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Topic

**‘From silos to synergy’: Stakeholder Perceptions on Institutional Fragmentation in
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe**

BY

Edwin Makavire

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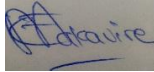
**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN CLIMATE
CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

YEAR 2026

DECLARATION FORM

I, **MAKAVIRE EDWIN** hereby declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation. The contents of this dissertation represent my own work and that this dissertation has not previously been published and/or submitted for academic examination towards any qualification.

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A small, rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature appears to be 'Makavire' with a stylized initial 'M'.

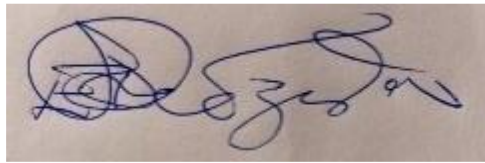
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APPROVAL FORM

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‘From silos to synergy’: Stakeholder Perceptions on Institutional Fragmentation in Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe

Submitted by **Makavire Edwin** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Science Degree in Climate Change and Sustainable Development.



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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my family

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First and foremost, I thank God for His daily mercies and guidance throughout this process. I am truly blessed to have received such grace and strength.

I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. P. Chinyanganya, whose patience, guidance, and insightful feedback were invaluable at every stage of my research. Her expertise and encouragement have greatly enriched my experience.

I am profoundly grateful to my wife for her unwavering support and encouragement. Her belief in me and my abilities provided the strength I needed to persevere through the challenges of this academic journey. Your support has made a significant impact on my work and my personal growth. This dissertation reflects the collective support and inspiration I have received, and I am eternally grateful to each of you.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined stakeholder perceptions of institutional fragmentation in climate change mitigation and adaptation in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe, guided by the aim of identifying pathways for transitioning from silos to synergy. Grounded in polycentric governance theory, the research employed a convergent mixed-methods case study design. Data were collected from 95 household survey respondents (95% response rate), 20 key informant interviews, and 5 focus group discussions, analysed using descriptive statistics and reflexive thematic analysis. Key findings revealed that Agritex, NGOs, the Rural District Council, the Environmental Management Agency, and traditional leaders are the main institutional actors, but they operate with overlapping mandates and weak coordination. Stakeholder perceptions of inter-institutional collaboration were overwhelmingly negative: 72% disagreed that organisations work together effectively, 68% viewed overall collaboration as weak, and 60% reported exclusion of traditional leaders. Trust in government was eroded by inconsistent presence and changing advice, while trust in NGOs suffered due to short-term, donor-driven projects. Four interconnected challenges were identified: overlapping mandates causing role confusion, contradictory advice leading to farmer decision paralysis, NGO proliferation creating duplication and spatial fragmentation, and communication gaps producing information silos. Stakeholders strongly favoured structural reforms over voluntary coordination, with 82% supporting a Climate Change Act to mandate inter-agency cooperation, alongside district coordination committees (75%), formal inclusion of traditional leaders (75%), joint planning and budgeting (72%), and pooled funding mechanisms (71%). The study concludes that fragmentation in Mwenezi is structural rather than behavioural, reinforced by the absence of legal mandates. Recommendations include enacting a Climate Change Act, establishing a single district master plan, creating a district climate fund, and legally mandating traditional leader representation on district planning bodies. Further research should compare multiple districts and track the long-term impact of coordination reforms.

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Edwin Makavire

DISSERTATIONS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the foundational context for investigating stakeholder perceptions of institutional fragmentation in climate change mitigation and adaptation in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe. The chapter begins by presenting the background of the study using a funnel approach, moving from global governance challenges to regional dynamics in sub-Saharan Africa, then narrowing to Zimbabwe's policy landscape and finally to Mwenezi District's specific vulnerabilities. Following the background, the chapter articulates the statement of the problem, the study's aim, SMART objectives, and corresponding research questions. The significance of the study is then discussed, followed by the study's assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and ethical considerations. The chapter concludes with a summary that synthesises the key elements and provides a roadmap for the remainder of the dissertation.

1.2 Background of the Study

Climate change has transcended its origins as an environmental concern to become one of the most formidable governance challenges of the twenty-first century, particularly for vulnerable communities in the Global South (Biermann et al., 2022; IPCC, 2023). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2022) unequivocally states that while technical solutions for climate adaptation and mitigation are readily available, their effective implementation is consistently undermined by fragmented institutional arrangements, weak coordination mechanisms, and governance failures. This governance deficit is most acutely felt in developing nations, where institutional capacity constraints, competing sectoral priorities, and limited financial resources exacerbate the challenges of mounting effective climate responses (Adger et al., 2020; Pahl-Wostl, 2019).

Globally, the recognition that climate change demands integrated, cross-sectoral responses has been codified in international frameworks, most notably the Paris Agreement (2015) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Article 7 of the Paris Agreement explicitly calls for enhanced adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience, and reducing vulnerability, with an emphasis on coherent, coordinated action across governance levels (UNFCCC, 2015). Similarly, SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) underscore the necessity of multi-stakeholder collaboration and institutional integration (United Nations, 2015). Despite these international commitments, empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that governance fragmentation remains a persistent barrier to effective climate action,

manifesting as policy incoherence, duplicated efforts, resource competition, and missed opportunities for synergy (Jordan et al., 2018; Zelli et al., 2020).

The phenomenon of institutional fragmentation has been extensively documented in global environmental governance scholarship. Biermann et al. (2009, 2022) conceptualise fragmentation as the proliferation of distinct institutional elements, organisations, regimes, and decision-making that operate with limited coordination, often pursuing overlapping or conflicting objectives. In the climate governance domain, fragmentation manifests across multiple dimensions: vertical fragmentation refers to disconnects between international, national, sub-national, and local governance levels; horizontal fragmentation describes poor coordination among actors operating at the same level, such as government departments or non-governmental organisations (Hooghe & Marks, 2003; Zelli & van Asselt, 2013). While some scholars argue that institutional diversity can foster innovation and adaptive capacity (Ostrom, 2010; Carlisle & Gruby, 2019), the preponderance of evidence suggests that unmanaged fragmentation undermines collective action, wastes scarce resources, and disproportionately harms vulnerable populations who depend on coherent institutional support (Berkes, 2017; Pahl-Wostl, 2019).

Turning to the regional context, sub-Saharan Africa is widely recognised as one of the regions most vulnerable to climate change, owing to its heavy reliance on rain-fed agriculture, limited adaptive capacity, persistent poverty, and existing development challenges (Serdeczny et al., 2017; Niang et al., 2014). The Sixth Assessment Report of the IPCC (2022) projects that temperature increases across Africa will exceed the global average, with southern Africa facing particularly severe reductions in precipitation and increased frequency of drought events. These climatic shifts have profound implications for food security, water availability, human health, and rural livelihoods across the continent (Conway & Schipper, 2011; Adimassu et al., 2024).

In response to these challenges, many African countries have developed National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and national climate policies aligned with the Paris Agreement (Ford et al., 2015). However, a persistent "policy-practice gap" characterises climate governance across the continent: robust policy frameworks at national level frequently fail to translate into coherent, effective action at sub-national and local levels (Adimassu et al., 2024; Stringer et al., 2009). This implementation deficit is largely attributable to institutional fragmentation, including competing mandates among government agencies, inconsistent allocation of climate responsibilities across sectoral functions, absence

of clear coordination mechanisms, and limited capacity for integrated planning at district and local levels (Conway & Schipper, 2011; Pahl-Wostl, 2019). Furthermore, the proliferation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) across sub-Saharan Africa, while filling critical gaps left by resource-constrained state institutions, has in some instances exacerbated fragmentation through parallel implementation structures that bypass local government coordination mechanisms (Banks et al., 2015; Mercer, 2002).

Within this regional context, Zimbabwe presents a particularly instructive case. The country has established a comprehensive climate policy architecture, including the National Climate Policy (2017), the National Climate Change Response Strategy (2014), and an updated Nationally Determined Contribution (2021) (Government of Zimbabwe, 2014, 2017, 2021). These policy documents explicitly recognise the importance of integration, coordination, and multi-stakeholder participation for effective climate action, and they articulate the need to dismantle sectoral silos. Zimbabwe is also a signatory to the Paris Agreement and has committed to the Sustainable Development Goals, further embedding its climate commitments within international frameworks.

Despite this seemingly robust policy foundation, implementation at sub-national levels remains fragmented and uneven (Chanza & Gundu-Jakarasi, 2020; Mugandani et al., 2022). Scholars have documented persistent disconnects between national policy formulation and district-level execution, limited horizontal coordination among sectoral ministries with climate-relevant mandates (agriculture, environment, water, local government), and inadequate devolution of authority and resources to local governance structures (Chatiza, 2019; Mubaya & Mafongoya, 2017). The absence of a dedicated Climate Change Act that would mandate inter-agency cooperation and establish clear accountability mechanisms means that coordination often depends on individual goodwill rather than institutionalised processes (Chanza & Gundu-Jakarasi, 2020). Moreover, the structure of local governance in Zimbabwe, governed by the Rural District Councils Act (1988), creates a complex institutional landscape where Rural District Councils (RDCs) hold formal coordinating authority but line ministries (Agritex, Environmental Management Agency, Department of Water) retain significant control over sectoral programmes, creating tensions between horizontal coordination and vertical accountability (Chatiza, 2019).

It is within this challenging governance context that Mwenezi District, located in Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe's southeastern lowveld, emerges as a critical case for examining

institutional fragmentation in climate governance. Mwenezi falls within Zimbabwe's driest agro-ecological regions, Natural Regions IV and V, which are characterised by low and erratic rainfall (average 400-600 mm annually), frequent droughts, high temperatures, and marginal agricultural potential (Mugandani et al., 2012; Vincent & Thomas, 1960). The district's population of approximately 330,000 people (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2022) depends primarily on rain-fed agriculture and livestock rearing for their livelihoods, with limited economic diversification (Mashizha et al., 2019). Climate projections for the region indicate increased temperatures, reduced rainfall reliability, and more frequent extreme events, which will intensify existing vulnerabilities (Davis, 2011; IPCC, 2022).

Mwenezi hosts a dense concentration of institutional actors engaged in climate-related interventions, including government departments (Agritex, Environmental Management Agency, Rural District Council, Department of Civil Protection, Zimbabwe Republic Police), international NGOs (CARE International, World Food Programme, World Vision, Musasa, SCORE), and community-based organisations, alongside traditional authorities (chiefs and headmen) who retain significant influence over land allocation and natural resource management (Mubaya & Mafongoya, 2017; Munodawafa, 2021). This multiplicity of actors, operating with overlapping mandates, competing priorities, and limited coordination, creates a classic polycentric governance landscape (Ostrom, 2010) that, in the absence of effective linkages, often results in fragmentation rather than synergy. Understanding how this institutional fragmentation shapes climate mitigation and adaptation outcomes in Mwenezi is therefore both empirically important and theoretically significant, with implications for climate governance in similar semi-arid, resource-constrained settings across sub-Saharan Africa.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite the existence of comprehensive national climate policies and a diverse array of stakeholders including government agencies, non-governmental organisations, traditional authorities, and community-based organisations, climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions in Mwenezi District remain largely disjointed, uncoordinated, and suboptimal in their effectiveness, exemplifying a well-documented "policy-practice gap" where robust national strategies fail to translate into coherent local action (Adimassu et al., 2024; Chanza & Gundu-Jakarasi, 2020). This fragmentation manifests in several interrelated ways: government departments such as Agritex, the Environmental Management Agency, and the Rural District Council operate within institutional silos, governed by overlapping mandates yet lacking formal mechanisms for horizontal collaboration, leading to inefficient resource allocation

where multiple agencies target the same communities with similar but uncoordinated programmes (Cash et al., 2006; Biermann et al., 2009); contradictory interventions arise when one department's goals, such as land clearing for agriculture promoted by Agritex undermine the conservation objectives of the Environmental Management Agency, producing maladaptive outcomes that increase rather than reduce long-term vulnerability (Pahl-Wostl, 2019); community members experience confusion and fatigue from fragmented advice and inconsistent support systems, diminishing their trust in institutions and eroding their adaptive capacity over time (Nyahunda & Tirivangasi, 2019; Munodawafa, 2021); and NGOs often operate parallel coordination mechanisms that duplicate rather than enhance existing district systems, creating temporal fragmentation through short-term projects that lack sustainability once external funding ceases (Banks & Hulme, 2012). While substantial research has focused on the technical and biophysical aspects of climate change in Zimbabwe, a critical knowledge gap remains regarding how specific social, political, and institutional dynamics among local actors in Mwenezi actively obstruct the emergence of synergistic climate governance, necessitating an in-depth investigation of the mechanisms, consequences, and potential remedies for institutional fragmentation at the district level.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to critically examine how institutional fragmentation among state and non-state actors influences the coordination, implementation, and effectiveness of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

Main Research Objective

To examine stakeholder perceptions on institutional fragmentation and the transition from silos to synergy in climate change mitigation and adaptation in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe.”

