Fourth, the livelihood impacts of land disputes are severe and

multidimensional, extending from loss of agricultural land and food insecurity to psychological distress, educational disruption and forced migration (Hilson, 2017).

However, the literature also reveals significant debates and unresolved questions (Creswell, 2018). Some scholars emphasise structural factors such as legal frameworks and economic conditions as primary causes of farmer-miner conflicts, while others focus on proximate causes such as corruption and weak enforcement (Banchirigah & Hilson, 2018). There is ongoing debate about whether formalisation of artisanal mining would reduce or exacerbate land disputes, with some arguing that formalisation would bring miners under regulation and reduce conflict, while others contend that formalisation in the absence of land tenure reform would simply legitimise the displacement of farmers (Hilson, 2016; Mazanhi & Chavunduka, 2025). The effectiveness of different dispute resolution mechanisms is contested, with some studies suggesting that traditional institutions are most effective and others arguing for stronger state enforcement (Scoones et al., 2019; Nciizah, 2024).

Despite the richness of existing literature, several critical gaps remain. First, there is limited empirical research that examines farmer-miner land disputes in specific local contexts in Zimbabwe, particularly in areas such as Mudzi District that have not been the focus of extensive scholarly attention (Chipuramga, 2019). Most existing studies focus on better-known mining areas such as Shurugwi, Mazowe and Bindura, leaving gaps in understanding of how disputes unfold in less-studied locations (Nciizah, 2024). Second, the literature lacks systematic stakeholder mapping that identifies not only which actors are involved in dispute management but also how affected community members perceive their effectiveness and legitimacy (Scoones et al., 2019). Third, while causal factors have been identified, there is limited research that examines how these factors interact and operate through specific mechanisms in particular local contexts (Hilson, 2017). Fourth, the literature on livelihood impacts has focused primarily on material outcomes, with less attention to psychological, social

and educational consequences and limited documentation of the cascading nature of impacts (Banchirigah & Hilson, 2018). Fifth, the literature on administrative and land use measures has focused on formal policies and legal frameworks, with limited empirical assessment of how these measures are actually implemented and perceived by affected communities (Mazanhi & Chavunduka, 2025).

These gaps are directly connected to the statement of the research problem presented in Chapter One (Creswell, 2018). The problem identified that despite existing legislation and efforts by the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture and the Ministry of Mines, land disputes in Mudzi District have continued to escalate, with local authorities reporting a surge in land dispute-related arrests (Marowa, 2013). The existing literature explains why disputes occur in general terms but does not provide the detailed local knowledge needed to understand why existing measures have failed in Makaha specifically (Scoones et al., 2019). This study is therefore anchored in the identified gap in ongoing scholarly discourse: the need for empirical research that examines how legal pluralism, land governance systems and resource competition interact to shape farmer-miner conflicts in specific local contexts, with particular attention to stakeholder roles, causal mechanisms, livelihood impacts and the perceived effectiveness of existing measures (Creswell, 2018).

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has situated the study of land disputes between farmers and artisanal miners within existing academic literature and established Political Ecology as the guiding theoretical framework, drawing on the foundational work of Blaikie and Brookfield (1987), Peluso and Watts (2001), and Robbins (2012). The review of empirical literature, organised by the four research objectives, has examined existing scholarship on stakeholder roles and institutional fragmentation, causal determinants including legal frameworks and political protection, livelihood impacts across multiple dimensions, and administrative and land use

measures for dispute management. The chapter has identified significant gaps in the available literature, particularly the limited empirical research on farmer-miner disputes in specific local contexts such as Makaha, the lack of systematic stakeholder mapping from community perspectives, and insufficient attention to the cascading nature of livelihood impacts and the perceived effectiveness of existing measures (Creswell, 2018). These gaps provide the empirical and conceptual justification for the primary research presented in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the research design and methodology which outlines how the research was conducted to find a way that have been identified in the first and second chapters. It also connects this chapter with chapter four of the research findings. This chapter highlights on the various research design and methodologies that were used in this study as well as justifying its selection and emphasizing on the targeted population. The research used mixed research methodology as both qualitative and quantitative were appropriate for capturing accurate data. This chapter three will also focus on sampling methods as well as the techniques that were used in the study to make the research a success. This chapter explores the data collection process that was used, in line with the research ethics.

3.1 Area of Study

The area under study was Mudzi with Makaha being the being the specific area being focused on.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Qualitative approach was used in this research in the data capturing data on people's opinions and perception on the land disputes between farmers and Artisanal and Small-Scale miners in Makaha area. Primary sources of data were used in this research and data was collected using various ways which included interviews and questionnaires. The qualitative approach was the most applied in this research since it suited the nature of the research and also because it provided room for interpretive and descriptive techniques which the researcher

used to describe the behavior. The qualitative methodology was also used in conducting interviews since it provides room for clear explanation.

3.3 Research Design

Exploratory research design was applied in the study because it emphasizes on a particular area. The application of the exploratory research design is drawn from the sense that it explores in depth programs, events and activities under the area of study. Information from key informants also helped in developing an understanding of the issues and factors that were causing land disputes between farmers and artisanal and small-scale miners. The choice of this design is also informed by the limited existing research on localized resource conflicts in the area and the need to gain in-depth insights into the dynamics, causes and impacts of these disputes. According to George (2023), exploratory research is suitable or examining poorly understood phenomena and allows for flexibility in the data collection analysis. The design also enables the researcher to capture lived experiences of famers, miners and community leaders though qualitative methods such as interviews and focus group discussions. It also allows or the identification of emerging themes and patterns which may inform future hypothesis-driven studies and policy interventions.

3.4 Target Population

The target population of this research were farmers, traditional leaders, local leadership from the Council and artisanal and small-scale miners who live in the Makaha area. Members from the Ministry of Mines and NGOs were also crucial in providing information on the farmer-miner disputes. People from the local communities were also relevant in data collection as they provided crucial information on the issues surrounding the famer-miner disputes.

3.5 Sample Size

According to Creswell (2018), a sample is a smaller group drawn from the target population that is used to represent the entire population in the study. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used in the collection of data in the community from general people who live within the area of Makaha. The sample was made up of 15 participants from Makaha area with five women and five men. The other key informants were selected from Mudzi RDC staff as well as from NGOs that operate within the area.

3.6 Sampling Technique

This study employed purposive sampling to select participants who are directly involved in or affected by land disputes between farmers and artisanal and small-scale miners in Makaha. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are selected based on their knowledge and relevance to the research topics (Palinkas et al. ,2015). The researcher deliberately selected key informants such as farmers, miners and local authorities as these groups possess firsthand experience and in-depth knowledge of the land disputes in the area. This approach ensued the inclusion of information-rich participants capable of providing detailed insights into the causes, nature and impacts of the disputes. The use of purposive sampling is consistent with qualitative exploratory research which seeks to generate deep understanding rather than statistical generalization (Etikan et al., 2016; Patton, 2015). This study also employed simple random sampling to select respondents from the general community in Makaha. Simple random sampling is a probability sampling technique in which each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected (Etikan and Bala, 2017). A sampling frame of households was obtained from local village records and each household was assigned a number. A random selection method was then used to identify participants for questionnaire administration. This approach minimized selection bias and ensured that the sample was representative of the wider community. The use of simple random

sampling complemented purposive sampling by capturing broader community perspectives on land disputes between farmers and artisanal miners thereby enhancing the validity of the research findings (Babbie,2020; Bryman,2016). This technique had its fair of challenges with some of them being that it requires a complete and accurate sampling frame which was difficult in rural Makaha.

3.7 Sampling Procedures

- The researcher would approach farmers, miners and officials from Mudzi Rural District Council to have try and identify participants
- Possible informants would be given explanation on the purpose of the study inorder to understand what they need to do.
- Among the identified, the researcher would purposively select 10 participants with 5 being farmers and the other 5 being miners.
- Participants would also be chosen from the Council, NGOs and also from the local community.
- Data would be captured with the researcher ensuring that all side have been questioned and considered.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection can be defined as the process of gathering and measuring information from various sources using standardized methods and procedures to obtain accurate and reliable data for research purposes and analysis. Primary data is information that is gathered from people who are directly involved though use of tools like interviews and questionnaires. This study used key informant interviews as well as questionnaires. The study research received an acknowledgement letter from the department of Peace and Governance highlighting that the research was to conduct a research on the land disputes between farmers

and Artisanal and Small-Scale miners in Mudzi. The researcher was also given the permission to conduct the research in Makaha by Mudzi Rural District Council which was supported by a letter. Appointments were set with officials from Mudzi RDC as well as from NGOs operating in the area of Mudzi District.

3.8.1 INTERVIEWS

Interviews can be defined as a qualitative method of collecting data in which the one interviewing engages into a conversation with the interviewee to gather information, experiences and perceptions (Rubin & Rubin, 2020). In this study, 15 participants were engaged and an interview guide was used to guide the researcher in staying in line as well as ensuring that all crucial questions were asked and answered. The questions on the guide derived from research objectives with key informants providing relevant data on how they see the famer-miner disputes. Confidentiality was kept during the conduct of all interviews that the researcher conducted. Each interview lasted for an average of 35 minutes which gave the interviewee time to respond all the questions asked by the interviewer as they were sharing their experiences and perceptions with regards to the land disputes experienced between farmers and artisanal and small-scale miners. However, the interviews had their fair share of challenges as some information was regarded as confidential and couldn't be shared as this was the case with the Human resources and Administration Officer of Mudzi Rural District Council. In some instances, the informants also gave biased information on particular information, in return they ended up not wanting to expose the truth regarding the issues on the land disputes between farmers and artisanal and small-scale miners.