Specific Research Objectives

1. To identify the key institutional actors involved in climate action in Mwenezi District.
2. To examine stakeholder perceptions on institutional fragmentation in climate change mitigation and adaptation among authorities in Mwenezi District.
3. To determine the challenges that impede inter-institutional coordination for climate change mitigation and adaptation in Mwenezi District.

4. To propose strategies that can enhance inter-institutional collaboration for climate change mitigation and adaptation in Mwenezi District.

1.6 Research Questions

1. Who are the key institutional actors involved in climate action in Mwenezi District?
2. How do stakeholders perceive institutional fragmentation on climate change mitigation and adaptation among authorities in Mwenezi District?
3. What challenges impede inter-institutional coordination for climate change mitigation and adaptation in Mwenezi District?
4. What strategies can enhance inter-institutional collaboration for climate change mitigation and adaptation in Mwenezi District?

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study bears practical, academic, and social significance that extends beyond the boundaries of Mwenezi District to inform climate governance in similar semi-arid, resource-constrained settings across sub-Saharan Africa and the Global South.

Practically, the study addresses governance realities in Mwenezi District, which falls within Zimbabwe's driest agro-ecological regions (Natural Regions IV and V), making it one of the most drought-prone and climate-vulnerable districts in the country where the adverse effects of fragmented governance are particularly pronounced (Mugandani et al., 2012; Nyahunda & Tirivangasi, 2019). This study systematically documents how institutional fragmentation manifests and identifying specific mechanisms through which it undermines climate action, the research provides evidence-based insights that can inform policy reforms, resource allocation decisions, and institutional design improvements. The study directly supports Zimbabwe's ongoing devolution agenda by generating knowledge about district-level governance challenges and opportunities, thereby contributing to more effective decentralised climate governance (Chatiza, 2019). Furthermore, the research promotes efficient allocation of limited public and donor funds by identifying areas where collaboration can reduce duplication, achieve economies of scale, and generate cost savings (Biermann et al., 2022).

Academically, while extensive scholarship has focused on climate change impacts, vulnerability assessments, and household adaptation strategies in Zimbabwe, there remains a scarcity of research examining the institutional frameworks that mediate climate governance outcomes, what Berkes (2009, 2017) terms 'institutional plumbing.' This study provides a vital

shift in focus, moving from primarily examining how farmers adapt to also understanding how institutions adapt or fail to adapt, and how their interactions shape the enabling environment for local climate action. Therefore, applying the frameworks of polycentric governance (Ostrom, 2010; Carlisle & Gruby, 2019) and institutional theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) to a rural Zimbabwean case study, the research contributes to theoretical development in climate governance scholarship, particularly regarding how path dependency, decoupling, and isomorphism operate in developing country contexts. The study also responds to calls in the literature for more fine-grained, context-sensitive empirical research on institutional fragmentation at sub-national levels (Zelli et al., 2020; Jordan et al., 2018).

Socially, the study underscores the necessity of safeguarding the livelihoods of smallholder farmers and vulnerable households in Mwenezi, who bear the brunt of both climate impacts and governance failures. Therefore, transitioning from silos to synergy and fostering better social learning, co-management, and community engagement (Berkes, 2009; Pahl-Wostl, 2019), the district can provide more coherent, consistent, and effective support to its residents, enhancing community resilience to climate shocks, reducing confusion and fatigue from fragmented interventions, and empowering local actors to participate meaningfully in climate governance decisions that affect their lives.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

This study is guided by several assumptions pertaining to participants, institutions, and methodology. Regarding participants, it is assumed that government officials, NGO representatives, traditional leaders, and community members will provide honest and transparent accounts of their experiences with institutional fragmentation, despite potential social desirability bias that might lead some respondents, particularly officials, to overstate collaboration or understate conflict (Bergen & Labonté, 2020; Creswell & Poth, 2018). It is also assumed that selected participants, particularly technical officers from EMA, Agritex, and NGOs, possess adequate expertise and institutional memory to provide informed insights on climate change policies, coordination mechanisms, and district-level governance dynamics. Regarding institutions, it is assumed that national climate policy will remain relatively stable throughout the data collection period (Government of Zimbabwe, 2017, 2021), that formal structures for inter-agency collaboration (such as the District Development Committee) exist in Mwenezi despite their current performance levels being challenged by institutional decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), and that the institutions selected for study, including

Agritex, EMA, RDC, traditional authorities, and major NGOs, are indeed critical actors in the district's polycentric climate governance system (Ostrom, 2010). Methodologically, it is assumed that the frameworks of polycentric governance and institutional theory are appropriate for explaining governance dynamics in a rural Zimbabwean context and that key concepts such as 'synergy,' 'fragmentation, mitigation and adaptation can be effectively translated and contextualised into local languages (Shona and Shangani) during data collection without significant loss of meaning (Brislin, 1970; Temple & Young, 2004).

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

The study is delimited in several respects to ensure focus, feasibility, and depth of analysis. Geographically, the study is confined to Mwenezi District in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. Although institutional fragmentation is a national concern, Mwenezi represents a particularly critical case of a semi-arid, climate-vulnerable district (Natural Regions IV and V) where the consequences of governance failure are especially severe. The research is designed for depth rather than breadth and will not compare multiple districts, adhering to a focused single-case study methodology (Yin, 2018). Thematically, the study focuses specifically on institutional fragmentation as it pertains to climate change mitigation and adaptation, examining coordination among government departments, NGOs, traditional authorities, and community-based organisations. The study does not examine other potential barriers to effective climate action such as technical capacity constraints, financial resource limitations, or household-level factors except insofar as they intersect with institutional fragmentation. Temporally, the study focuses on the contemporary period from 2020 to 2026, capturing the implementation of recent national policies (the updated NDC of 2021, the National Development Strategy 1 from 2021-2025) and the post-2023 El Niño recovery phase, which is crucial for understanding current adaptation challenges. Historical analysis of climate policy evolution is outside the study's scope, although past policies and interventions may be referenced for contextual understanding (Babbie, 2021).

1.10 Limitations of the Study

The study acknowledges several inherent limitations that may affect the interpretation and generalisability of findings. The study acknowledges several inherent methodological limitations. First, the single-case design limits statistical generalisability: findings from Mwenezi District may not apply directly to other districts in Zimbabwe or elsewhere. However, the study aims for analytical generalisation developing theoretical insights from the Mwenezi

case that can inform understanding in similar semi-arid, resource-constrained, polycentric governance contexts, rather than statistical generalisation. Third, conducting research across English, Shona, and Shangani introduces risks of meaning being lost or distorted in translation (Temple & Young, 2004). This is addressed by: using multiple expressions to convey key concepts; checking understanding during data collection; employing skilled, context-aware translators; back-translating key instruments; and explicitly considering translation challenges in analysis. Mwenezi's vast geography and poor road infrastructure may limit access to the most remote wards, potentially introducing "roadside bias" (Schell et al., 2020) whereby participants are drawn more from accessible areas, potentially overlooking unique experiences of marginalised communities. This is acknowledged in reporting, and analysis examines whether patterns differ by accessibility to assess potential bias. Sixth, fragmentation is a multi-dimensional construct that no single measure can capture fully. This study addresses this by using multiple indicators across different methods (survey, interviews, focus groups, document review).

1.12 Chapter Summary

This introductory chapter has established the foundational context for investigating how institutional fragmentation shapes collaborative climate change mitigation and adaptation in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe. The background section employed a funnel approach, demonstrating that climate governance fragmentation is a global challenge that manifests acutely in sub-Saharan Africa and Zimbabwe, with Mwenezi District representing a critical case where institutional multiplicity, climate vulnerability, and governance challenges intersect. The statement of the problem articulated the core issue: despite comprehensive national policies and diverse stakeholders, climate interventions in Mwenezi remain disjointed, producing inefficiency, contradiction, and community fatigue due to institutional fragmentation. The study's aim is to critically examine this fragmentation and develop a synergistic governance framework, with objectives focused on mapping institutional actors, assessing fragmentation dimensions, evaluating stakeholder perceptions, and examining cases of synergy and failure. The significance of the study was discussed in practical, academic, and social terms, followed by articulation of the study's assumptions, delimitations and limitations. The following chapter will focus on theoretical framework and literature review.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive and critical review of the literature relevant to understanding inter-institutional collaboration for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The chapter begins with the theoretical frameworks that guide the study polycentric governance theory followed by a conceptualisation of institutional fragmentation as it pertains to climate governance. The following sections are structured around key institutional actors involved in climate action, stakeholder perceptions of inter-institutional collaboration, challenges that impede inter-institutional coordination and strategies that can enhance inter-institutional collaboration for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Then after, the chapter presents recent relevant empirical studies and then identifies research gaps,

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Polycentric Governance Theory which is well explained in the following sections;

2.2.1 Polycentric Governance Theory

Polycentric governance theory provides the primary theoretical lens for this study. The theory developed by Elinor Ostrom and her colleagues at the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis at Indiana University. The theory conceptualises polycentricity as a governance system in which multiple, formally independent yet functionally interdependent decision-making centres interact to formulate and enforce rules within a specified policy arena (Ostrom, 2010; Carlisle & Gruby, 2019). The theory assumes that governance systems naturally involve multiple centres of authority rather than a single hierarchical structure, these centres are formally independent but exhibit significant interdependence through competitive, cooperative, and conflictual relationships and the absence of a central coordinating authority does not necessarily lead to chaos, as mutual adjustment, learning, and institutional entrepreneurship can produce coherent outcomes. The polycentric systems can foster innovation, local adaptation, and redundancy that enhance system resilience, particularly for complex problems like climate change. This means that effective polycentric governance requires both autonomy for local decision-making and linkages that enable information sharing, conflict resolution, and coordinated action across scales (Ostrom, 2010; McGinnis, 2011).

2.2.2 Relevance of polycentric governance to the study

Polycentric governance theory is highly relevant to this study for several reasons. First, Mwenezi District exemplifies a polycentric governance landscape, with multiple decision-making centres including government departments (such as, Agritex, EMA, RDC, Department of Civil Protection), non-governmental organisations (such as, CARE, SCORE, World Vision), traditional authorities (chiefs and headmen), and community-based organisations, all exercising authority over different facets of climate governance (Mubaya & Mafongoya, 2017; Munodawafa, 2021). For this study, the Polycentric theory provides analytical tools for understanding how these centres interact whether they function as an effective system with meaningful connections and coordinated action, or as a fragmented assortment of silos with limited synergy (Ostrom, 2010). Second, the theory emphasises the importance of linkages among governance centres, including both formal mechanisms (coordinating committees, memoranda of understanding, joint planning processes) and informal mechanisms (personal relationships, ad hoc consultations, shared professional networks) (Berkes, 2009; Pahl-Wostl, 2019). This focus directly informs the study's examination of stakeholder perceptions of collaboration and the challenges that impede coordination. In addition, polycentric governance highlights the necessity of nested enterprises, arrangements that connect local, district, national, and international levels (Andersson & Ostrom, 2008). This is relevant to understanding vertical coordination challenges in Mwenezi.

2.3 Conceptualising institutional fragmentation

Institutional fragmentation refers to the division of authority, responsibility, resources, and accountability among multiple, often loosely connected or uncoordinated entities operating within a governance domain (Biermann et al., 2009, 2022). In climate governance, fragmentation arises when different agencies, departments, and organisations work in isolation, leading to policy misalignments, duplicated efforts, inefficient resource allocation, and missed opportunities for synergy (Olsson et al., 2014; Zelli & van Asselt, 2013). In contrast, Jordan (2018) argues that although to some degree of institutional diversity can encourage innovation, local responsiveness, and adaptive capacity, consistent with polycentric governance theory—fragmentation becomes problematic when it inhibits coordination, creates contradictory policies, and undermines collective action (Jordan et al., 2018). Therefore, fragmentation encompasses multiple dimensions, vertical fragmentation refers to disconnects between governance levels (international, national, sub-national, local), while horizontal fragmentation describes poor coordination among actors at the same level, such as government departments

or NGOs operating within the same geographic area (Hooghe & Marks, 2003). Both forms are relevant to Mwenzi District, where national policies need to interface with local implementation amid limited inter-institutional coordination.

2.3.2 Manifestations of fragmentation in climate governance

Institutional fragmentation manifests in several observable patterns in climate governance contexts. First, policy incoherence arises when different agencies pursue conflicting objectives or use incompatible approaches. For instance, literature by Cash et al., (2006) and Pahl-Wostl, (2019) argue agricultural extension services may promote practices that increase water demand (for example irrigation expansion), while water management agencies enforce restrictions on water extraction, sending contradictory signals to farmers and undermining effective adaptation. However, literature by Munodawafa, (2021) and Banks & Hulme, (2012) argue that fragmentation results to duplication of efforts occurs when multiple organisations implement similar initiatives in the same communities without coordination, wasting scarce financial and human resources and causing confusion among beneficiaries who receive redundant training, overlapping support, and inconsistent messages. Also, Berkes (2017) knowledge that fragmentation stifles organisational learning and evidence-based policy when information, best practices, and lessons learned remain confined within organisational boundaries, hindering the accumulation and diffusion of knowledge across the governance system (Berkes, 2009, 2017). Literature by Biermann et al., (2009) and Stringer et al., (2009) resource competition emerges when agencies prioritise their own budgets, staff allocations, and territorial prerogatives over collaborative, collective impacts, leading to zero-sum dynamics where one agency's gain is perceived as another's loss, undermining trust and cooperation. According to Meyer & Rowan, (1977) accountability fragmentation occurs when overlapping mandates and unclear responsibilities mean that no single institution feels responsible for climate outcomes, enabling blame-shifting and reducing pressure for performance improvement.