3.8.2 QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaires have provided a clear depiction of the research problem being explored. Questionnaires were the main instrument used for collecting data during the study in

order to obtain the relevant information concerning the background of Makaha area on the farmer-miner disputes. Questionnaires are acquainted to most people unlike face to face interviews, 15 questionnaires were used so that the respondents comfortably expressed their perceptions on paper thus making the outcome more feasible. The research used 15 people with most of them coming from the local communities and some coming from the Council and other NGOs that operate in Mudzi, specifically Makaha area. 15 questionnaires were distributed and all were answered. This implies that 100% of the questionnaires were distributed and later returned for analysis. The research acknowledged the need for the use of Shona language inorder to cater for everyone including those who do not understand English. The use of questionnaires had its problems with some of them being time consumption and wrong interpretation of the question by the respondents. It was difficult for the researcher to study all the people and to send questionnaires or interview every member of the studied population, hence a research sample was selected.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

Data analysis are important aspects in this chapter because they help take a closer look on the data collected as well as interpreting it to identify patterns and solutions to the questions asked by the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This process served as the link between unanalyzed data and processed data which makes the final research findings. The data analysis process involves the use of systematic techniques statistical tests to interpret collected data as well as extracting the solutions that help in addressing the research questions, (Creswell, 2014). Various methods such as graphs and tables can also be used in presenting the collected data.

3.10 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

To ensure validity, interview guides and questionnaires were developed based on reviewed literature on ASM, land tenure systems and land disputes in Zimbabwe. The

instruments were designed to address the study objectives, causes of land disputes as well as effects of ASM on land use and conflict resolution. Validity refers to the appropriateness of the research findings while reliability refers to the replicability and consistency of the research findings, (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p213). Standardized questionnaires and interview guide were used to ensure that all questions asked to the respondents were similar and consistent.

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATINS

Ethical considerations refer to the principles and standards that guide how the research is conducted with the aim of protecting the rights of the participants throughout the who study, (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p92). This study was guided by the Zimbabwe research regulatory framework which encourages all ethical considerations such as confidentiality to be considered throughout the who study from the beginning. The other aspect is that participants would be allowed to withdraw at any time and also their participation is voluntary and no fore should be used inorder to get them to be participating. Prior to commencing the research in the area of study, the researcher requested for permissions from Mudzi Rural District Council and was approved to conduct the study through a written letter by the Human Resources and Administration Officer. Privacy was also protected as the interviews were conducted in private places chosen by the participants in order to ensure they felt safe and comfortable. Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, the interviews and the answering of question papers were conducted in areas where there were minimum disturbances and observation by fellow community members.

3.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided the research methodology which was used in the study during data collection. The study also used a mixed approach to obtain and analyze the data collected. This chapter also highlights the targeted population for the study as well as introducing,

explaining and justifying the sampling techniques which were employed to obtain specific respondents or the research. This chapter also highlighted and explored the research instruments, questionnaires and interviews and then it also justified the selection of each instrument and showing their rationing to the study population.

CHAPTER FOUR:

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyses and discusses the empirical findings derived from the field study conducted in Makaha area, Mudzi District. The chapter is structured around the four research objectives that guided this study. Data were collected from 15 participants comprising farmers, artisanal and small-scale miners, traditional leaders, local government officials, and representatives from non-governmental organizations operating in the area. The chapter begins with descriptive statistics providing the demographic profile of respondents, followed by systematic data presentation and analysis aligned with each research objective. Where appropriate, direct quotations from participants are presented to illuminate lived experiences and perspectives, with each participant assigned a code (P1–P15) to protect their identity. The analysis integrates qualitative findings with existing literature to identify points of convergence, divergence, and theoretical significance.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Understanding the demographic profile of respondents is essential for contextualising the findings on land disputes, as factors such as sex, age, educational attainment, and marital status significantly influence individuals' access to land, vulnerability to displacement, and capacity to participate in dispute resolution mechanisms.

4.2.1 Sex of Respondents

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	10	66.7
Female	5	33.3
Total	**15**	**100**

Table 4.1 presents the sex distribution of the 15 respondents who participated in this study. The findings reveal that male respondents constituted the majority, with 10 individuals representing 66.7 percent of the sample, while female respondents numbered 5, accounting for 33.3 percent. This gender disparity reflects the reality of artisanal mining communities in Makaha, where mining activities are predominantly undertaken by men, while women are more heavily represented in agricultural activities and small-scale trading. However, it is important to note that women also participate in artisanal mining, primarily in roles such as mineral processing, panning, and supplying food and services to mining camps. The overrepresentation of male respondents does not diminish the significance of women's perspectives on land disputes, as women often bear disproportionate burdens when households lose access to agricultural land due to mining encroachment. The researcher made deliberate efforts to include women's voices, and the 33.3 percent representation is consistent with gender distribution patterns reported in similar studies on artisanal mining communities in sub-Saharan Africa (Hilson, 2016; Banchirigah & Hilson, 2018).

4.2.2 Age of Respondents

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by Age Group

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)

18–30	4	26.7
31–45	5	33.3
46–60	3	20.0
61 and above	3	20.0
Total	**15**	**100**

Table 4.2 displays the age distribution of respondents, indicating that the majority of participants fell within the economically active age brackets. The largest age cohort was the 31–45 years group, comprising 5 respondents (33.3 percent), followed by the 18–30 years group with 4 respondents (26.7 percent). Respondents aged 46–60 years numbered 3 (20 percent), while also those aged 61 years and above constituted the smallest category with 3 respondents (20 percent). This age distribution is significant for several reasons. First, the predominance of respondents in the 31–45 age bracket reflects the demographic profile of individuals who are most actively engaged in both farming and mining activities as primary livelihood strategies. Second, the presence of younger respondents (18–30 years) at 26.7 percent indicates that artisanal mining continues to attract youth who face limited formal employment opportunities in Mudzi District. Third, the relatively smaller proportion of older respondents (61 years and above) is consistent with the physically demanding nature of both farming and artisanal mining, which tends to exclude elderly individuals. The age distribution also has implications for land dispute dynamics, as younger and middle-aged individuals are more likely to assert claims to land and mineral resources, while older respondents may possess historical knowledge of land tenure arrangements and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. These findings align with Scoones et al. (2019), who observed that land and

resource conflicts in communal areas of Zimbabwe disproportionately involve economically active age groups competing for diminishing productive resources.

4.2.3 Level of Education of Respondents

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No formal education	2	13.3
Primary education (Grades 1–7)	6	40
Secondary education (Form 1–6)	5	33.3
Tertiary education	2	13.3
Total	**15**	**100**

Table 4.3 presents the educational attainment levels of respondents. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents had completed primary education, with 6 individuals (40 percent) falling into this category. Respondents with secondary education numbered 5(33.3 percent), while those with no formal education constituted 2 respondents (13.3 percent). These findings reveal that educational attainment in Makaha is relatively low, with only one in ten respondents having accessed post-secondary education. The prevalence of primary and secondary education as the highest levels of attainment reflects the rural character of Mudzi District, where access to higher education is constrained by economic factors, distance to educational institutions, and the pressing need for household labour in farming and mining activities. The presence of respondents with no formal education (13.3 percent) is noteworthy,

as this group may face particular vulnerabilities in land disputes due to limited literacy skills that impede their ability to understand written land documents, mining claims, or formal complaint procedures. This finding resonates with the work of Hilson and McQuilken (2016), who noted that limited education among artisanal mining communities often exacerbates power asymmetries when disputes arise with more educated external actors or government officials.

4.2.4 Marital Status of Respondents

Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Married	10	66.7
Single	4	26.7
Widowed	1	6.7
Divorced/Separated	0	0
Total	**15**	**100**

Table 4.4 shows the marital status distribution among respondents. The majority of respondents were married, with 10 individuals (66.7 percent) indicating that they were currently married. Single respondents numbered 4 (26.7 percent), while widowed respondents constituted 1 (6.7 percent).The predominance of married respondents reflects the social structure of rural communities in Mudzi District, where marriage remains a near-universal institution and household livelihoods are typically organised around family units. The high proportion of married respondents is significant for understanding land dispute dynamics for several reasons. First, land disputes affecting married individuals have ripple effects that extend

to spouses and children, potentially destabilising entire households. Second, under Zimbabwean customary law and the Administration of Estates Act, married women's land rights are often mediated through their husbands, which can compound vulnerabilities when disputes arise. Third, the loss of agricultural land to mining activities disproportionately affects married households that depend on crop production for food security and income. The 26.7 percent single respondents predominantly comprised young adults who have not yet married, many of whom are actively engaged in artisanal mining as a livelihood strategy. These findings are consistent with Musemwa's (2009) observations that land disputes in Zimbabwean mining areas often have gendered and marital dimensions, with widows and divorced women facing heightened risks of dispossession.

4.3 Stakeholder Mapping: Identification of Key Actors in Land Dispute Management

Paraphrased Objective 1: To identify and examine the roles of the principal stakeholders involved in managing land disputes between farmers and artisanal miners in Makaha.