2.3.3 The silo mentality as institutional pathology

According to Cilliers & Greyvenstein, (2012) the '*silo mentality*' symbolises the behavioural and cognitive manifestation of institutional fragmentation, representing an organisational orientation in which departments or units operate in isolation, focusing narrowly on their specific mandates and performance metrics rather than broader organisational or societal goals. This mentality is reinforced by organisational structures, performance management systems, and professional cultures that reward intra-departmental achievements over collaborative

efforts. In climate governance, the '*silo mentality*' is particularly damaging because climate impacts cascade across multiple sectors, drought affects agriculture, which impacts water resources, energy generation, food security, health, and livelihoods. Pahl-Wostl, (2019) argues that institutions responsible for these various climate change domains often respond in isolation, addressing symptoms in one sector while potentially exacerbating vulnerabilities in another. This fragmented response not only lacks efficiency but can be maladaptive, producing outcomes that increase long-term vulnerability even as they address immediate needs (Adger et al., 2020). However, literature by Berkes, (2009) and Cash et al., (2006) suggest that overcoming the silo mentality requires deliberate institutional design that aligns incentives with collaborative outcomes, creates spaces for cross-sectoral dialogue, and fosters shared understanding of climate risks and response options.

2.4 Typologies of climate governance actors

Climate governance at sub-national levels involves a diverse array of institutional actors, each with distinct mandates, resources, and operational logics. Scholarly literature, such as, Banks et al., (2015) and Stringer et al., (2009) identified several actor categories relevant to district-level climate action in developing country contexts. These include state actors like line ministries and their decentralised departments (agriculture, environment, water, livestock, social protection, civil protection), local government authorities (district councils, ward development committees), and statutory bodies (environmental management agencies, water authorities). Non-state actors include international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), national and local NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs), farmer cooperatives, and faith-based organisations. In line with that Mubaya & Mafongoya, (2017) identified traditional institutions which include chiefs, headmen, village heads, and traditional councils, which often retain significant authority over land allocation, natural resource management, and dispute resolution in rural African contexts. Separately, Biermann et al., (2022) private sector actors, including agribusinesses, financial institutions, and service providers, are increasingly involved in climate adaptation through value chain interventions, insurance products, and technology provision.

2.5 Stakeholder perceptions of inter-institutional collaboration.

Various literature has been reviewed on the perceptions of stakeholders with regards to institutional collaboration towards climate change.

2.5.1 Perceptions as a governance dimension

Stakeholder perceptions shape how institutions interact and collaborate. Literature by Adger et al., (2020) and Pahl-Wostl, (2019) argue that positive perceptions (trust, legitimacy, shared goals) facilitate collaboration, while negative perceptions (distrust, perceived competition, lack of accountability) reinforce fragmentation (Adger et al., 2020; Pahl-Wostl, 2019). Perceptions are not merely subjective; they reflect real experiences of coordination success or failure and influence future behaviour. In climate governance, understanding how stakeholders perceive inter-institutional collaboration is essential because these perceptions determine whether actors are willing to share information, pool resources, engage in joint planning, and commit to collective outcomes (Carlisle & Gruby, 2019). Perceptions also affect the legitimacy of governance processes: when stakeholders perceive that collaboration is fair, transparent, and effective, they are more likely to participate actively and comply with collective decisions (Ostrom, 2010).

2.5.2 Trust and legitimacy among actors

Scholars have long recognised mutual trust as essential for effective collaboration, particularly in polycentric governance systems where formal enforcement mechanisms are limited (Ostrom, 2010; Carlisle & Gruby, 2019). According to this body of literature, trust reduces transaction costs, enables information sharing, facilitates conflict resolution, and supports risk-taking in collaborative endeavours (Ostrom, 2010). Conversely, Adger et al. (2020) contend that distrust whether based on past negative experiences, perceived broken promises, or fundamental value differences inhibits collaboration and reinforces fragmentation. Within Mwenezi's climate governance landscape, multiple sources of distrust have been documented in the literature. Munodawafa (2021) found that government officials may perceive NGOs as competing for resources and influence, operating with excessive autonomy and insufficient accountability to local priorities. Conversely, Banks et al. (2015) observed that NGOs may view government as bureaucratic, slow, and corrupt, preferring to bypass state structures to achieve rapid results for their donors. Mubaya and Mafongoya (2017) further noted that communities may regard both government and NGOs as extractive, unreliable, or unaccountable, having experienced broken promises, inconsistent support, or projects that ended when funding ceased. In addition, Chanza and Gundu-Jakarasi (2020) documented that traditional authorities may feel marginalised by formal governance structures that privilege technocratic, educated, English-speaking officials over local leaders with deep community legitimacy. The literature concludes that rebuilding trust requires sustained engagement,

transparency, accountability for commitments, and demonstrable benefits from collaboration—conditions that are difficult to achieve in fragmented, resource-constrained settings (Adger et al., 2020; Munodawafa, 2021).

2.5.3 Shared understanding of climate risks

Scholars have emphasised that collaborative governance depends on stakeholders sharing a common understanding of climate risks, vulnerabilities, and appropriate response options (Pahl-Wostl, 2019; Cash et al., 2006). According to this literature, when institutions operate from divergent risk perceptions or mental models, coordination becomes difficult even with good-faith efforts (Cash et al., 2006). Research conducted in Zimbabwe has documented significant variation in climate risk understanding across institutional actors. Specifically, Chanza and Gundu-Jakarasi (2020) found that national policymakers may focus on long-term climate projections and international commitments, while district officials may prioritise immediate drought response and humanitarian needs. Similarly, Mashizha et al. (2019) observed that NGO staff may emphasise specific technical interventions aligned with donor priorities, whereas farmers themselves may interpret climate variability through lived experience and intergenerational knowledge. Berkes (2009) notes that these divergent understandings are not inherently problematic, diverse perspectives can enrich collective problem-solving but without mechanisms for dialogue, translation, and integration, they become barriers to shared action. Mashizha et al. (2022) further concluded that the absence of structured, facilitated processes for joint climate risk assessment and scenario planning in Mwenezi means that stakeholders rarely have opportunities to develop shared understanding or negotiate collective responses.

2.6.4 Commitment to joint planning and implementation

Scholars have argued that even when stakeholders recognise the need for collaboration and possess basic trust, sustained commitment to joint planning and implementation requires supportive institutional arrangements, aligned incentives, and dedicated resources (Ostrom, 2010; Carlisle & Gruby, 2019). However, research indicates that in many developing country contexts, including Zimbabwe, existing institutional arrangements create perverse incentives that undermine commitment to collaboration. For instance, Chanza and Gundu-Jakarasi (2020) found that government performance metrics typically prioritise sectoral outputs—such as hectares of land under improved management or number of farmers trained—rather than cross-cutting outcomes like district-level resilience or reduced vulnerability. Similarly, Banks et al.

(2015) observed that NGO funding agreements typically tie to project-specific deliverables and timelines, with limited flexibility for adaptive management or joint programming with other organisations. Furthermore, Pierson (2000) noted that individual career incentives reward vertical loyalty and agency-specific achievements rather than horizontal collaboration and collective impact. Stringer et al. (2009) concluded that without dedicated resources—including staff time, funding, meeting spaces, and facilitation support—for collaborative activities, joint planning becomes an unfunded mandate, representing an additional burden on already overstretched staff, which leads to sporadic engagement, low-quality participation, and eventual withdrawal from collaborative efforts.

2.6 Challenges impeding inter-institutional coordination

Despite the recognised need for collaborative climate governance, several persistent challenges impede effective inter-institutional coordination at district level. This section reviews the literature on three major challenges: overlapping mandates and role ambiguity, communication and information-sharing gaps, and resource disparities and competition.

2.6.1 Overlapping mandates and role ambiguity

Scholars have identified overlapping mandates and role ambiguity as primary coordination challenges in climate governance. Research conducted across sub-Saharan Africa consistently identifies these factors as primary drivers of institutional fragmentation (Stringer et al., 2009; Conway & Schipper, 2011; Adimassu et al., 2024). Focusing on Zimbabwe, Mugandani et al. (2022) documented how climate-related mandates are distributed across multiple ministries—Environment, Agriculture, Lands, Local Government, Water, Energy—without clear assignment of lead responsibility or mechanisms for resolving inter-ministerial conflicts. At the district level, Munodawafa (2021) observed that this fragmentation translates into situations where Agritex promotes drought-tolerant maize varieties, while the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) enforces restrictions on new land clearing, while the Rural District Council (RDC) implements its own climate resilience projects, and non-governmental organisations introduce entirely different agricultural technologies, all with limited mutual consultation or coordination. Chanza and Gundu-Jakarasi (2020) further concluded that the absence of a dedicated Climate Change Act that would mandate inter-agency cooperation and establish clear accountability mechanisms means that coordination depends on individual goodwill and informal relationships rather than institutionalised processes, making it fragile and dependent on personalities.

2.6.2 Weak communication and information-sharing gaps

Scholars such as Cash et al. (2006) and Pahl-Wostl (2019) have emphasised that effective coordination requires systematic information sharing. However, the literature indicates that fragmentation often manifests in the absence of systematic, institutionalised information-sharing protocols. In Mwenezi, Mashizha et al. (2022) found that multiple institutions collect climate-relevant data meteorological data from the Meteorological Services Department, crop yield data from Agritex, environmental compliance data from the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), vulnerability assessments from non-governmental organisations, and early warning information from the Department of Civil Protection yet these data streams are rarely integrated or shared across institutional boundaries. According to the same authors, each agency maintains its own databases, reporting formats, and information management systems, creating knowledge silos that prevent the development of shared situational awareness and evidence-based joint planning (Mashizha et al., 2022). Biermann et al. (2009) observed that communication channels, where they exist, tend to be vertical (within each agency's hierarchy) rather than horizontal (across agencies at the same level), thereby reinforcing siloed operations. Chatiza (2019) further noted that regular inter-agency forums, such as the District Development Committee (DDC), exist in principle but often function as information-sharing sessions rather than genuine collaborative decision-making platforms, with limited follow-through on coordinated action.

2.6.3 Resource disparities and competition

Scholars such as Biermann et al. (2009, 2022) have argued that resource competition is both a driver and a consequence of institutional fragmentation, creating zero-sum dynamics that undermine collaboration. In contexts of scarce public and donor funding for climate action, Stringer et al. (2009) observed that agencies compete for budget allocations, donor grants, and staff positions, incentivising each institution to claim credit for successes and distance itself from failures. According to Banks and Hulme (2012), this competition manifests in territorial behaviour: agencies guard their "turf" (geographic areas, sectors, or populations) against perceived encroachment by other actors, resist sharing information that might give competitors an advantage, and prioritise visibility and attribution over collective impact. In Mwenezi, Munodawafa (2021) found that this dynamic is evident in the proliferation of non-governmental organisations, where multiple organisations target the same wards with similar interventions (e.g., conservation agriculture training, small-livestock distributions), creating "project fatigue" among communities while leaving other wards entirely underserved.

Banks et al. (2015) further concluded that donor funding models which reward individual organisational performance rather than collective outcomes reinforce these competitive dynamics, as agencies are evaluated on their own outputs (number of farmers trained, hectares under improved practices) rather than their contribution to district-wide resilience.

2.7 Strategies to enhance inter-institutional collaboration.

There is also literature on strategies to addressing the challenges requires deliberate strategies. This section reviews the literature on strategies to enhance inter-institutional collaboration.

2.7.1 Coordination mechanisms and institutional reforms

Scholars have proposed several strategies to enhance collaboration through coordination mechanisms and institutional reforms. A recent study by Adimassu et al. (2024) suggested that establishing dedicated coordination units at district level with clear mandates and devolved budgets can provide institutional homes for collaborative planning. This resonates with Chanza and Gundu-Jakarasi (2020) who argued that enacting a Climate Change Act to mandate inter-agency cooperation and accountability would formalise coordination requirements and reduce dependence on individual goodwill. Also, Chatiza (2019) recommended strengthening existing structures such as District Development Committees with regular meetings, secretariat support, decision-making authority, and dedicated budgets, which can transform them from information-sharing forums into genuine collaborative platforms Carlisle and Gruby (2019) contended that creating formal memoranda of understanding among key actors (government departments, non-governmental organisations, and traditional authorities) can clarify roles, responsibilities, and coordination protocols. Similarly, Mugandani et al. (2022) proposed that mainstreaming climate considerations into all sectoral planning processes rather than treating climate as a standalone issue can reduce policy incoherence.