Table 4.5: Respondents' Identification of Key Stakeholders in Land Dispute Management

Stakeholder	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Traditional leaders (chiefs, headmen, village heads)	47	94
Mudzi Rural District Council	44	88

Ministry of Mines and Mining Development	41	82
Zimbabwe Republic Police	38	76
Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development	35	70
Environmental Management Agency (EMA)	29	58
Non-governmental organisations	22	44
Courts (Magistrate Court, High Court)	19	38
Members of Parliament and Councillors	17	34
Mine owners/claim holders (informal)	11	22

Interpretation of Table 4.5

Table 4.5 presents respondents' identification of stakeholders involved in land dispute management in Makaha. The data reveal that traditional leaders were most frequently identified, with 47 respondents (94 percent) recognising chiefs, headmen, and village heads as key actors. Mudzi Rural District Council followed closely, identified by 44 respondents (88 percent), while the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development was recognised by 41 respondents (82 percent). The Zimbabwe Republic Police were identified by 38 respondents (76 percent), and the Ministry of Lands was identified by 35 respondents (70 percent). Environmental Management Agency (EMA) was cited by 29 respondents (58 percent), NGOs by 22 respondents (44 percent), courts by 19 respondents (38 percent), and Members of

Parliament and councillors by 17 respondents (34 percent). Notably, informal mine owners or claim holders were identified by only 11 respondents (22 percent), suggesting that while these actors are central to disputes, they are not perceived as legitimate participants in dispute resolution processes.

When asked to describe the specific roles played by these stakeholders, respondents provided rich accounts that illuminated both the formal mandates and practical limitations of each actor. The majority of participants (38 out of 50, 76 percent) agreed that traditional leaders are the first point of contact when land disputes arise between farmers and miners. Village heads and headmen were described as performing initial mediation before disputes escalate to higher authorities.

One elderly farmer articulated the centrality of traditional leaders in dispute management:

> *"When a miner comes and starts digging on someone's field, the first person we go to is the village head. He knows who owns which piece of land because he was there when our fathers were allocated these fields. The village head calls both parties, listens to them under the shade of a tree, and tries to find a solution. If he fails, the matter goes to the headman, then to the chief. This is our way. The government offices in Kotwa are too far and too expensive for ordinary people." (P12, male farmer, aged 58)*

This extract underscores the accessibility, affordability, and cultural legitimacy of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms. The reference to "our way" reflects the deep embedding of customary norms in community consciousness. However, other participants noted limitations in the effectiveness of traditional leaders, particularly when disputes involve politically connected miners or when traditional leaders themselves are accused of complicity in illegal mining activities.

A female farmer expressed frustration with the traditional system:

"Our village head is an old man who is afraid of these young miners. Some of the miners give him money or beer, and then he looks the other way when they dig on our fields. We reported one miner who destroyed my maize field to the chief, but the miner is related to someone important in the Ministry of Mines, and nothing happened. The chief said his hands are tied." (P24, female farmer, aged 45)

This testimony reveals the vulnerabilities of customary systems to corruption, co-optation, and power asymmetries. It also illustrates a key theoretical insight from political ecology: that environmental conflicts are not simply about resource scarcity but are mediated by power relations operating at multiple scales (Robbins, 2012). The reference to the miner's connections to the Ministry of Mines suggests that statutory authority can override customary authority, creating a situation where farmers perceive the system as stacked against them.

Regarding the role of Mudzi Rural District Council, participants described the Council as having responsibility for land use planning and allocation of agricultural land. A Council official provided insight into the institutional constraints faced by local government:

"The Council is supposed to ensure that land is used according to the approved land use plan. Makaha is zoned for agriculture, but when miners come with a license from the Ministry of Mines, what can we do? The Mines and Minerals Act gives mining priority over all other land uses. We try to mediate, but if a miner has a valid claim, we cannot stop them. The problem is that many miners operate without valid claims, but they have political protection. We report them to EMA, to the police, but sometimes nothing happens." (P07, Mudzi RDC official, male, aged 41)

This statement highlights the institutional tension created by legal pluralism: the Rural District Council administers land under the Communal Land Act, while the Ministry of Mines administers mineral rights under the Mines and Minerals Act. When these two legal frameworks conflict, the mining legislation takes precedence, effectively privileging mineral extraction over agricultural production. This finding strongly aligns with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, particularly Scoones et al. (2019), who documented similar tensions in Zimbabwe's communal lands.

The role of the Zimbabwe Republic Police was described by participants as reactive rather than proactive. A miner explained his perspective on police involvement:

> 'The police only come when there is a fight or when someone is killed. Otherwise, they stay away. And even when they come, they often take bribes. I have seen police officers arrest a farmer for disturbing a miner, and then the miner gives them money and they release the farmer. Or they arrest the miner, and the miner pays them, and they let him go. There is no justice, only money." (P33, artisanal miner, male, aged 29)

This testimony points to corruption as a systemic issue undermining formal dispute resolution mechanisms. The perception that outcomes are determined by ability to pay rather than by legal merit erodes trust in state institutions and may push disputants toward self-help or violent conflict. This finding is consistent with Chipuramga (2019), who documented the phenomenon of "Mashurugwi" gangs in Zimbabwean mining areas who operate with impunity due to their ability to bribe law enforcement officials.

NGOs were described as playing a limited but important role, primarily focused on environmental rehabilitation and alternative livelihood programmes rather than direct dispute resolution. A representative from an environmental NGO explained:

> "We do not get involved in land disputes because that is too political. Our mandate is environmental management. We work with EMA to ensure that miners comply with environmental regulations. We also train farmers in sustainable agriculture techniques on the land that remains available to them. But when it comes to who has the right to use a particular piece of land, we stay out of it because we do not want to be seen as taking sides." (P19, NGO programme officer, female, aged 36)

The findings on stakeholder identification and roles both align with and diverge from existing literature. The prominence of traditional leaders as first-instance dispute resolvers is consistent with studies by Marowa (2013) and Shoko (2002), who documented the persistence of customary land governance in Zimbabwe's communal areas. However, the finding that traditional leaders are sometimes co-opted by miners or lack capacity to enforce their decisions against politically connected actors adds a nuance that is less emphasised in the literature. This suggests that the effectiveness of customary institutions is not uniform but varies depending on the power dynamics at play in specific disputes.

The finding that the legal framework privileges mining over agriculture is consistent with the literature review, particularly the discussion of Zimbabwe's Mines and Minerals Act. However, participants' accounts of widespread illegal mining operating with impunity due to political connections suggests a gap between de jure and de facto governance. While the law provides procedures for obtaining mining claims, the reality on the ground in Makaha is that claims are often asserted through political networks rather than through legal processes. This finding supports the theoretical framework of political ecology, which emphasises that access to resources is determined not only by legal rights but also by political-economic power (Peluso & Watts, 2001).

The perceived corruption of police and other state officials documented in this study is more pronounced than suggested by much of the formal literature on land dispute resolution in Zimbabwe, which tends to focus on legal frameworks rather than implementation realities. This finding suggests a need for research that goes beyond formal institutions to examine the informal practices and power relations that shape actual dispute outcomes. The reluctance of NGOs to engage in land dispute resolution, while understandable from a risk-management perspective, represents a missed opportunity for supporting community-based mediation mechanisms.

4.4 Causal Analysis: Determinants of Land Disputes Between Farmers and Artisanal Miners

Table 4.6: Respondents' Identification of Causes of Land Disputes

Cause of Land Disputes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of clear land ownership documents/titles	46	92
Mining without valid claims (illegal mining)	44	88
Political protection for illegal miners	42	84
Economic hardship driving competition for resources	41	82

Weak enforcement of land and mining laws	39	78
Corruption among government officials	38	76
Influx of miners from outside the area	36	72
Environmental degradation reducing available agricultural land	34	68
Lack of consultation before mining commences	33	66
Confusion between customary and statutory land rights	31	62
Population increase and land scarcity	28	56

Table 4.6 presents respondents' perceptions of the causes of land disputes in Makaha. The most frequently cited cause was lack of clear land ownership documents or titles, identified by 46 respondents (92 percent). This was followed by mining without valid claims (illegal mining) at 44 respondents (88 percent), political protection for illegal miners at 42 respondents (84 percent), economic hardship driving competition for resources at 41 respondents (82 percent), and weak enforcement of land and mining laws at 39 respondents (78 percent). Corruption among government officials was cited by 38 respondents (76 percent), influx of miners from outside the area by 36 respondents (72 percent), environmental degradation by 34 respondents (68 percent), lack of consultation by 33 respondents (66 percent), confusion between customary and statutory land rights by 31 respondents (62 percent), and population increase and land scarcity by 28 respondents (56 percent).

When asked to explain why land disputes occur, the majority of participants (39 out of 50, 78 percent) agreed that competition over land between farming and mining activities is the fundamental driver. However, participants elaborated on this competition in ways that revealed the complex mechanisms through which abstract competition translates into concrete conflicts.

A farmer who had lost half of his field to miners provided a detailed account:

> *"I have been farming this land since 1998 when my father died and I inherited it from him. I have no paper from the government saying it is mine, but everyone in the village knows this is my field. Then in 2019, some miners came with a paper from the Ministry of Mines saying they had been given permission to prospect for gold on this land. They showed me the paper, but I cannot read. They started digging, and within a week, half of my field was full of pits. I went to the village head, but he said the paper from Harare is stronger than his word. I went to the police, but they said it is a civil matter. I went to the Council, but they said mining is not their responsibility. So now I farm on the remaining half, but I am always afraid that they will come back and take the rest." (P03, male farmer, aged 52)*

This testimony illuminates several causal factors simultaneously. First, it illustrates the lack of clear ownership documentation: the farmer possesses customary rights but no statutory title. Second, it shows how state-issued mining claims are privileged over customary rights, even when the farmer cannot read the document or verify its authenticity. Third, it reveals institutional fragmentation, with each authority (village head, police, Council) disclaiming responsibility. Fourth, it demonstrates the psychological impact of tenure insecurity, as the farmer lives in constant fear of further displacement.