2.7.2 Communication and information-sharing platforms

Scholars have argued that shared information systems can reduce fragmentation by enabling transparent data sharing and joint situational awareness Cash et al., (2006). Pahl-Wostl (2019) recommended joint climate risk assessments and scenario planning exercises that bring stakeholders together to develop shared understanding of vulnerabilities and response options. Adimassu et al. (2024) proposed multi-stakeholder platforms for regular dialogue, such as district climate learning alliances, to facilitate cross-sectoral planning and learning. Stringer et al. (2009) suggested integrated databases accessible to all agencies, with standardised reporting formats that allow data aggregation and comparison. Berkes (2009) advocated for participatory

monitoring systems that include community feedback loops to improve accountability and ensure that local knowledge informs decision-making. Finally, Cash et al. (2006) emphasised that regular inter-agency meetings with structured agendas, action points, and follow-up mechanisms can institutionalise communication and prevent information silos.

2.7.3 Resource pooling and collaborative funding

To address resource competition and disparities, scholars have proposed several financial strategies. Research by Banks et al. (2015) suggested that pooled funding mechanisms, where multiple donors contribute to a district climate fund managed jointly by government and non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives, can reduce competition and align incentives. This agrees with Munodawafa (2021) who proposed co-financing requirements, where NGOs are required to contribute to local government coordination costs (for example, a percentage of project budgets for district coordination office support), to ensure that external resources strengthen rather than bypass local structures. Adimassu et al. (2024) argued that performance metrics which reward collective outcomes rather than individual organisational outputs can shift incentives from competition to collaboration. Chatiza (2019) recommended joint budgeting and planning processes, where all climate-relevant agencies develop a single district climate plan and budget collectively, to reduce duplication and ensure that resources are allocated to district-wide priorities rather than agency-specific projects. Also, Chanza and Gundu-Jakarasi (2020) contended that devolved budgets giving district authorities control over climate finance can enhance local ownership and flexibility.

2.7.4 Integrating Traditional Authorities and Community Participation

Scholars have proposed several strategies for integrating traditional authorities into climate governance. Mubaya and Mafongoya (2017) recommended legal reforms to mandate traditional leader representation on district planning bodies, including District Development Committees and ward planning committees. The same authors also advocated for joint capacity building for traditional leaders and government officials to foster mutual understanding and respect, integration of indigenous and scientific knowledge systems in adaptation planning through participatory knowledge co-production processes, and formal recognition of traditional natural resource management institutions in district plans (Mubaya & Mafongoya, 2017). For community participation, Nyahunda and Tirivangasi (2019) suggested establishing village climate committees as single points of coordination for all climate interventions at community level, ensuring that community representatives are included in district-level planning forums,

and creating feedback mechanisms that allow communities to report coordination failures or conflicting advice.

2.7.5 Documenting synergistic outcomes

Scholars have documented cases of successful synergy in climate governance despite the prevalence of fragmentation, providing valuable lessons for improving coordination. Berkes (2009, 2017) defined synergy as occurring when collaborative efforts among institutions result in outcomes that are greater than the sum of individual actions. In sub-Saharan African contexts, researchers have associated synergistic climate governance with several enabling conditions. Pahl-Wostl (2019) identified bridging organisations that actively facilitate communication and coordination across institutional boundaries as a key enabler. Carlisle and Gruby (2019) highlighted formal coordination mechanisms with clear mandates, dedicated resources, and accountability for collaborative outcomes. Cash et al. (2006) emphasised shared information systems that enable transparent data sharing and joint situational awareness. Berkes (2009) pointed to social learning processes that build trust, shared understanding, and adaptive capacity over time. Specific examples from the region include catchment management forums in South Africa that bring together government agencies, farmers, and civil society for integrated water resource management (Pahl-Wostl, 2019); district-level climate learning alliances in Tanzania that facilitate cross-sectoral planning and learning (Adimassu et al., 2024); and community-based natural resource management programmes in Namibia that devolve authority to local institutions while maintaining national coordination (Mubaya & Mafongoya, 2017).

2.8 Empirical Studies

This section presents seven recent empirical studies (published 2019-2024) that investigate institutional fragmentation in climate governance, providing current evidence from sub-Saharan Africa and comparable contexts.

A recent study by Adimassu, Desta, and Simane, (2024) investigated the persistent gap between national climate adaptation policies and their implementation at sub-national levels across sub-Saharan Africa. The study was conducted in six sub-Saharan African countries, namely Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. The authors employed a qualitative multi-case study design, utilising document analysis of National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and national climate policies. Document analysis was complemented by 78 key informant interviews with policymakers,

district officials, and development partners. The study revealed that while all six countries possessed comprehensive adaptation policy frameworks, implementation was consistently undermined by two forms of institutional fragmentation, vertical fragmentation (disconnects between national-level policy formulation and district/local-level execution) and horizontal fragmentation (poor coordination among sectoral ministries with climate-relevant mandates, such as agriculture, environment, water, and local government). The study identified weak coordination mechanisms, inadequate and unpredictable funding for local implementation, lack of clear accountability for adaptation outcomes, and limited technical capacity at sub-national levels as persistent barriers. The authors concluded that bridging the policy-practice gap requires dedicated coordination units at sub-national levels, devolved budgets with flexible implementation modalities, participatory monitoring systems that include community feedback loops, and legal mandates requiring inter-agency cooperation.

A study by Chanza, and Gundu-Jakarasi, (2020) aimed to decipher the governance barriers responsible for the gap between climate change policy and action in Zimbabwe, with a particular focus on understanding how institutional fragmentation manifests at different governance levels. The study was conducted in Zimbabwe, covering national-level policy institutions and three district-level case studies (one each from Masvingo, Manicaland, and Matabeleland South provinces). The authors employed a qualitative governance analysis approach, drawing on 45 semi-structured interviews with policymakers (ministries of environment, agriculture, and local government), district officials (Agritex, EMA, RDCs), NGO programme managers, and community members, supplemented by document review of national policies, district development plans, and project reports. The major findings indicated that despite Zimbabwe's relatively robust policy framework (National Climate Policy, NAP, NDC), implementation failures stem from institutional fragmentation characterised by overlapping and unclear mandates among ministries, limited coordination mechanisms (District Development Committees functioned weakly), weak local government capacity (inadequate staffing, funding, and transport), and the absence of a dedicated Climate Change Act that would mandate inter-agency cooperation and establish clear accountability. The authors documented significant decoupling between formal policy commitments and actual practice, particularly at district level, where officials reported receiving contradictory directives from different line ministries. The conclusions recommended legal reform to establish a Climate Change Act, strengthening of District Development Committees with dedicated coordination budgets, devolution of resources and authority to local authorities, and

institutionalisation of participatory planning processes that include traditional leaders and community representatives.

Mashizha, Ziervogel, and Moyo, (2022) investigated institutional barriers to climate adaptation in semi-arid Zimbabwe, specifically examining how fragmented institutional support affects household adaptive capacity. The study was conducted in Mwenezi and Chiredzi districts, both located in Zimbabwe's agro-ecological regions IV and V (semi-arid lowveld). The authors employed a mixed-methods convergent design, surveying 300 randomly selected smallholder households across 12 wards (150 per district) and conducting 25 semi-structured key informant interviews with institutional stakeholders including Agritex officers, EMA officials, RDC planners, NGO programme managers, and traditional leaders. The major findings revealed that fragmented institutional support, characterised by overlapping mandates, contradictory advice from different agencies, uncoordinated NGO interventions, and limited information sharing, significantly constrained household adaptive capacity. Farmers reported receiving conflicting messages about drought response strategies (e.g., one agency promoting conservation agriculture while another encouraged livestock destocking), experiencing "project fatigue" from multiple NGOs implementing similar short-term interventions in the same wards, and lacking access to integrated support packages that addressed their multiple livelihood constraints simultaneously. The study quantitatively demonstrated that households exposed to coordinated interventions (where multiple agencies worked together under a common framework) had significantly higher adaptive capacity scores (mean 3.8/5) compared to those in fragmented intervention areas (mean 2.1/5), but such synergy was rare, occurring in only 3 of the 12 sampled wards. The authors concluded that institutional coordination is a prerequisite for effective adaptation support and recommended the establishment of district-level climate coordination units, joint planning and budgeting across sectoral departments, and community-based monitoring of institutional performance.

In a study Munodawafa, (2021) which examined the paradoxical effects of NGO proliferation on climate governance fragmentation in rural Zimbabwe, specifically testing the hypothesis that an increasing number of NGOs may inadvertently undermine rather than strengthen local adaptive capacity. The study was conducted in Mwenezi District, Masvingo Province, over an 18-month period (2019-2020). The author employed an ethnographic research design, including participant observation (the researcher lived in the district for 12 months), 62 in-depth interviews with NGO staff (international and national), government officials (Agritex, EMA, RDC), traditional leaders, and community members, and document analysis of NGO

project proposals, reports, and district development plans. The study documented how the presence of multiple international and national NGOs (13 active organisations during the study period), while providing financial resources and technical support, paradoxically exacerbated governance fragmentation in several ways. NGOs operated parallel coordination mechanisms (their own project-specific steering committees) that duplicated rather than enhanced district government structures, NGOs maintained separate reporting systems and project cycles that did not align with district planning calendars; NGO projects created temporal fragmentation (short-term interventions lasting 1-3 years lacking sustainability plans, leading to "boom and bust" cycles of support); and NGO interventions produced spatial fragmentation (some wards receiving multiple overlapping projects while neighbouring wards remained entirely underserved). The author also documented that NGO staff often bypassed local government structures to maintain implementation speed, inadvertently weakening RDC capacity and creating dependency. The study concluded that NGO proliferation without strong local government coordination and without adherence to district development plans undermines rather than builds long-term adaptive capacity and recommended mandatory alignment of NGO projects with district plans, establishment of a district-level NGO coordination forum, and donor requirements for co-financing of local government coordination costs.

Another study Mubaya, and Mafongoya, (2017) examined the role of traditional institutions in local-level climate change adaptation in southern Africa, specifically investigating how traditional authorities contribute to natural resource management, conflict resolution, and mobilisation of collective action, and how they interact (or fail to interact) with formal governance structures. The study was conducted in Zimbabwe (Mwenezi and Chiredzi districts), Zambia (Southern Province), and Malawi (Salima District). The authors employed a comparative qualitative case study design, utilising participatory rural appraisal methods including 48 focus group discussions (16 per country, stratified by gender and age), 120 key informant interviews (40 per country) with chiefs, headmen, village heads, traditional council members, and local government officials, and participatory mapping exercises to document traditional resource governance boundaries and institutions. The major findings revealed that traditional leaders play critical roles in climate adaptation including allocating land for drought-resistant crops and dry-season grazing, resolving conflicts over water and natural resources, mobilising community labour for soil and water conservation, and disseminating indigenous early warning knowledge. However, traditional institutions were frequently marginalised in formal climate planning processes (district development committees, ward planning meetings)

which were dominated by government technocrats and NGO staff who privileged English-language, literate, and formal planning modes. The study documented cases where integrating traditional authorities into district planning (e.g., through formal representation on District Development Committees, joint land use planning exercises) enhanced adaptation outcomes, but such integration was inconsistent, dependent on individual relationships and chief-level personalities rather than institutionalised processes and was entirely absent in many study sites. The authors concluded that recognising and institutionalising the role of traditional authorities in climate governance is essential for effective adaptation, recommending legal reforms to mandate traditional leader representation on district planning bodies, joint capacity building for traditional leaders and government officials, and integration of indigenous and scientific knowledge systems in adaptation planning.

A study by Nyahunda, and Tirivangasi, (2019) investigated the challenges faced by rural communities in mitigating the effects of climate change, with a specific focus on how institutional fragmentation affects community-level experiences of climate interventions. The study was conducted in Mazungunye communal lands, located in Bikita District, Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe a context similar to Mwenezi in terms of agro-ecology (Natural Region IV/V) and socio-economic profile. The authors employed a qualitative research design, utilising 12 focus group discussions (each with 8-12 participants, stratified by gender, age, and livelihood strategy) and 20 in-depth interviews with smallholder farmers, village headmen, and local NGO field officers. The major findings revealed that fragmented institutional support, characterised by inconsistent advice from different agencies (e.g., government extension officers promoting one set of practices, NGO staff promoting different techniques), uncoordinated project timing (planting advice arriving after planting season, seed distributions delayed), and lack of follow-through after initial interventions—was a primary source of community frustration, confusion, and disempowerment. Participants reported that the proliferation of NGOs and government programmes, rather than increasing support, created confusion about which agency was responsible for what, reduced trust in all information sources (as communities learned that advice from one agency might be contradicted by another), increased transaction costs (time spent attending multiple separate meetings, completing multiple registration processes), and undermined local adaptive capacity (farmers becoming passive recipients rather than active managers). The study also documented instances of maladaptation where farmers, confused by conflicting advice, reverted to traditional practices that were themselves becoming less effective under changing climatic conditions.

The authors concluded that institutional coordination is a prerequisite for effective community-based adaptation, recommending the establishment of a single, multi-stakeholder community-level coordination mechanism (e.g., village climate committee) to harmonise messages, align project timing, and ensure accountability to communities.