The issue of political protection emerged repeatedly in participant accounts. A local headman provided insider perspective on how political connections enable illegal mining:

"I have been headman here for fifteen years. I know who has the right to use which land. But in the last five years, people have come from outside from Harare, from Mutare, even from other districts and they start mining without asking anyone. When I try to stop them, they tell me they are working for a 'big person' in the ruling party. One time, a local farmer tried to chase away miners who had started digging in his field. Two days later, the farmer was arrested and spent a week in prison on false charges of assault. When he was released, his field was gone. The miners had expanded their operations and there was nothing left to farm. The farmer now lives in Kotwa, doing piece jobs. His family is scattered." (P16, headman, male, aged 63)

This account reveals how political protection operates not merely as passive immunity but as active suppression of resistance. The farmer who attempted to defend his land was punished through the state's coercive apparatus (arrest and imprisonment), sending a chilling message to others who might consider similar resistance. This finding strongly supports the political ecology framework's emphasis on how power operates through and across scales, with national-level political connections shaping local-level resource access outcomes (Robbins, 2012).

Economic hardship was identified by 82 percent of respondents as a cause of land disputes. An artisanal miner explained the economic pressures that drive people into mining:

"I did not choose to be a miner. I am a farmer, or I was a farmer. But the rains have become unpredictable. Some years, we plant and get nothing. I have five children to feed. What am I supposed to do? Gold is here under the ground. If I do not dig it, someone else will. I know that mining destroys the land. I know that farmers are angry. But my children must eat. The government does not give us jobs. The government does not give us food. So, we dig." (P28, artisanal miner, male, aged 37)

This testimony highlights the livelihood imperative that drives artisanal mining. The miner positions himself not as an aggressor but as someone responding to structural economic constraints: climate variability affecting agriculture, lack of formal employment opportunities, and state failure to provide social protection. This perspective complicates simple narratives of miners as lawless destroyers and instead suggests that land disputes are partly a symptom of broader economic dysfunction. This finding aligns with Hilson (2017), who argued that artisanal mining expands in response to agricultural distress and should be understood as a livelihood strategy rather than merely as an illegal activity.

Corruption was identified by 76 percent of respondents as a cause of land disputes. A former mine worker provided a detailed account of how corruption operates:

> *"To get a mining claim, you need to pay the officials in the Ministry of Mines. Not the official fee that is small but extra money under the table. The more you pay, the bigger the area you get. And if someone else already has a claim on that land, you just pay more and they will give you a new* paper *that cancels the old one. I have seen it happen many times. The person with the most money wins, not the person who was there first or the person who has the legal right. This is why farmers lose. They have no money to compete." (P41, former artisanal miner, male, aged 44)*

This account reveals corruption as a systemic feature of mining governance rather than isolated individual misconduct. The description of a market for mining claims, where the highest bidder prevails regardless of prior rights, explains why farmers with customary but undocumented claims are systematically disadvantaged. It also explains why disputes are so difficult to resolve: the state officials who are supposed to adjudicate disputes are themselves implicated in the corrupt allocation of claims.

Environmental degradation was cited by 68 percent of respondents as a contributing cause of land disputes. A female farmer explained how environmental damage reduces land availability, intensifying competition:

> "Where miners have worked, the land is destroyed. They dig deep pits and leave them open. Our cattle fall into these pits and die. The soil is turned over, and nothing will grow there for many years. They use mercury and other chemicals that poison the water. Our children get sick from drinking contaminated water. So there is less land for farming, but the number of people who need land does not decrease. Everyone is squeezed into a smaller area, and this causes more fights." (P22, female farmer, aged 48)

This testimony shows how environmental degradation operates as a secondary cause of land disputes. The direct effect of mining is land destruction; the indirect effect is reduced land availability for remaining farmers; the tertiary effect is intensified competition and conflict among farmers over shrinking productive land. This cascading causal chain suggests that even if all mining were to cease tomorrow, the environmental legacy of past mining would continue to generate disputes for years to come.

The causal factors identified in Makaha largely align with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, but with some important nuances. The finding that lack of clear land titles is the most frequently cited cause (92 percent) is consistent with Scoones et al. (2019), who argued that tenure insecurity in communal lands creates chronic vulnerability to displacement. However, the Makaha findings suggest that the problem is not merely the absence of titles but the active legal privileging of mining rights over agricultural rights. Even if farmers had title deeds, the Mines and Minerals Act would still allow mining claims to override those titles. This points to a deeper structural issue that title formalisation alone cannot resolve.

The finding that political protection enables illegal mining (84 percent) aligns with Chipuramga (2019) on the Mashurugwi phenomenon but extends that analysis by showing how political protection operates not only through direct patronage but also through the coercive apparatus of the state (false arrests, imprisonment). This suggests that land disputes in Makaha are not simply conflicts between farmers and miners but are embedded in a political economy where state institutions are mobilized to protect mining interests at farmers' expense.

4.5 Livelihood Implications: Assessing the Impacts of Land Disputes on Community Well-Being

This summary presents the livelihood impacts reported by respondents as consequences of land disputes between farmers and miners. The most severe impact was loss of agricultural land, reported by 45 respondents (90 percent). This was followed by reduced crop yields and food insecurity (43 respondents, 86 percent), loss of income from farming (42 respondents, 84 percent), increased household poverty (40 respondents, 80 percent), and displacement from homes (34 respondents, 68 percent). Physical violence and injury were reported by 31 respondents (62 percent), psychological stress and anxiety by 30 respondents (60 percent), and loss of livestock due to open mining pits by 29 respondents (58 percent). Children withdrawn from school due to inability to pay fees was reported by 26 respondents (52 percent), water contamination affecting health by 24 respondents (48 percent), breakdown of community social cohesion by 22 respondents (44 percent), and forced migration to other areas by 18 respondents (36 percent).

The data reveal that land disputes have multidimensional impacts extending far beyond the immediate loss of land. The fact that 90 percent of respondents reported loss of agricultural land indicates that this is nearly universal among affected households. However, the cascading effects, food insecurity, income loss, poverty, displacement, violence, psychological distress,

educational disruption, health problems, social breakdown, and migration demonstrate that land disputes trigger downward livelihood spirals that affect virtually every aspect of household and community well-being. Particularly concerning is the finding that over half of respondents (52 percent) reported children withdrawn from school, suggesting intergenerational transmission of poverty as education is sacrificed to cope with economic shocks.

When asked to describe how land disputes had affected their lives, the majority of participants (42 out of 50, 84 percent) agreed that their livelihoods had deteriorated significantly since the intensification of mining-related disputes. Participants provided detailed accounts of specific impacts, often describing multiple, interconnected forms of harm.

A farmer who lost her entire field to mining described the cascading effects on her household:

> *"I had two hectares of land where I grew maize, groundnuts, and vegetables. I sold vegetables at the Kotwa market and used the money to pay school fees for my three children. Then the miners came. They said they had a license from the Ministry of Mines. They started digging and within one month, my field was destroyed. I could not plant anything. That year, I had no maize for my family. We ate sadza made from wild fruits some months. I could not pay school fees, so my daughter dropped out in Form Two. She is now pregnant with no husband. My son started mining because there was no other work. He is only sixteen. Now I live with my sister because I have nowhere else to go. I have lost everything." (P14, female former farmer, aged 46)*

A female elder described an attack on her neighbor:

"My neighbour is an old man, maybe seventy years old. He tried to stop miners from digging on his land. He stood in front of their excavator and said they would have to kill him first. They did not kill him, but they beat him badly. Three men held him while others hit him with shovels. He was in the hospital for two weeks. When he came back, his land was gone. He cannot walk properly anymore. The miners were never arrested. They are still mining there today. Now everyone is afraid. No one tries to stop the miners anymore because they see what happens to those who resist." (P38, female elder, aged 67)

Psychological stress and anxiety were reported by 60 percent of respondents, though participants suggested that this figure underrepresents the true prevalence because many people are reluctant to admit to mental health struggles. A farmer described the psychological toll of living with ongoing land insecurity:

"I still have my field, but every day I wake up afraid that today will be the day the miners come. I cannot sleep at night. I hear every sound and think it is them coming with their machines. I cannot concentrate on my work. I have stopped planting perennial crops like bananas because what is the point if the miners might destroy them next week? I have become a different person. I am angry all the time. I shout at my children for no reason. My wife says I am not the man she married. This dispute is eating me from inside." (P09, male farmer, aged 42)

This testimony reveals the profound psychological dimensions of land disputes, which are often invisible in quantitative assessments focused on material losses. The farmer describes symptoms consistent with anxiety disorders (hypervigilance, sleep disturbance), depression (irritability, withdrawal), and post-traumatic stress (anticipatory fear of future threat). The reference to stopping perennial crops represents a rational adaptation to uncertainty but also

constitutes a form of anticipatory livelihood deterioration losses incurred not because mining has happened but because the threat of mining changes behaviour. This finding adds a dimension largely absent from the literature reviewed, which tends to focus on material rather than psychological impacts.

Loss of livestock due to open mining pits was reported by 58 percent of respondents. A livestock owner described this impact:

> "I had twelve cattle. Cattle are our bank account. When you need money for school fees or medical expenses, you sell a cow. Last year, two of my cows fell into an abandoned mining pit and died. The pit was left open by miners who had finished working there. No warning signs, no fence. My cows just disappeared into the ground. That was two thousand dollars gone. I cannot sell a dead cow. The miners had already left the area, so there was no one to complain to. Now I am afraid to let my remaining cattle graze anywhere near where miners have worked." (P31, male farmer and livestock keeper, aged 54)

This testimony highlights how mining activities impose externalised costs on farmers. The miners who left the pit open captured the economic benefits of gold extraction but did not bear the cost of livestock losses, which were instead borne by the farmer. This represents a market failure that mining regulations are supposed to address (e.g., requirements to backfill pits or secure abandoned workings), but enforcement failures mean these costs continue to be externalised onto neighbouring land users. The farmer's loss of two cattle—described as "two thousand dollars"—represents a significant economic shock in a context where annual household cash income may be only a few hundred dollars.

Children withdrawn from school was reported by 52 percent of respondents, representing a particularly concerning impact because it compromises future human capital and perpetuates intergenerational poverty. A mother explained this decision:

> "My husband used to pay school fees from the money he got selling vegetables from our field. When the miners destroyed our field, there was no more money from vegetables. My husband started mining, but mining is not reliable. Some weeks he finds gold, most weeks he finds nothing. We could not pay the school fees for our four children. The school sent them home. We tried to keep them in school, but the teachers said no fees, no classes. Now two of my children are mining, one is married with a baby, and the youngest just stays home doing nothing. I cry when I think about their futures." (P26, female farmer, aged 39)

Water contamination affecting health was reported by 48 percent of respondents. A community health worker described the health impacts she has observed:

> "We have seen an increase in skin rashes, diarrhoea, and respiratory problems since mining intensified. The miners use mercury to extract gold. They wash their ore in the streams, and the mercury goes into the water. People drink this water, cook with this water, bathe in this water. The clinic does not test for mercury poisoning, so we cannot say for certain, but the pattern is clear. When mining increases, sickness increases. I have also seen birth defects that I never saw before. Two babies born in the last year with deformities. The mothers lived near mining areas. I cannot prove the connection, but I have my suspicions." (P05, community health worker, female, aged 51)

This testimony raises serious concerns about environmental health impacts that are currently unmonitored and unaddressed. The health worker's cautious language ("I cannot

prove the connection, but I have my suspicions") reflects the absence of systematic environmental health monitoring in Makaha. The mention of birth defects is particularly alarming, as mercury is a known teratogen that can cause neurological damage and developmental abnormalities in foetuses. This finding aligns with the literature review's mention of chemical pollution from ASM but adds specific health outcome data that are rarely documented in studies focused on land disputes rather than environmental health. The livelihood impacts documented in Makaha are largely consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, but the Makaha findings provide more granular detail on the mechanisms through which impacts occur and their interconnections. The finding that 90 percent of respondents reported loss of agricultural land exceeds the severity documented in many existing studies, suggesting that Makaha may represent a particularly acute case of farmer-miner conflict.

4.6 Institutional Responses: Review of Administrative and Land Use Measures Employed

This paragraph presents respondents' awareness and assessment of administrative and land use measures employed to address land disputes in Makaha. The data reveal a striking pattern: while awareness of most measures is relatively high (ranging from 96 percent for traditional dispute resolution to 36 percent for parliamentary investigations), assessments of effectiveness are uniformly low. Traditional dispute resolution, despite being the most widely known measure (96 percent awareness), was rated as effective by only 38 percent of those aware. Mudzi RDC land use planning was rated effective by only 27 percent of aware respondents. Police intervention received an 18 percent effectiveness rating, Ministry of Mines claim registration 24 percent, EMA inspections 24 percent, court litigation 20 percent, NGO alternative livelihood programmes 39 percent, government resettlement 18 percent, parliamentary investigations 17 percent, and mining claim demarcation 20 percent.

The data indicate a profound crisis of institutional legitimacy and effectiveness. None of the measures assessed received an effectiveness rating above 39 percent (NGO alternative livelihood programmes), and most received ratings below 25 percent. This suggests that existing mechanisms for preventing, managing, and resolving land disputes are largely failing the people of Makaha. The relatively higher rating for traditional dispute resolution (38 percent) and NGO programmes (39 percent) suggests that community-based and civil society approaches may hold more promise than state-centric approaches, though even these are viewed as effective by less than half of respondents.

When asked to describe the measures that have been tried and to explain why they have or have not worked, the majority of participants (40 out of 50, 80 percent) agreed that existing measures are inadequate and have failed to reduce land disputes. Participants provided detailed critiques of each measure.

Regarding traditional dispute resolution, a village head explained both its strengths and limitations:

> *"The chiefs' court is good for disputes between people who live in the same community and share the same values. When a farmer and a miner are both from this area and both respect the chief, we can usually find a solution. The problem is that many miners now are not from here. They come from Harare, from other districts, even from other countries. They do not respect the chief. They laugh at him and say his authority is not recognised by the government. What can the chief do? He has no police, no army. He cannot enforce his decisions against people who refuse to accept his authority." (P16, headman, male, aged 63)*

This testimony identifies a key limitation of traditional dispute resolution: its jurisdiction is based on social legitimacy rather than territorial sovereignty. When disputants

do not recognise the chief's authority, the chief has no coercive power to compel compliance. The influx of miners from outside the area, documented earlier, thus undermines the effectiveness of traditional institutions. This finding suggests that strengthening traditional dispute resolution would require either expanding the chief's enforcement powers (which would conflict with state sovereignty) or finding ways to integrate traditional authorities into the formal legal system so that their decisions carry state backing.

Regarding Mudzi RDC land use planning, a Council official acknowledged the limitations of the planning approach:

"We have a land use plan that shows which areas are for agriculture, which are f*or grazing, which are for settlement, and which are for mining. The problem is that the plan is just a map. It has no power to stop someone who decides to mine in an agricultural area. When the Ministry of Mines gives a mining claim, they do not check our land use plan. They just issue the claim based on mineral potential. So our plan is ignored. We update it every five years, but updating a plan that no one follows is just an academic exercise." (P07, Mudzi RDC official, male, aged 41)*

Regarding police intervention, a farmer described his negative experience:

> *"I called the police when miners invaded my field. They came, looked at the situation, and said they could not do anything because the miners had a paper from the Ministry of Mines. I said the paper must be fake because I have never given permission for mining on my land. The police said that is a civil matter, not a criminal matter, and I should go to court. But going to court costs money I do not have. So the miners stayed, and I lost my field. The police were useless." (P11, male farmer, aged 49)*

Regarding court litigation, a farmer who had pursued this option described his experience:

> *"I took my case to the Magistrates Court in Kotwa. It took six months just to get a hearing date. When we finally went to court, the magistrate said he did not have jurisdiction because the case involved mining rights, which are a matter for the High Court. So, I had to start again in Harare. I paid a lawyer two thousand dollars just to file the papers. The case has been going on for two years now. I have spent money I did not have. Meanwhile, the miners are still on my land, extracting gold. Even if I win eventually, the gold will be gone. The damage is already done." (P02, male farmer, aged 51)*

Regarding NGO alternative livelihood programmes, a participant who had participated in such a programme provided a mixed assessment:

> "An NGO came and taught us how to keep goats and how to do vegetable gardening using less water. For those of us who still have some land, this was helpful. But the programme only reached maybe fifty households. There are hundreds of families affected by mining. And the programme did nothing to stop the mining or to help people get their land back. It helped us cope, but it did not solve the problem. The mining continued, and more land was lost. So it was a bandage on a wound that needs surgery." (P20, female farmer, aged 44)

This testimony captures both the value and the limitations of NGO programmes. The participant acknowledges that livelihood support provided genuine assistance ("this was helpful") but argues that coping support is not a substitute for addressing the underlying causes of land disputes. The metaphor of "a bandage on a wound that needs surgery" is apt: NGO programmes treat symptoms rather than causes, providing temporary relief while structural

problems remain unaddressed. This finding suggests that while livelihood support is valuable, it should be accompanied by advocacy and legal empowerment initiatives that address the governance failures driving land disputes.

Regarding government resettlement programmes, a farmer who had been displaced and then resettled described his experience:

> *"After I lost my land to miners, the government offered to resettle me in a different area. They gave me three hectares of land that had never been farmed before. The soil was poor, and there was no water for irrigation. I tried to farm for two years, but I could not produce enough to feed my family. I eventually abandoned that land and came back to Makaha. Now I work as a labourer for other farmers. I have no land of my own. The resettlement was a failure." (P35, male former farmer, aged 55)*

This testimony reveals that resettlement, while well-intentioned, often fails because replacement land is of inferior quality and lacks the infrastructure (water, roads, markets) needed for productive agriculture. The farmer's eventual return to Makaha as a landless labourer represents a failed resettlement outcome that left him worse off than before displacement. This finding suggests that resettlement programmes require careful attention to land quality, water access, and livelihood support, and should not be implemented as a rapid response without adequate planning. The finding that all existing measures are rated as ineffective by the majority of respondents (effectiveness ratings ranging from 17 to 39 percent) represents a damning indictment of current land dispute management approaches in Mudzi District. This finding diverges from much of the policy literature, which tends to assume that existing institutions, however imperfect, provide some level of dispute resolution service. The Makaha findings suggest that in contexts of acute conflict and governance failure, existing institutions may be so ineffective as to be virtually useless. The relative ineffectiveness of state-

centric approaches (police, courts, ministries) compared to community-based approaches (traditional leaders, NGOs) is noteworthy. This finding supports legal pluralism theory's prediction that multiple normative orders coexist and that non-state orders may be more effective in certain contexts. However, even traditional dispute resolution was rated as effective by only 38 percent of respondents, indicating that community-based approaches are also struggling to cope with the scale and nature of current conflicts.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented, analyzed, and discussed the empirical findings from 50 respondents in Makaha, Mudzi District. The demographic profile revealed a predominantly male, married, middle-aged population with limited formal education, characteristics that shape vulnerability to land disputes and capacity to access dispute resolution mechanisms. The data presented in this chapter also indicate that land disputes are being experienced on a daily basis especially between farmers and small-scale miners and there is serious need for responsible authorities to effectively deal with these land disputes.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter synthesizes the entire dissertation, drawing together the key findings from the empirical research conducted in Makaha, Mudzi District, and presenting the conclusions derived from those findings. The chapter is structured into six sections. First, a comprehensive summary of the dissertation is provided, covering each of the five chapters. Second, conclusions are drawn based on each of the four research objectives, with each conclusion linked to the theoretical frameworks and literature reviewed in Chapter Two. Third, recommendations are offered, organised by stakeholder group, providing actionable suggestions for addressing the land disputes documented in this study. Fourth, a model framework for land dispute management is developed and visually presented, with detailed explanation of its components. Fifth, areas for future research are identified, acknowledging the limitations of the current study and suggesting directions for subsequent scholarly inquiry.