Stringer, Dyer, Reed, Dougill, Twyman, and Mkwambisi, (2009) carried a study to identify local-level insights into adaptation to climate change, drought, and desertification in southern Africa, and to develop policy-relevant recommendations for improving institutional coordination. The study was conducted across five southern African countries: Botswana (Kgalagadi District), Malawi (Salima District), South Africa (Northern Cape Province), Zambia (Southern Province), and Zimbabwe (Mwenezi and Chiredzi districts). The authors employed a participatory research methodology, utilising 50 participatory workshops (10 per country) with 15-25 participants each (smallholder farmers, livestock keepers, traditional leaders), 125 semi-structured interviews with community members, and 50 key informant interviews with district officials, NGO staff, and national policymakers. The major findings identified institutional fragmentation as a primary barrier to effective adaptation across all five countries. Key documented patterns included: climate-related responsibilities scattered across multiple ministries (environment, agriculture, water, lands, local government) without clear lead coordination; sectoral policies that conflict (for instance agricultural subsidies for water-intensive crops in drought-prone areas); local government lacking both resources (budget, staff, transport) and legal authority for autonomous adaptation planning; communities receiving fragmented, inconsistent support from multiple agencies with no single point of accountability; and knowledge systems (scientific, indigenous, local experiential) operating in parallel without integration. The study also identified enabling conditions for successful coordination where it occurred: dedicated local government coordination units with devolved budgets, multi-stakeholder platforms for regular dialogue, joint training and planning exercises, and community-based monitoring systems. The authors proposed a framework for integrated adaptation planning comprising four pillars: (1) policy coordination (legal mandates, lead agency designation); (2) institutional capacity (devolved resources, staff training); (3) knowledge integration (bridging organisations, participatory research); and (4) community participation (representation, feedback mechanisms). This framework remains influential in southern African climate policy debates.

2.9 Research knowledge gaps

Previous studies have made valuable contributions to understanding institutional fragmentation in climate governance, including the identification of key actors at national and regional levels (Banks et al., 2015; Stringer et al., 2009), documentation of objective fragmentation indicators such as duplication and resource competition (Biermann et al., 2009; Munodawafa, 2021), analysis of generic challenges like overlapping mandates and communication gaps (Mashizha et al., 2022; Chanza & Gundu-Jakarasi, 2020), and recommendation for coordination mechanisms and pooled funding (Adimassu et al., 2024; Stringer et al., 2009). However, several significant gaps remain. First, there is limited systematic mapping of institutional actors at district level in Zimbabwe, with most studies treating actors generically rather than distinguishing among specific agencies such as Agritex, EMA, and RDC. Above all, existing research has paid insufficient attention to stakeholder perceptions of inter-institutional collaboration, focusing instead on objective indicators while neglecting how stakeholders themselves perceive trust, shared understanding, and commitment to joint planning. Another gap is that, although challenges such as overlapping mandates and resource competition are well documented, there is limited context-specific analysis of how these challenges interact and manifest in a single district like Mwenezi, with its unique institutional, political, and cultural context. Since some of the studies were conducted in developed counties, proposed strategies for enhancing collaboration remain generic and are not tailored to the specific constraints and opportunities of districts such as Mwenezi. The present study seeks to fill these gaps by providing a detailed, empirically grounded mapping of key institutional actors in Mwenezi District, centring stakeholder perceptions through interviews, focus groups, and surveys conducting an in-depth case study to capture local specificities of how challenges interact.

2.10 Chapter summary

This literature review has established the conceptual, empirical, and theoretical foundations for investigating stakeholder perceptions on institutional fragmentation in climate change mitigation and adaptation in Mwenezi District. The review demonstrated that institutional fragmentation is a well-documented barrier to effective climate governance globally, with particularly acute manifestations in sub-Saharan Africa and Zimbabwe, where polycentric governance systems often function as fragmented silos rather than coordinated networks. The chapter presented polycentric governance theory as complementary analytical lenses, showing how they illuminate both the potential for synergy in multi-centre systems and the mechanisms.

The chapter also reviewed literature on the typologies, mandates, and resources of climate governance actors, stakeholder perceptions as both synergistic success and fragmentation-driven maladaptation. The chapter also covered recent empirical studies providing current evidence on fragmentation dynamics, followed by identification of research gaps that this study addresses. The next chapter presents the research methodology and procedures adopted to conduct this research study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework employed for this research study. The chapter details the philosophical assumptions underpinning the study, the research design, sampling strategies and procedures. The target population is also explained, data collection instruments, data analysis procedures, and measures taken to ensure trustworthiness and ethical integrity. The chapter provides the comprehensive methodological choices made, with explicit justifications for each choice in relation to the research objectives and the specific context of research study area.

3.2 Research Philosophy

This study was anchored in a pragmatist worldview research philosophy. This research philosophy prioritises the research problem and the practical consequences of inquiry over abstract debates about the nature of reality and knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The pragmatism research philosophy is particularly well-suited to this study because the research problem, understanding and addressing institutional fragmentation in climate governance requires both deep understanding of subjective experiences (qualitative) and systematic measurement of patterns across stakeholders (quantitative). Pragmatism rejects the incompatibility thesis that quantitative and qualitative methods cannot be mixed, instead treating methods as tools suited to different facets of the research problem (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). For this study this philosophy (a) valuing both the subjective meanings stakeholders attach to fragmentation (addressed through qualitative methods) and the measurable patterns in coordination, trust, and resource allocation (addressed through quantitative methods) and (b) recognising that knowledge is provisional, context-dependent, and oriented toward practical action. This can embrace the transformative ambition of the research to generate actionable knowledge that can improve institutional coordination and climate resilience in Mwenezi. In addition, it was chosen because it is inherently future-oriented and solution-focused, concerned with producing findings that are both academically rigorous and practically relevant for policymakers, practitioners, and community members.

3.3 Research Approach and Design

The study employed a convergent mixed-methods design framed as an in-depth single-case study of Mwenezi District. According to Yin, (2018) a case study approach is appropriate when the research aim is to understand a contemporary phenomenon in its real-world context. In this

context, institutional fragmentation in Mwenezi cannot be understood in isolation from the district's specific characteristics, its agro-ecological vulnerability, institutional landscape, stakeholder's perceptions, challenges, and social structures and a case study design makes this contextualised understanding possible. Mwenezi District was selected as a critical case because the district falls within Zimbabwe's driest agro-ecological regions (Natural Regions IV and V), making it inherently vulnerable to climate shocks and the district hosts an unusually dense concentration of climate-related interventions by multiple government departments and NGOs, making coordination challenges particularly visible and accessible for study. Therefore, insights from this critical case can inform understanding of fragmentation dynamics in other semi-arid, resource-constrained settings through analytical generalisation.

Within the case study framework, the research adopted a convergent mixed-methods design. According to Creswell & Creswell, (2018) convergent mixed methods approach involved a situation in which qualitative and quantitative data are collected concurrently, analysed separately, and then merged during the interpretation stage to compare, contrast, and synthesise findings. This research was well-suited to the study objectives in which the qualitative data was collected through interviews while quantitative data was collected through questionnaire survey. Therefore, converging these two strands allowed for triangulation, where qualitative findings can be checked against quantitative patterns and vice versa, leading to a more complete, robust, and credible picture than either method could provide alone.

3.4 Study Area

The study is set in Mwenezi District, located in Masvingo Province in Zimbabwe's South-Eastern lowveld, approximately 90 kilometres south of the provincial capital, Masvingo, and sharing a southern border with South Africa along the Mwenezi River (Mugandani et al., 2012). The district falls within Zimbabwe's driest agro-ecological regions, Natural Regions IV and V, which are characterised by low and erratic rainfall (average 400-600 mm annually), frequent droughts (occurring in 3-5 years out of every decade), high temperatures (mean annual 22-24°C), and marginal agricultural potential (Vincent & Thomas, 1960; Mugandani et al., 2012). The district covers approximately 8,200 square kilometres and is divided into 18 administrative wards (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2022). The population is approximately 330,000 people, predominantly of Shangani and Shona ethnicity, with livelihoods centred on rain-fed agriculture (maize, sorghum, millet, cowpeas), livestock rearing (cattle, goats, poultry), and some small-scale trading and remittances (Mashizha et al., 2019). Climate projections for the region indicate increased temperatures (1.5-3°C by 2050), reduced rainfall reliability (10-20%

decline), and more frequent extreme events (droughts, heat-waves, occasional floods), which will intensify existing vulnerabilities (IPCC, 2022; Davis, 2011). Mwenezi was selected as the study site for its high climatic vulnerability, the dense concentration of institutional actors implementing climate-related interventions (including, Agritex, DDC, EMA, RDC, CARE International, World Food Programme, World Vision, Musasa, SCORE, and others), and its representativeness of semi-arid, communal farming contexts across southern Zimbabwe (Munodawafa, 2021).

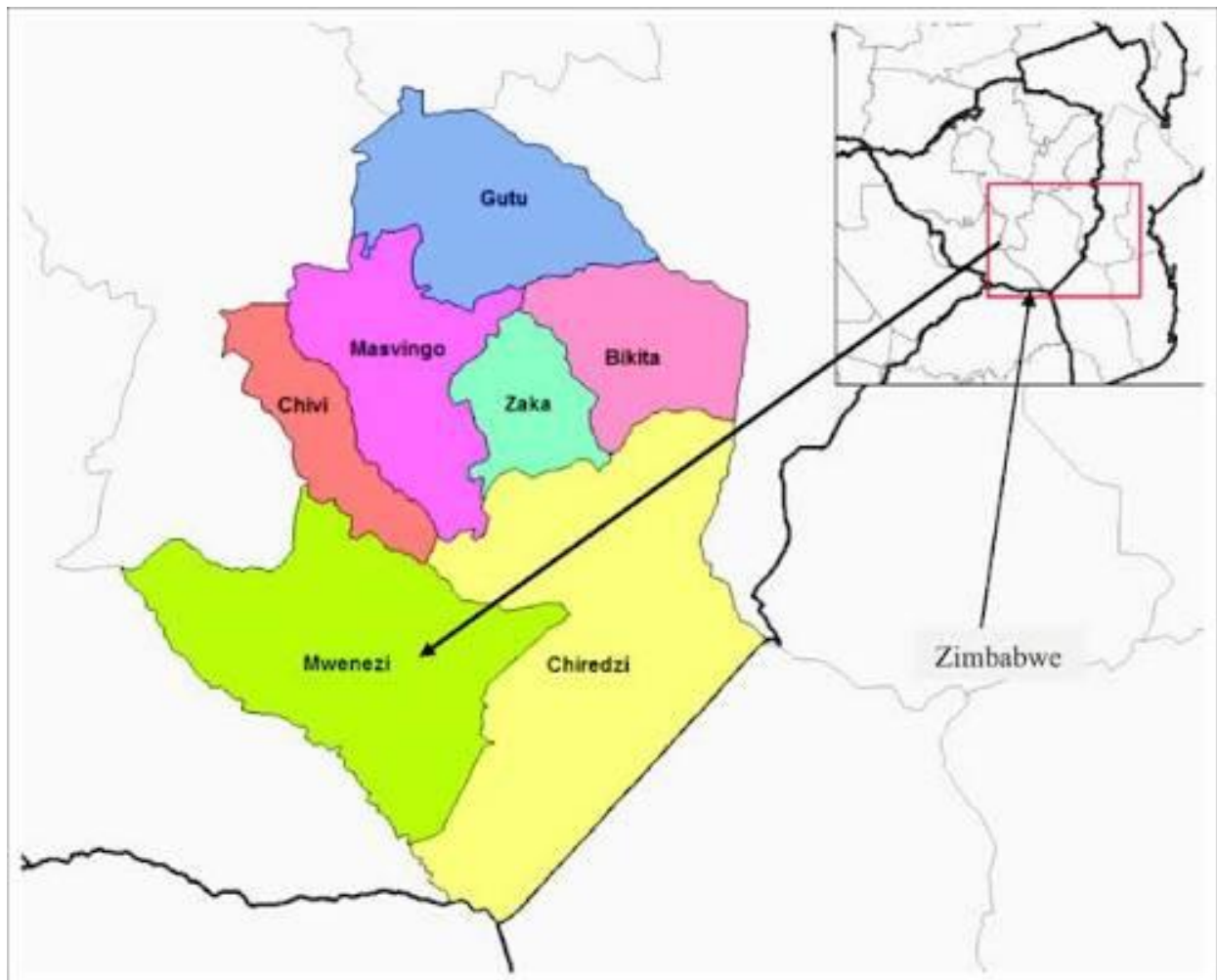


Figure 3.1: Map for Mwenezi district, Zimbabwe, extracted from Shava et al (2017).

3.5 Target Population

The target population for this study consists of all actors and stakeholders involved in or affected by climate change mitigation and adaptation activities in Mwenezi District. These comprised of four main categories, institutional actors consisting of government departments, non-governmental organisations, and traditional institutions with mandates related to climate-sensitive sectors. This could include agriculture, water, natural resources, disaster risk

reduction, social protection. Another category was community members (smallholder farmers, livestock keepers, and other livelihood groups across Mwenezi's 18 wards who are recipients of climate-related interventions and who navigate the institutional landscape in their adaptation efforts. Also, key informants consisting of individuals in strategic positions within the institutional landscape (district officials, programme managers, traditional leaders, experienced development practitioners) possessing specialised knowledge of coordination mechanisms and policy implementation; and documentary sources, such as, policy documents, plans, reports, and records produced by institutions operating in the district.

3.5.1 Sampling procedures

Given the mixed-methods design adopted for this study, multiple sampling techniques were employed. For key informant interviews, purposive sampling was used to intentionally select individuals with specific knowledge or perspectives relevant to the research questions (Palinkas et al., 2015). The purposive selection criteria included, positional authority within institutions responsible for climate-relevant functions, direct involvement in planning or implementing climate-related interventions, length of service in the district (minimum two years preferred) and willingness to participate. The target sample for key informants is 20-25 respondents, comprising, district-level government officials (Agritex, EMA, RDC, Department of Civil Protection, District Development Coordinator's Office), NGO representatives, and traditional leaders (chiefs and headmen from selected wards) and ward councillors. However, a sample of 20 key informants were selected through purposive sampling technique. This sample size is consistent with recommendations for qualitative studies of institutional phenomena, where saturation is often reached within 20-30 interviews (Guest et al., 2006).

For the household survey, stratified random sampling was employed to ensure representation across Mwenezi's 18 wards (Thompson, 2012). The district is stratified by ward, with wards further categorised based on agro-ecological conditions, proximity to the district administrative centre, and density of NGO presence to capture variation. Using Yamane's formula (1967) with a 95% confidence level and a 7% margin of error $-n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$ —where N is the estimated district household population of 33,300 (based on 2022 census data) and $e = 0.07$, the calculation yields a required sample of approximately 100 households. This sample size was considered adequate for descriptive analysis (frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations) and for detecting moderate associations among variables, while remaining feasible within the resource and time constraints Bartlett et al., (2001). The sample was distributed across wards proportionally to ward population, with adjustments to ensure inclusion of wards

with varying characteristics. Within each selected ward, villages are randomly selected from ward registers, and households within selected villages are randomly selected from village household lists. Within selected households, the household head or, in their absence, the most knowledgeable adult regarding household livelihood strategies and institutional engagement is interviewed.

For focus group discussions, using the same selected respondents for questionnaire a combination of purposive and snowball sampling was used to recruit 5-6 groups of 6-8 participants each Krueger & Casey, (2015). Focus group discussions included mostly village development committee members and local leaders help identify potential participants representing diverse livelihood strategies (crop farming, livestock keeping, casual labour, small-scale trading) and experiences with institutional support. Snowball sampling where initial participants recommend others who meet the criteria was used to reach individuals whose experiences are particularly relevant, but who might not be identified through formal community structures (Noy, 2008). Each focus group is stratified by gender (approximately 50% female, 50% male) and includes a mix of age groups and livelihood strategies to capture diverse perspectives.

3.6 Data collection instruments

Four primary data collection instruments were employed, each aligned with specific research objectives. These include key informant interview guide, questionnaire survey, focus group discussions and documents analysis.

3.6.1 Key informant interview guide

A semi-structured interview guide was used to conduct interviews with 20 purposively selected key informants. According to Kallio et al., (2016) semi-structured interviews are appropriate because they combine a guiding framework of topics with the flexibility to pursue emergent themes and probe respondents' answers, allowing for depth and nuance while ensuring consistency across interviews. The guide includes open-ended questions organised around thematic sections corresponding to the research objectives. The guide was pilot-tested with two former district officials (not included in the final sample) to refine question wording, flow, and timing. Interviews were conducted at locations convenient for participants (typically their offices or community meeting places). Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes, and are researcher collected interview scripts. Interviews with government and NGO officials

were conducted in English while interviews with traditional leaders and community members were conducted in Shona or Shangani and later translated.

3.6.2 Questionnaire survey

A structured household survey questionnaire was developed to quantify community perceptions of institutional fragmentation and its effects on household adaptive capacity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The instrument included close-ended questions measuring, including demographic and socio-economic characteristics, key institutional actors, stakeholder perceptions of inter-institutional collaboration, challenges that impede inter-institutional coordination and strategies that can enhance inter-institutional collaboration for climate change mitigation and adaptation in Mwenezi District. The questionnaire followed Likert scales from (*Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree*). The questionnaire was developed in English, translated into Shona and Shangani, and back translated to ensure conceptual equivalence (Brislin, 1970). It was pilot-tested with 10 households (not included in the final sample) to assess clarity, comprehension, and timing (approximately 20-25 minutes to complete). The final questionnaire was administered face-to-face to 100 respondents who were selected through stratified random sampling across all 18 wards of Mwenezi District. Key informants were also included in the questionnaire survey.”

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussion guide

A focus group discussion guide was developed to explore shared understandings, collective experiences, and areas of consensus or disagreement among community members regarding institutional support for climate adaptation (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The guide includes open-ended prompts and questions organised thematically, (a) community experiences with different institutions (government, NGOs, traditional leaders); (b) perceptions of how well institutions coordinate or communicate with each other; (c) instances of conflicting advice, contradictory requirements, or gaps in support; (d) community strategies for navigating fragmented institutional landscapes; and (e) suggestions for improving coordination and making support more effective. Each focus group session lasted approximately 40-60 minutes. The focus groups were facilitated by the researcher with support from a note-taker, and were audio-recorded with participants’ consent. Discussions were conducted in Shona or Shangani, with translation and transcription done later by the researcher.

3.6.4 Document review checklist

A document review checklist was developed to systematically extract information from documentary sources. Documents reviewed include, national policies (National Climate Policy 2017, National Climate Change Response Strategy 2014, Updated Nationally Determined Contribution 2021), sectoral policies (National Agriculture Policy, National Water Policy, Environmental Management Act), district-level plans (RDC development plans, ward development plans), agency-specific strategic plans and annual reports (Agritex, EMA, major NGOs); meeting minutes (District Development Committee, ward development committees) and project evaluations and reports. The checklist guided extraction of information on formal mandates and legal authorities, coordination mechanisms (formal and informal), planned versus implemented activities, documented challenges and successes in coordination and indicators of fragmentation or synergy. Document review served to triangulate interview and survey data, provide historical and policy context, and construct a timeline of climate-related interventions in the district.

3.7 Data analysis procedures

Data analysis proceeds in multifaceted streams corresponding to the quantitative and qualitative strands, followed by integration of findings Creswell & Creswell, (2018). Survey data were entered into Microsoft Excel and imported into IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27) for analysis. First, descriptive statistics were computed in which frequencies and percentages for categorical variables (such as, demographic characteristics, awareness of institutions, and experiences of conflicting advice); means, medians, and standard deviations for continuous variables and Likert-scale items (for example mean trust scores for different institutions, mean perceived coordination scores) were generated. Results are presented using tables, bar charts, and summary statistics. For qualitative data from key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and document review reflexive thematic analysis was used (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Thematic analysis is a flexible, accessible method for identifying, analysing, organising, describing, and reporting themes found within qualitative data, and is particularly appropriate for applied policy-relevant research. The analysis followed the six-phase process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021), this included, familiarisation with the data in which transcripts are read and re-read, and initial impressions documented, generating initial codes, meaningful segments of data are labelled using coding, generating initial themes, reviewing and developing themes, defining and naming themes and writing the report. Quotations from key informants were used to illustrate the key themes and findings arising from the study. Throughout analysis,

attention was paid to identifying patterns of fragmentation as experienced by different stakeholders, the perceptions towards climate action collaboration, challenges, and strategies to enhance collaboration towards climate change action in Mwenezi district.

3.8 Trustworthiness and Rigour

Ensuring the quality of findings in mixed-methods research requires attention to validity and reliability in both strands, as well as the quality of their integration (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness was established using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria. Credibility was ensured through prolonged engagement in the district, including the researcher's prior experience and extended time during fieldwork. To mitigate any potential bias arising from this familiarity, the researcher maintained a reflexive journal, engaged in regular peer debriefing with supervisors, and conducted member checking with a subset of participants to verify interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Also, triangulation across data sources (interviews, focus groups, documents, survey) and across participant categories (officials, NGO staff, community members), and peer debriefing (regular discussions with supervisors and fellow researchers). Transferability (applicability to other contexts) was supported by thick description of the study context (Mwenezi's characteristics, institutional landscape, governance arrangements), allowing readers to assess the applicability of findings to other settings. Dependability (consistency of findings) was maintained through an audit trail documenting research decisions, analytical choices, and methodological reflections, and through a reflexive journal documenting the researcher's personal reactions, potential biases, and how these were managed. Confirmability (neutrality, freedom from researcher bias) was ensured by the audit trail, reflexive journal, and by securely storing raw, anonymised data to enable verification of findings by external reviewers.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

This research adhered to the core ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Prior to data collection, various ethical principles were observed. This included, informed consent, confidentiality and protection from harm.

3.9.1 Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Each participant received a detailed information sheet (translated into Shona or Shangani as appropriate) explaining, the research purpose, potential risks (minimal, primarily time and potential discomfort discussing sensitive topics) and benefits (indirect improved understanding of coordination challenges)

confidentiality protections and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Written informed consent was documented using a consent form; for participants with limited literacy, verbal consent is audio-recorded in the presence of a witness (Mcgregor, 2023). For the household survey, completion and return of the questionnaire implies consent, with an information sheet provided at the beginning.

3.9.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity was strictly maintained. All identifying information (names, positions, organisations, locations) is removed from transcripts and replaced with participant codes (for example, KII-AGR-01 for key informant interview with Agritex official 1, FGD-WD3-02 for focus group discussion participant from ward 3). The master list linking codes to identities was stored separately in a password-protected file accessible only to the researcher. In reporting findings, care was taken to avoid identifying details that might enable recognition of specific individuals or organisations, particularly for sensitive information about coordination failures or inter-agency conflict.

3.9.3 Protection from harm

In addition, special protection was afforded to potentially vulnerable participants, including community members who may be poor, have limited education, or depend on the institutions being studied. They were clearly informed that their participation or non-participation was not affect their access to services or benefits from any organisation (Mcgregor, 2023). No incentives or payments were offered for participation, though refreshments were provided during focus group discussions, and the researcher contributed to village development committee meetings as a gesture of reciprocity.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a comprehensive methodology for this research study. The chapter explained that the study was grounded in a pragmatist philosophy that prioritises the research problem and practical consequences. The research employed a convergent mixed-methods case study design that integrated qualitative and quantitative approaches to capture both the depth and breadth of fragmentation dynamics. The study area Mwenezi District was described, with its high climatic vulnerability and dense institutional presence justifying its selection as a critical case. The chapter also discussed the sampling strategies which included purposive sampling for key informants, stratified random sampling for the household survey. The chapter also explained the data collection instruments, such as, semi-structured interview guide,

questionnaire survey, focus group discussion guide, and document review checklist were detailed, with justifications for each. Data analysis procedures include descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative data and reflexive thematic analysis for qualitative data. Trustworthiness was addressed through Lincoln and Guba's criteria (credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability). Also, ethical considerations including informed consent, confidentiality and protection of vulnerable participants. The following chapter focusses on data presentation, analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyses, and discusses the findings obtained from the questionnaire survey, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions conducted in Mwenezi District. The chapter begins by presenting the response rate then demographic characteristics of the survey respondents using tables, followed by a descriptive discussion of each characteristic supported by relevant literature. Thereafter, the chapter presents Likert-scale results, with each section providing a table of frequencies and percentages and discussion. The chapter then presents qualitative findings organised into themes derived from key informant interviews and focus group discussions. This included verbatim quotations and a discussion linking findings to literature and theory. The chapter ends with a chapter summary.