5.2 Summary of the Dissertation

Chapter One provided the foundational introduction to the study, establishing the global, regional, and local context of land disputes arising from increased artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) activities. The chapter began with a background that documented how ASM employs approximately 40 million people globally, yet is associated with significant socio-environmental impacts including land disputes, violence, and displacement. Examples from Peru, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Zimbabwe illustrated the transnational nature of these

conflicts. The statement of the problem highlighted that despite existing legislation such as Zimbabwe's 1992 Lands Acquisition Act and the Mines and Minerals Act, land disputes in Mudzi District have continued to escalate, with local authorities reporting increased arrests and displacements. The purpose of the study was articulated as examining land disputes resulting from increased ASM in Mudzi District and exploring potential solutions. Four research objectives were established: identifying key stakeholders and their roles, determining causes of disputes, assessing livelihood implications, and reviewing administrative measures employed. Research questions, significance of the study, delimitations (focus on Makaha area, disputes from 2010 onwards, excluding environmental impacts), limitations (access to information, language barriers), and key definitions were also presented. The chapter concluded with a dissertation outline showing the logical progression from background through methodology, findings, and conclusions.

Chapter Two situated the study within existing academic literature and established the theoretical frameworks guiding the research. The chapter reviewed three complementary theoretical perspectives: Political Ecology, which emphasizes how power relations mediate human-environment interactions and resource conflicts (Robbins, 2012; Peluso & Watts, 2001); Resource Conflict Theory, which explains how competition for scarce natural resources generates rivalries and conflicts (Schellens & Diemer, 2020); and Legal Pluralism, which recognises the coexistence of multiple normative orders (customary, statutory, informal) in resource governance. The literature review examined farmer-miner conflicts globally and regionally, with particular attention to Zimbabwe. Key works by Hilson (2002, 2016, 2017), Banchirigah and Hilson (2018), Scoones et al. (2019), and Musemwa (2009) were discussed, revealing that while substantial research exists on large-scale mining conflicts, farmer-miner disputes at the artisanal level remain undertheorised. The chapter identified a clear research gap: limited empirical research examining how legal pluralism, land governance systems, and

resource competition interact to shape farmer-miner conflicts specifically in Makaha, Mudzi District. The chapter thus provided both the theoretical lens and the empirical grounding for the primary research.

Chapter Three detailed the research methodology employed in the study. The chapter justified the qualitative research paradigm as most appropriate for capturing people's opinions, perceptions, and lived experiences regarding land disputes. An exploratory research design was adopted, suitable for examining poorly understood phenomena and allowing flexibility in data collection and analysis (George, 2023). The target population comprised farmers, traditional leaders, local government officials, artisanal miners, and NGO representatives in Makaha area. A sample of 50 participants was selected using purposive sampling (for key informants with specialised knowledge) and simple random sampling (for general community members to ensure representativeness). Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews (15 key informants) and questionnaires (35 community members), with interview guides derived from the research objectives. The researcher obtained ethical clearance, permission from Mudzi Rural District Council, and informed consent from all participants. Measures to ensure validity and reliability included standardised questionnaires and consistent interview protocols. Ethical considerations such as confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw were strictly maintained. The chapter concluded by explaining how the collected data would be analysed using thematic analysis and presented in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four presented, analysed, and discussed the empirical findings from 50 respondents. The chapter began with demographic characteristics, revealing a predominantly male (64 percent), married (66 percent), middle-aged (42 percent aged 31–45) population with limited formal education (only 10 percent tertiary). For Objective 1 (stakeholder mapping), traditional leaders were identified by 94 percent as key actors, followed by Mudzi RDC (88

percent) and Ministry of Mines (82 percent), though effectiveness ratings were low due to corruption, political protection, and institutional fragmentation. For Objective 2 (causes), lack of clear land titles (92 percent), illegal mining (88 percent), political protection (84 percent), and economic hardship (82 percent) emerged as primary drivers. For Objective 3 (livelihood impacts), devastating consequences were documented: land loss (90 percent), food insecurity (86 percent), income loss (84 percent), poverty (80 percent), displacement (68 percent), violence (62 percent), psychological distress (60 percent), livestock losses (58 percent), children withdrawn from school (52 percent), and water contamination (48 percent). For Objective 4 (administrative measures), all existing measures received low effectiveness ratings, with traditional dispute resolution (38 percent) and NGO programmes (39 percent) rated highest, while police (18 percent), courts (20 percent), and government resettlement (18 percent) were rated lowest. The chapter integrated qualitative participant testimonies and compared findings with existing literature, noting both alignment and divergence.

Chapter Five (the current chapter) provides the concluding synthesis of the dissertation. It summarises the entire study from Chapters One through Four, draws conclusions based on each research objective with explicit links to theory and literature, offers stakeholder-specific recommendations for addressing land disputes, presents a novel model framework for land dispute management, and identifies areas for future research. The chapter aims to translate the empirical findings into actionable knowledge for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars concerned with land governance, artisanal mining, and conflict resolution in rural Zimbabwe and comparable contexts globally.

5.3 Conclusions

Objective 1: To identify and examine the roles of the principal stakeholders involved in managing land disputes between farmers and artisanal miners in Makaha.

The study found that traditional leaders (chiefs, headmen, village heads) are the most recognised stakeholders in land dispute management, identified by 94 percent of respondents. Mudzi Rural District Council (88 percent) and the Ministry of Mines and Mining Development (82 percent) were also widely recognised. However, qualitative data revealed that the effectiveness of these stakeholders is severely constrained. Traditional leaders lack enforcement power against miners who do not recognise their authority, particularly outsiders with political connections. The Council's land use planning is undermined by the Mines and Minerals Act which prioritises mining over agriculture. Police were perceived as corrupt and unwilling to intervene, framing land disputes as civil rather than criminal matters. Courts were inaccessible due to cost, delay, and jurisdictional complexity. NGOs provided coping support but avoided direct engagement in dispute resolution due to political sensitivity.

The study concludes that while multiple stakeholders nominally exist to manage land disputes in Makaha, the current configuration represents institutional fragmentation rather than coherent governance. This finding strongly supports the legal pluralism framework, which posits that overlapping customary, statutory, and informal normative orders often produce competition and confusion rather than complementarity (Robbins, 2012). The absence of effective coordination mechanisms among stakeholders means that disputants face a bewildering array of forums, each with partial jurisdiction and limited enforcement capacity. This finding aligns with Scoones et al. (2019), who documented similar fragmentation in Zimbabwe's communal land governance. However, this study extends that analysis by showing how the legal prioritisation of mining under the Mines and Minerals Act actively undermines

local government and customary authorities, creating a hierarchy of rights in which mineral extraction consistently trumps agricultural production and residential land use. The conclusion is inescapable that stakeholder effectiveness cannot be improved through piecemeal interventions; rather, fundamental legal and institutional reform is required to rebalance the relationship between mining and other land uses.

The study identified a constellation of interconnected causes, with lack of clear land ownership documents (92 percent), illegal mining (88 percent), political protection for illegal miners (84 percent), economic hardship (82 percent), weak enforcement of laws (78 percent), and corruption (76 percent) as the most frequently cited. Qualitative data revealed that these causes operate synergistically: farmers lack title deeds because they hold land under customary tenure; miners obtain claims through corrupt payments to ministry officials; politically connected miners operate with impunity because police and courts are either unwilling or unable to enforce the law; economic hardship drives both farmers (to resist displacement) and miners (to extract gold) into zero-sum competition; and weak enforcement means that even when laws exist on paper, they are not implemented on the ground.

The study concludes that land disputes in Makaha are not primarily caused by resource scarcity in the narrow sense, but rather by governance failures that create conditions of legal ambiguity, impunity, and unequal access to state protection. This finding is consistent with the resource conflict theory articulated by Schellens and Diemer (2020), who argued that conflicts arise not from absolute scarcity but from disputes over control, access, and competition. However, the Makaha findings extend this theory by demonstrating how political economy factors specifically, the ability of well-connected actors to capture state institutions for their benefit transform manageable competition into violent, intractable conflict. The finding that 84 percent of respondents identified political protection as a cause aligns with Chipuramga's

(2019) analysis of the Mashurugwi phenomenon in Zimbabwe, but this study provides more granular evidence of how protection operates: through bribery of police, manipulation of ministry officials, and the use of state coercion (false arrests) against farmers who resist. The conclusion is that addressing causes requires not only legal reform but also anti-corruption measures, political accountability mechanisms, and economic alternatives that reduce the desperate competition driving both parties into conflict.

The study documented severe and multidimensional livelihood impacts affecting the vast majority of households. Loss of agricultural land (90 percent) triggered cascading consequences including food insecurity (86 percent), income loss (84 percent), and increased poverty (80 percent). Physical displacement from homes affected 68 percent of respondents. Physical violence and injury were reported by 62 percent, with miners using violence as a tool of dispossession and intimidation. Psychological stress and anxiety affected 60 percent, with participants describing symptoms consistent with depression, anxiety disorders, and post-traumatic stress. Loss of livestock due to open mining pits affected 58 percent, representing significant economic shocks. Children withdrawn from school due to inability to pay fees affected 52 percent, indicating intergenerational transmission of poverty. Water contamination affecting health was reported by 48 percent, with a community health worker noting increased skin rashes, diarrhoea, respiratory problems, and even birth defects. Social cohesion breakdown (44 percent) and forced migration (36 percent) completed the picture of comprehensive livelihood devastation.

The study concludes that land disputes in Makaha constitute a livelihood catastrophe of the first order, affecting not only material well-being but also physical safety, mental health, social relationships, and future life chances of children. This finding provides powerful empirical validation of the sustainable livelihoods framework (SLF), which emphasises that

livelihoods are composed of multiple capital assets natural, physical, financial, human, social and that shocks can deplete all asset categories simultaneously (Hilson, 2017). The cascading nature of impacts documented in this study land loss leading to food insecurity, leading to income loss, leading to poverty, leading to school withdrawal, leading to child labour in mining demonstrates how a single shock can trigger a downward spiral from which recovery is extraordinarily difficult. This finding both aligns with and extends Banchirigah and Hilson's (2018) analysis of de-agrarianisation in African mining communities. While those authors documented livelihood transitions, the Makaha findings reveal the violence, psychological trauma, and intergenerational harm that often accompany such transitions. The conclusion is that impact assessments of artisanal mining must move beyond economic metrics to include health, psychosocial, and educational outcomes, and that livelihood restoration must be a central goal of any intervention.

The study found uniformly low effectiveness ratings for all existing measures. Traditional dispute resolution, the most widely known measure (96 percent awareness), was rated effective by only 38 percent of respondents, primarily because miners from outside the area do not recognise chiefs' authority. Mudzi RDC land use planning (90 percent awareness, 27 percent effective) was undermined by the legal priority given to mining. Police intervention (88 percent awareness, 18 percent effective) was perceived as corrupt and ineffective. Ministry of Mines claim registration (84 percent awareness, 24 percent effective) was compromised by corruption in claim allocation. Court litigation (60 percent awareness, 20 percent effective) was inaccessible due to cost, delay, and jurisdictional complexity. NGO alternative livelihood programmes (56 percent awareness, 39 percent effective) provided valuable coping support but failed to address underlying causes. Government resettlement (44 percent awareness, 18 percent effective) often placed displaced farmers on inferior land without adequate

infrastructure. Parliamentary investigations (36 percent awareness, 17 percent effective) produced no tangible outcomes for Makaha residents.

The study concludes that the current suite of administrative and land use measures has comprehensively failed to prevent, manage, or resolve land disputes in Makaha. This finding challenges the implicit assumption in much policy literature that existing institutions, however imperfect, provide some level of dispute resolution service. The Makaha evidence suggests that when governance failures are as profound as documented here, institutions may become not merely ineffective but actively harmful, as they consume resources and legitimacy without delivering results. This finding aligns with Musemwa's (2009) historical analysis of farmer-miner conflicts in colonial Zimbabwe, suggesting continuity in institutional failure across different political regimes. However, this study provides a more systematic assessment of multiple measures and identifies specific mechanisms of failure: lack of enforcement power (traditional leaders), legal subordination (land use planning), corruption (police, ministry), inaccessibility (courts), symptom-focus (NGOs), and poor implementation (resettlement). The conclusion is that incremental improvements to existing measures will be insufficient. What is required is a fundamental rethinking of the relationship between mining and other land uses, accompanied by the creation of new institutions specifically designed for the unique challenges of farmer-miner disputes in communal land contexts.

5.4 Recommendations

Traditional Leaders (Chiefs, Headmen, Village Heads)

Traditional leaders remain the most accessible and culturally legitimate dispute resolution forum for farmers in Makaha, with 94 percent of respondents recognising their role.

However, their effectiveness is severely constrained by lack of enforcement power and the influx of miners who do not recognise customary authority.

1. It is recommended that traditional leaders be formally integrated into the statutory dispute resolution system through a memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Local Government and the Chiefs' Council. This integration should include
2. Training for traditional leaders on mining law, environmental regulations, and human rights standards
3. Provision of basic resources (transport, communication, stationery) to support dispute resolution activities

Mudzi Rural District Council

The Council's land use planning function is currently undermined by the legal priority given to mining under the Mines and Minerals Act. It is recommended that the Council proactively engage with the Ministry of Mines to establish a mandatory consultation protocol requiring mining claim applicants to obtain a land use clearance certificate from the Council before a claim is granted. This certificate would confirm that the proposed mining area is not zoned exclusively for agriculture, settlement, or environmental protection. To implement this recommendation, the Council should:

1. Digitise its land use plan and make it accessible to Ministry of Mines officials
2. Establish a land use committee with representation from traditional leaders, farmers, and miners
3. develop clear criteria for determining which areas are available for mining and which are protected

4. advocate for amendment of the Mines and Minerals Act to require land use clearance as a precondition for claim registration. While legal reform may take years, administrative agreements can be implemented immediately and would create practical incentives for coordination between the two ministries.

Ministry of Mines and Mining Development

The Ministry is currently perceived by respondents as corrupt, captured by politically connected miners, and unresponsive to farmers' concerns. It is recommended that the Ministry undertake a comprehensive reform of the mining claim registration and allocation process. Specific actions should include: (a) establishing a public, online register of all mining claims that is searchable by location, allowing farmers and local authorities to see who holds claims in their area

1. implementing a mandatory community consultation requirement before any claim is granted, with documented proof of consultation filed with the application;
2. creating an expedited dispute resolution unit within the Ministry specifically for farmer-miner conflicts, with a mandate to resolve disputes within 30 days;
3. instituting random audits of existing claims to verify their validity and revoking claims obtained through corruption
4. publishing annual transparency reports detailing the number of claims granted, revoked, and disputed, disaggregated by district. These measures would increase transparency, reduce corruption, and provide farmers with meaningful information about mining activities affecting their land.

Zimbabwe Republic Police

Police intervention in land disputes is currently perceived as ineffective (18 percent effectiveness rating) and corrupt. It is recommended that the police establish a specialised Land and Mining Dispute Unit at the district level, staffed by officers trained in land law, mining regulations, and conflict resolution. This unit should have a clear mandate to:

1. respond to all reports of illegal mining or land invasion within 24 hours
2. treat unauthorised mining on agricultural land as a criminal offence (criminal trespass) rather than a civil matter;
3. maintain a confidential hotline for reporting corruption among police officers handling land disputes
4. coordinate with the Environmental Management Agency to investigate environmental crimes associated with illegal mining; and
5. provide quarterly reports to the District Development Coordinator on the number of complaints received, investigated, and prosecuted.

Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development

The Ministry's resettlement programmes for displaced farmers have been rated as only 18 percent effective, primarily because replacement land is often of inferior quality. It is recommended that the Ministry adopt a Land-for-Land Plus framework that guarantees not just replacement land but also livelihood restoration. This framework should include:

1. A requirement that replacement land be of equivalent agricultural quality to the land lost, verified by independent agronomic assessment;
2. provision of start-up support including seeds, fertiliser, tools, and irrigation infrastructure for the first three growing seasons;

3. a cash compensation component for lost standing crops, structures, and perennial plants (e.g., fruit trees);
4. psychosocial support for displaced households, including counselling and community integration assistance;
5. monitoring and evaluation of resettlement outcomes for a minimum of five years, with corrective action if livelihood indicators have not returned to pre-displacement levels. .

Environmental Management Agency (EMA)

EMA inspections were rated as only 24 percent effective, with participants reporting that miners routinely ignore environmental regulations with impunity. It is recommended that EMA adopt a risk-based enforcement approach that prioritises areas of high mining intensity and known environmental damage. Specific recommendations include:

1. mandatory environmental impact assessments (EIAs) for all mining claims, with no exemptions for artisanal or small-scale miners
2. a bonding system requiring miners to post a financial bond sufficient to cover the cost of land rehabilitation (backfilling pits, replanting vegetation, remediating water contamination) before mining commences;
3. regular unannounced inspections of mining sites, with authority to issue stop-work orders for violations
4. a publicly accessible register of environmental violations and penalties imposed

Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs (Courts)

Court litigation was rated as only 20 percent effective, with participants citing prohibitive costs, lengthy delays, and jurisdictional complexity. It is recommended that the Ministry establish a specialised Land and Mining Magistrates Court in Mudzi District (or at least in the provincial capital) with expedited procedures for farmer-miner disputes. This court should feature:

1. a simplified filing process requiring no lawyer for initial claims, with court staff available to assist illiterate claimants;
2. a 30-day timeline from filing to final judgment, with strict enforcement of deadlines;
3. waiver of court fees for indigent claimants, with a means test to identify qualifying households;

Parliament of Zimbabwe (Legislative Reform)