4.2 Response rate

The results for the response rate are illustrated in the figure 1 below;

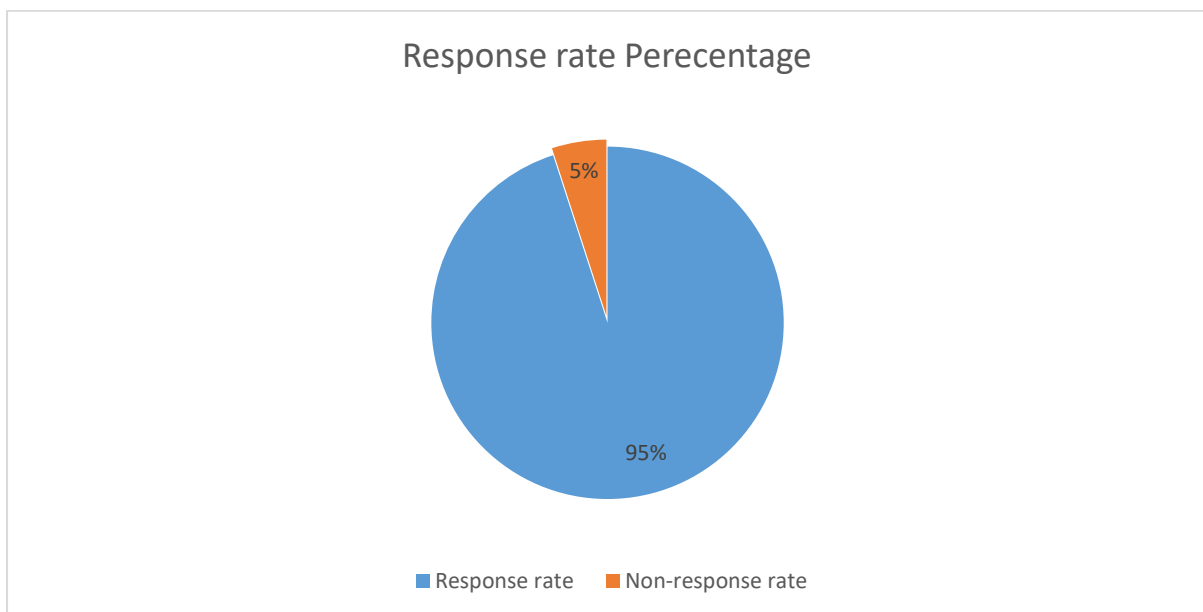


Figure 1 Response Rate

The researcher aimed to collect data from 100 respondents, and gratifyingly, the response rate reached a high of 95%. This high response rate enhances the credibility of the findings, as it minimises non-response bias and ensures that the sample remains representative of the target population (Bartlett et al., 2001).

4.3 Demographic characteristics of respondents

This section presents the demographic profile of the respondents, including, gender, age group, education level, main livelihood activity, household size, and receipt of climate-related support

in the past five years. Understanding these characteristics provides essential context for interpreting the subsequent findings on perceptions, challenges, and strategies related to inter-institutional collaboration.

4.3.1 Gender of respondents

This subsection presents the gender distribution of the survey respondents. Table 4.1 shows the frequency and percentage of male and female participants.

Table 1 Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	55	58
Female	40	42
Total	95	100

Source: Field data (2026)

Table 1 shows that male respondents (58%) outnumbered female respondents (42%). This gender distribution is typical in rural Zimbabwean household surveys, where men traditionally act as household heads and primary respondents (Mashizha et al., 2019). However, the substantial female representation (42%) is noteworthy because women in semi-arid areas like Mwenezi bear disproportionate responsibility for water collection, food preparation, and child care, making them particularly vulnerable to climate shocks (Nyahunda & Tirivangasi, 2019). The inclusion of female perspectives is therefore essential for understanding how institutional fragmentation affects different household members differently.

4.3.2 Age group of respondents

This subsection provides the age distribution of the surveyed household heads or representatives. Table 2 categorises respondents into four age groups to illustrate the age profile of the sample.

Table 2 Age group distribution of respondents

Age Group	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
18-35 years	17	18
36-50 years	32	34
51-65 years	30	32
Over 65 years	16	16

Total	95	100
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Source: Field data (2026)

Table 2 indicates that the majority of respondents (66%) were aged between 36 and 65 years, with the largest proportion (34%) in the 36-50 years category. Only 18% of respondents were below 35 years, which reflects the common pattern in rural Zimbabwe where younger people migrate to urban centres for employment, leaving middle-aged and older adults to manage agricultural livelihoods (Mashizha et al., 2022). The presence of 16% of respondents over 65 years is significant because older farmers possess intergenerational knowledge about climate variability and traditional adaptation strategies, yet they may also face mobility and health constraints that affect their ability to access institutional support (Mubaya & Mafongoya, 2017).

4.3.3 Education level of respondents

This subsection reports the highest level of formal education attained by respondents. Table 3 summarises educational attainment from no formal education to tertiary level.

Table 3 Highest level of education of respondents

Education Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
No formal education	21	22
Primary	43	45
Secondary	27	28
Tertiary	4	5
Total	95	100

Source: Field data (2026)

Table 3 reveals that 67% of respondents had either no formal education (22%) or only primary education (45%). Only 28% had secondary education, and just 5% attained tertiary education. This educational profile is typical for communal areas in Masvingo Province, where economic constraints limit access to secondary and tertiary education (Chatiza, 2019). The high proportion of respondents with limited formal education has important implications for climate governance: written information from government departments and NGOs may not be accessible to many community members, and technical advice may be misunderstood (Chanza & Gundu-Jakarasi, 2020). This underscores the need for oral communication channels and visual aids in climate extension services.

4.3.4 Main livelihood activity of respondents

This subsection describes the primary livelihood activities on which households depend for their survival. Table 4 presents the range of activities, including crop farming, livestock rearing, trading, and casual labour.

Table 4 Main livelihood activity of respondents

Livelihood Activity	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Crop farming only	27	28
Livestock rearing only	14	15
Both crop and livestock	40	42
Trading	8	8
Casual labour	5	5
Other	1	2
Total	95	100

Source: Field data (2026)

Table 4 shows that the majority of respondents (42%) engaged in both crop farming and livestock rearing, reflecting a diversified livelihood strategy that spreads risk across multiple agricultural activities. This is a common adaptation to the erratic rainfall characteristic of Natural Regions IV and V (Mashizha et al., 2019). Only 28% relied solely on crop farming, and 15% solely on livestock. The 8% engaged in trading and 5% in casual labour indicate some degree of non-farm diversification, though limited. The high dependence on rain-fed agriculture makes Mwenezi households highly vulnerable to drought, and therefore the quality of institutional support they receive is critical for their adaptive capacity (Stringer et al., 2009).

4.3.5 Household size of respondents

This subsection presents the number of persons per household among the surveyed respondents. Table 5 categorises household sizes from small (1-3 persons) to large (10+ persons).

Table 5 Household size distribution

Household Size (persons)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1-3	17	18
4-6	46	48
7-9	25	26
10+	7	8

Total	95	100
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Source: Field data (2026)

Table 5 indicates that majority 48% of households had 4-6 persons, while 26% had 7-9 persons. Larger households (10+ persons) constituted only 8%. The predominance of medium-sized households (4-9 persons) is typical for communal farming areas, where larger families provide labour for farming activities (Mashizha et al., 2022). However, larger household sizes also increase food consumption demands, making food security more precarious during drought years. Institutional fragmentation where different organisations provide uncoordinated and sometimes contradictory support can exacerbate food insecurity by confusing households about which advice to follow (Nyahunda & Tirivangasi, 2019).

4.3.6 Received climate-related support in the past five years

This subsection indicates the proportion of respondents who have received any form of climate-related support (training, inputs, or advice) in the last five years. Table 6 shows the percentage of households that have been reached by at least one organisation.

Table 6 Received climate related support

Received Support	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	74	78
No	21	22
Total	95	100

Source: Field data (2026)

Table 6 reveals that 78% of respondents had received some form of climate-related support (training, inputs, or advice) in the past five years. This high proportion confirms the dense concentration of institutional actors in Mwenezi District as found by Munodawafa (2021), who found 13 active NGOs alongside multiple government departments. The fact that three-quarters of households have been reached by at least one organisation suggests that the problem in Mwenezi is not absence of intervention but rather lack of coordination among interventions. This also corroborates with Banks, et al., (2015) who found that when NGOs, states, and Donors operate in silos, households may receive duplicated services while other needs remain unmet and become difficult to bring social change.

4.4 Key institutional actors involved in climate action in Mwenezi District.

To identify the key institutional actors, respondents were asked in the questionnaire (A8) to tick all organisations that had provided them with climate-related support (training, inputs, or advice) in the past five years. In addition, key informant interviews and focus group discussions asked participants to name the main actors working on climate change in the district. The results are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7 Key institutional actors identified by respondents (n=95, multiple responses allowed)

Institutional Actor	Frequency (n)	Percentage of Respondents (%)
Agritex (government extension)	78	82
Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)	65	68
Rural District Council (RDC)	52	55
Environmental Management Agency (EMA)	48	51
Traditional leaders (chiefs/headmen)	44	46
Department of Civil Protection	23	24
Other (e.g., community-based organisations)	15	16

Source: Field data (2026) Note: Percentages exceed 100% because respondents could select multiple actors.

Table 7 reveals that Agritex was the most frequently cited actor (82% of respondents), reflecting its frontline role in agricultural extension and its long-established presence in rural wards. This finding aligns with Mashizha et al. (2022), who noted that Agritex remains the primary government department delivering climate-relevant advice to smallholder farmers in Mwenezi. NGOs were cited by 68% of respondents, confirming the dense NGO presence documented by Munodawafa (2021), who identified 13 active international and national NGOs in the district during his 18-month ethnographic study. The Rural District Council (RDC) was mentioned by 55%, reflecting its formal coordinating mandate under the Rural District Councils Act (Government of Zimbabwe, 1988), though its actual role in climate coordination appears limited from the perceptions discussed earlier. The Environmental Management Agency (EMA) was cited by 51%, consistent with its mandate to coordinate environmental management, including climate change responses (Chanza & Gundu-Jakarasi, 2020). Notably, traditional leaders were identified by 46% of respondents, indicating that despite their

marginalisation in formal planning processes, they remain important local actors providing advice and facilitating access to land and resources.

Also, Mubaya and Mafongoya (2017) documented similar findings across southern Africa, where traditional authorities are frequently consulted by communities even when excluded from official planning. The Department of Civil Protection (24%) and other actors (16%) were less frequently cited, reflecting their more specialised or intermittent roles. The results aligns with the ideas of the polycentric governance theory (Ostrom, 2010), Mwenezi has many decision-making centres, including, government, NGOs, traditional leaders, and local authorities. However, these institutions operate as fragmented silos because they lack the institutional linkages and shared rules needed for synergy resulting in uncoordinated efforts in the same district.

4.5 Stakeholder perceptions of inter-institutional collaboration

This section presents the questionnaire results on how community members perceive collaboration among government departments, NGOs, and traditional authorities. Figure 4.2 summarises respondents' levels of agreement with five statements regarding their perceptions on inter-institutional collaboration;

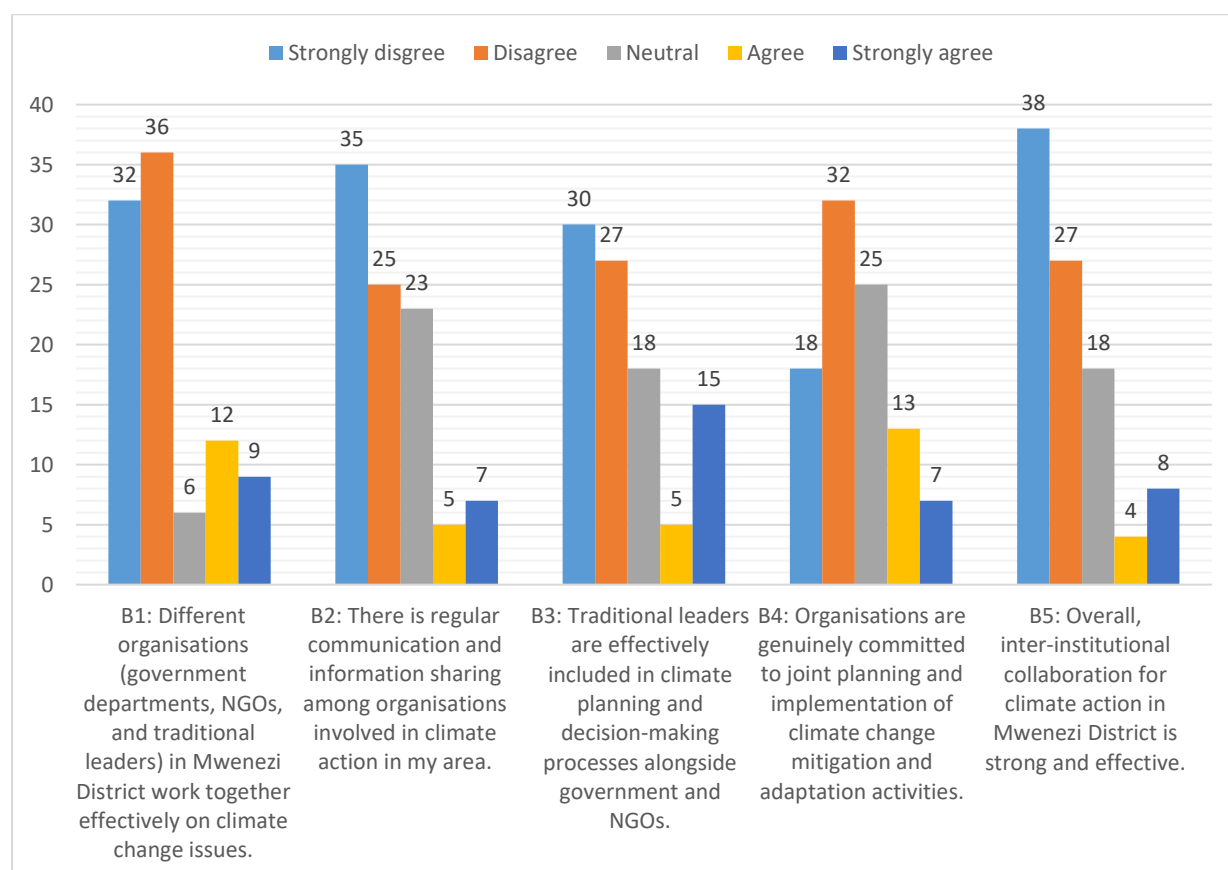


Figure 2 Stakeholders perceptions of inter-institutional collaboration in Mwenezi District

The results reveal a consistently negative perception of inter-institutional collaboration across all five statements, with disagreement levels ranging from 53% to 72%. For B1, 72% of respondents disagreed that different organisations work together effectively, while only 22% agreed, reflecting the horizontal fragmentation documented by Munodawafa (2021) in Mwenezi, where government departments and NGOs operated in parallel silos. Similarly, 63% disagreed that regular communication and information sharing exists (B2), consistent with Mashizha et al. (2022), who found that each agency maintains its own databases, creating knowledge silos. Regarding the inclusion of traditional leaders (B3), 60% disagreed, supporting Mubaya and Mafongoya (2017) who documented the systematic marginalisation of traditional authorities in formal climate planning. For B4, 53% disagreed that organisations are genuinely committed to joint planning, reflecting the perverse incentives identified by Chanza and Gundu-Jakarasi (2020), where government performance metrics prioritise sectoral outputs over cross-cutting outcomes. Also, B5 the overall assessment of collaboration received the highest disagreement (68%, with 40% strongly disagreeing), confirming that communities perceive the governance system as fundamentally fragmented. From a polycentric governance perspective (Ostrom, 2010), Mwenezi's multiple decision-making centres lack the essential linkages coordinating committees, shared information systems, and conflict resolution mechanisms required to function as a coherent system rather than isolated silos. These perceptions are not merely subjective; they reflect real governance failures that undermine community trust and adaptive capacity.