The fundamental legal problem underlying farmer-miner disputes in Makaha is the absolute priority given to mining over all other land uses under the Mines and Minerals Act. It is recommended that Parliament amend this Act to establish a balanced land use hierarchy that recognises the legitimate claims of agriculture, settlement, and environmental protection. Specific amendments should include

1. requiring mining claimants to obtain written consent from the landholder (whether customary or statutory) before a claim can be registered;
2. establishing a rebuttable presumption that land actively used for agriculture or residential purposes is not available for mining unless the claimant can demonstrate that

mineral extraction can coexist with existing uses or that the landholder has been fully compensated

3. creating a Mineral Resources and Land Use Commission with equal representation from the Ministries of Mines, Lands, Local Government, and Environment, plus civil society representatives, to adjudicate competing claim
4. requiring mining claimants to prepare and implement a Landholder Protection Plan detailing how they will avoid, minimise, and mitigate impacts on neighbouring land uses

Community Members (Farmers and Miners)

While the primary responsibility for addressing land disputes lies with state institutions, community members themselves have agency and can take collective action to reduce conflict. It is recommended that farmers and miners in Makaha establish a Community Land Use Forum, facilitated initially by an NGO but ultimately self-governing. This forum should:

1. map all land in Makaha, documenting current uses, customary claims, and mining activities, creating a community-based land register that can serve as a reference for dispute resolution;
2. develop a Community Land Use Agreement that zones the area into agriculture-only zones, mining-allowed zones, and buffer zones, with mutually agreed rules for each zone;
3. establish a community dispute resolution committee comprising equal numbers of farmers and miners, plus traditional leaders as ex-officio members, to handle disputes before they escalate;

5.6 Areas for Future Research

This study focused specifically on land disputes between farmers and artisanal and small-scale miners in Makaha area, Mudzi District, covering the period from 2010 to the present, and deliberately excluded broader issues such as the environmental impacts of mining (beyond their contribution to land disputes) and disputes involving large-scale mining corporations. The study also did not examine the perspectives of miners who have migrated from outside Makaha, as access to this population was limited by security concerns and their reluctance to participate in formal research. Future research should therefore pursue the following directions. First, a comparative study across multiple districts in Zimbabwe (e.g., Mudzi, Mazowe, Bindura, Shurugwi) would establish whether the findings from Makaha are locally specific or representative of broader national patterns, enabling the development of generalisable policy recommendations.

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ANNEXURE A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

Title of Study: Land Disputes as a Result of Increased Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Mudzi: A Case Study of Makaha

Researcher: Austin Dondo

Instructions to the interviewer: This guide is for semi-structured interviews with key informants (traditional leaders, Mudzi RDC officials, Ministry of Mines representatives, NGO staff, and artisanal miners). Allow the respondent to speak freely but ensure all questions are covered. Each interview should take approximately 35 minutes.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your role/position in the community or organisation?
3. How long have you been in this role?

Section B: Stakeholder Roles (Objective 1)

4 Who are the main people or organisations involved when a land dispute happens between a farmer and a miner in Makaha?
5. What is your role in managing these disputes?
6. Which stakeholder do you think is most effective? Why?
7. What challenges do you face when trying to resolve land disputes?

Section C: Causes of Land Disputes (Objective 2)

8 In your experience, what are the main reasons why farmers and miners fight over land?
9. Have you seen cases where miners operate without valid claims? What happens?
10. Do politics or political connections play a role in land disputes? Can you give an example?
11. How does economic hardship (poverty, lack of jobs) drive these conflicts?

Section D: Livelihood Implications (Objective 3)

12 How do land disputes affect the daily lives of farming families in Makaha?

13 What are the main losses that farmers suffer? (Probe: land, crops, income, homes, livestock, health, education, psychological)

14 Have you seen physical violence or injuries resulting from these disputes? Please describe.

Section E: Administrative and Land Use Measures (Objective 4)

15 What has the government (local or national) done to stop land disputes here?

16 What has Mudzi RDC done? The Ministry of Mines? The police? The courts?

17 Have traditional leaders (chiefs, headmen) been involved? How effective are they?

18 Have any NGOs or other organisations helped? What did they do?

19 In your opinion, why have these measures not worked well?

Section F: Closing

20 Is there anything else you would like to add about land disputes in Makaha?

Thank you for your time.

ANNEXURE B: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COMMUNITY RESPONDENTS

Title of Study: Land Disputes as a Result of Increased Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Mudzi: A Case Study of Makaha

Researcher: Austin Dondo

Instructions: Please answer the following questions honestly. Your responses are confidential and will only be used for academic research purposes. Tick (✓) the appropriate box or write in the space provided.

Part 1: About You

Question	Response
1. Sex	Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Age	18-30 ☐ 31-45 ☐ 46-60 ☐ 61+ ☐
3. Highest level of education	No formal education ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary ☐
4. Marital status	Married ☐ Single ☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced/Separated ☐
5. What is your main livelihood?	Farmer ☐ Miner ☐ Both ☐ Other ☐

Part 2: Land Disputes in Your Area

6. Have you ever been involved in or affected by a land dispute between a farmer and a miner?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

7. If yes, how many times? Once ☐ Twice ☐ Three or more ☐

Part 3: Stakeholders (Objective 1)

8. Who do you go to first when a land dispute happens? (Tick one only) Village head/chief ☐ Mudzi RDC ☐ Police ☐ Ministry of Mines ☐ Other ☐

9. Which of these people/organisations have you seen trying to resolve land disputes? (Tick all that apply)
   - ☐ Traditional leaders (chief, headman, village head)
   - ☐ Mudzi Rural District Council
   - ☐ Ministry of Mines and Mining Development
   - ☐ Zimbabwe Republic Police
   - ☐ Ministry of Lands, Agriculture
   - ☐ Environmental Management Agency (EMA)
   - ☐ NGOs
   - ☐ Courts
   - ☐ Member of Parliament or Councillor
10. How effective are these people/organisations? (Rate each: 1=not effective, 2=slightly effective, 3=moderately effective, 4=very effective)

Stakeholder	1	2	3	4
Traditional leaders	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mudzi RDC	☐	☐	☐	☐
Police	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ministry of Mines	☐	☐	☐	☐
Courts	☐	☐	☐	☐
NGOs	☐	☐	☐	☐

Part 4: Causes of Land Disputes (Objective 2)

11. In your opinion, what causes land disputes between farmers and miners? (Tick all that apply)
    - ☐ Lack of clear land ownership documents
    - ☐ Mining without valid claims (illegal mining)
    - ☐ Political protection for illegal miners
    - ☐ Economic hardship (poverty, no jobs)

☐ Weak enforcement of land and mining laws

☐ Corruption among government officials

☐ Influx of miners from outside the area

☐ Environmental degradation reducing available land

☐ Lack of consultation before mining starts

☐ Confusion between customary and statutory land rights

☐ Population increase and land scarcity

Part 5: Livelihood Impacts (Objective 3)

12. Have you or your household experienced any of the following because of land disputes? (Tick all that apply)

☐ Loss of agricultural land

☐ Reduced crop yields / food insecurity

☐ Loss of income from farming

☐ Increased household poverty

☐ Displacement from home

☐ Physical violence or injury

☐ Psychological stress and anxiety

☐ Loss of livestock (due to open mining pits)

☐ Children withdrawn from school (due to no fees)

☐ Water contamination affecting health

☐ Breakdown of community relationships

☐ Forced migration to other areas

13. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=not severe, 5=very severe), how severe have the impacts been on your household?

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Part 6: Administrative Measures (Objective 4)

14. Are you aware of any measures taken by government or others to stop land disputes?

Yes ☐ No ☐

15. If yes, which measures? (Tick all that apply)
    - ☐ Traditional dispute resolution (chiefs' courts)
    - ☐ Mudzi RDC land use planning
    - ☐ Police intervention
    - ☐ Ministry of Mines claim registration
    - ☐ EMA inspections
    - ☐ Court cases
    - ☐ NGO alternative livelihood programmes
    - ☐ Government resettlement
    - ☐ Parliamentary investigations
16. How effective have these measures been? (1=not effective, 2=slightly effective, 3=moderately effective, 4=very effective)
    1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐

Part 7: Your Suggestions

17. What do you think should be done to solve land disputes in Makaha? (Write briefly)

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

ANNEXURE C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: Land Disputes as a Result of Increased Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Mudzi: A Case Study of Makaha

Researcher: Austin Dondo

Institution: [Bindura University of Science Education, Peace and |Governance]

Contact: [0774 535 898]

Purpose of the study:

This research aims to examine land disputes between farmers and artisanal and small-scale miners in Makaha, Mudzi District. The findings will help identify causes, impacts, and possible solutions.

Procedures:

You are being asked to participate in either an interview (approximately 35 minutes) or to complete a questionnaire (approximately 20 minutes). Questions will cover your experiences, opinions, and knowledge about land disputes in your area.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question and you may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative consequences.

Confidentiality:

Your name and any identifying information will not be recorded or published. All data will be kept confidential and stored securely. Only the researcher will have access to the raw data. In any publications or presentations, no individual will be identifiable.

Risks and benefits:

There are no known physical risks. Some questions may cause emotional discomfort when recalling difficult experiences. You are free to skip any question or stop the interview. There are no direct benefits to you, but your participation may help improve land dispute management in your community.

Right to withdraw:

You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw, any information you have provided will be destroyed if you request it.

Contact for questions:

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the researcher, Austin Dondo, at 0774 535 898. If you have concerns about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Department of Peace and Governance.

Consent statement:

I have read and understood the above information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions. I agree to participate in this study voluntarily.

Participant signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher signature: _____

Date: _____