Qualitative data from key informants and focus group discussion are presented in this section as follows;

4.5.1 Perceived lack of effective collaboration

The perceptions of key informants and focus group discussion was that different organisations operate in isolation rather than as a coordinated system. This was captured in a focus group discussion:

“Agritex does its own thing. EMA does its own. NGOs come with their own projects. None of them sit together before coming to us.” (FGD-WD01-02)

This sentiment was echoed by a key informant:

“We try to coordinate, but there is no formal platform. Everyone is busy with their own targets and timelines.” (KII-NGO-02)

The sentiments above show the perception that organisations operate in isolation is not merely anecdotal; it reflects a structural failure in Mwenezi’s governance architecture. This finding directly aligns with Munodawafa (2021), who documented that government departments and NGOs functioned in parallel silos, each maintaining separate reporting systems, project cycles, and coordination mechanisms. The NGO officer’s admission that “there is no formal platform” is particularly significant because it reveals that even when individual actors are willing to collaborate, the absence of institutionalised coordination mechanisms prevents joint action. From a polycentric governance perspective (Ostrom, 2010), effective systems require linkages such as coordinating committees and shared information systems. Mwenezi lacks these linkages. The result is horizontal fragmentation (Biermann et al., 2009), where poor coordination among actors at the same level wastes resources and confuses communities.

4.5.2 Low trust in government and NGOs

It also emerged that community distrust towards both government extension officers and NGOs is widespread, though trust in government is slightly higher. A focus group participant explained:

“Government officers come once, then you don’t see them again. Their advice changes every time. How can we trust?” (FGD-WD07-03)

This agrees with what another focus group participant noted:

“NGOs promise – irrigation, goats, trainings. When the project ends, they disappear. We are left with nothing tangible and meaningful.” (FGD-WD12-04)

Findings show that low trust is a central finding with profound implications for climate adaptation. The first statement highlights two drivers of distrust toward government: inconsistent presence and changing advice. Chanza and Gundu-Jakarasi (2020) explained that district-level government departments in Zimbabwe face chronic underfunding, staff shortages, and inadequate transport, which limits their ability to maintain regular contact with remote communities. This inconsistency erodes trust because communities cannot rely on government officers as a stable source of advice. Furthermore, when advice changes without explanation often because different officers rotate through or because national directives shift communities perceive government as unreliable (Bergen & Labonté, 2020). The second quotation captures

distrust toward NGOs, which stems from the short-term, project-based nature of their funding. Banks et al. (2015) noted that NGOs are under pressure from donors to demonstrate rapid results, which leads to time-bound interventions that end when funding ceases. Communities have learned from repeated experience that NGO projects are temporary, creating what Nyahunda and Tirivangasi (2019) called “project fatigue” – a state where communities become passive recipients, sceptical of any new intervention. From an institutional theory perspective, this distrust is a form of decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Adger et al. (2020) argued that trust is a form of social capital essential for collective action; without it, even well-designed interventions face resistance or non-compliance. The low trust documented here thus directly undermines the effectiveness of both government and NGO climate programmes in Mwenezi.

4.5.3 Exclusion of traditional leaders

Another perception was that traditional leaders are systematically excluded from climate planning processes, despite their legitimacy and local knowledge. A focus group participant lamented:

“Our chief knows the land, knows the history of droughts. But no one invites him to the district planning meetings. They plan for us without us.” (FGD-WD04-01)

Similarly, a traditional leader stated:

“I have never been invited to a District Development Committee meeting. I only hear about decisions after they are made. We chiefs are treated as outsiders.” (KII-TRAD-01)

The findings show systematic exclusion of traditional leaders as one of the most striking findings of this study, with deep implications for governance legitimacy and adaptation effectiveness. Mubaya and Mafongoya (2017), in their comparative study across Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi, documented that traditional authorities play critical roles in natural resource management, conflict resolution, land allocation, and mobilising collective action for adaptation. They possess indigenous knowledge about drought patterns, water sources, and resilient crop varieties that has been accumulated over generations. As shown on the quotations, traditional leaders like village heads are routinely excluded from formal climate planning forums such as the District Development Committee. This exclusion is not accidental but reflects what Chanza and Gundu-Jakarasi (2020) described as the privileging of technocratic, literate, English-language modes of communication in formal governance structures.

Traditional leaders, who may not have formal education or English fluency, are marginalised. The consequence, as the focus group participant noted, is that “they plan for us without us” a classic violation of participatory governance principles. This exclusion not only wastes valuable local knowledge but also reduces community ownership of adaptation programmes, as communities perceive that decisions are imposed from outside. The traditional leader’s statement that he only hears about decisions after they are made indicates that even basic consultation is absent. Similarly, Mubaya and Mafongoya (2017) concluded that integrating traditional authorities into district planning enhances adaptation outcomes, but such integration requires legal mandates, not just informal invitations.

4.5.4 Absence of shared understanding of climate risks

It was also revealed that community members perceive a disconnect between how organisations understand climate risks and what farmers actually experience. A focus group participant observed:

“NGOs come with solutions for problems we don’t have. They talk about long-term projections. We need help with the drought happening now.” (FGD-WD09-02)

This was confirmed by an Agritex officer:

“Our headquarters focuses on national targets. Farmers here have different priorities. There is a mismatch. But we have no forum to align our understanding. (KII-AGR-01).

The views above show divergent risk perceptions between institutions and communities representing a fundamental barrier to effective collaboration. This resonates with Mashizha et al. (2019) who found similar patterns in Mwenezi, where farmers prioritise immediate drought response (food, water, seed) while national policies and NGO projects often focus on long-term adaptation (climate-resilient infrastructure, livelihood diversification). This divergence is not merely a communication problem it reflects different knowledge systems and temporal horizons. In Mwenezi, no such bridging mechanism exists. The absence of joint climate risk assessment processes means that each institution operates from its own mental model, producing fragmented interventions that may not address what communities identify as their most urgent needs. From a polycentric governance perspective (Ostrom, 2010), shared understanding of the problem is a prerequisite for coordinated action; without it, even well-intentioned efforts pull in different directions.

4.6 Challenges that impede inter-institutional coordination.

This section presents the questionnaire findings on the challenges that hinder effective coordination among climate actors in Mwenezi District. Figure 4.3 displays respondents' perspectives with five statements covering challenges;

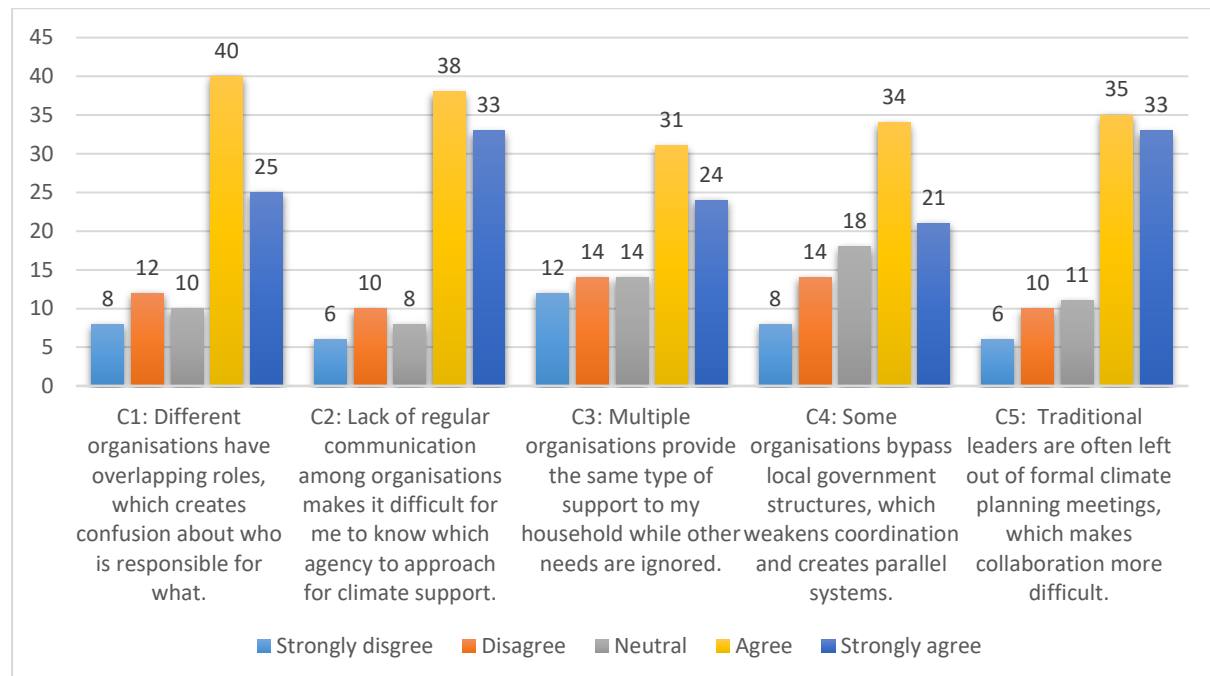


Figure 3 Challenges that impede inter-institutional coordination in Mwenezi District

The results show strong agreement across all five statements, confirming that communities perceive multiple interconnected challenges. For C1, 68% agreed that overlapping roles create confusion (42% agree, 26% strongly agree), while only 21% disagreed. This supports Mugandani et al. (2022), who documented that climate-related mandates in Zimbabwe are distributed across multiple ministries without clear lead responsibility, leading to jurisdictional ambiguity. For C2, 75% agreed that lack of regular communication makes it difficult to know which agency to approach (40% agree, 35% strongly agree), reflecting Biermann et al.'s (2009) observation that communication channels tend to be vertical rather than horizontal, leaving communities without a clear point of contact.

Regarding duplication of efforts (C3), 58% agreed that multiple organisations provide the same type of support while other needs are ignored, which aligns with Munodawafa's (2021) finding of "spatial fragmentation" and "project fatigue" in Mwenezi, where NGOs target the same wards with similar interventions. For C4, 58% agreed that some organisations bypass local government structures (36% agree, 22% strongly agree), consistent with Banks and Hulme (2012), who noted that NGOs often operate parallel systems that weaken local government

capacity. Finally, C5 received the strongest agreement: 72% agreed that traditional leaders are left out of formal climate planning meetings (37% agree, 35% strongly agree), supporting Mubaya and Mafongoya (2017), who found that traditional authorities are systematically marginalised in district planning processes. From a polycentric governance perspective (Ostrom, 2010), these challenges represent failures of essential linkages among decision-making centres role clarity, communication channels, resource coordination, and inclusive participation which together produce fragmented, ineffective climate governance.

4.6.1 Overlapping mandates and role confusion

One challenge that was commonly identified was unclear and overlapping mandates among institutions create confusion for both communities and practitioners. A focus group participant expressed frustration:

“Who is responsible for helping us with drought solutions? Agritex says crops, EMA says environment, RDC says development. We don’t know where to go to.” (FGD-WD03-04)

An RDC official confirmed this structural ambiguity:

“Our mandate overlaps with Agritex on agriculture and with EMA on natural resources. Legally, it is not clear who leads on climate. So everyone claims they are in charge.” (KII-RDC-03)

The sentiments above illustrate that one of the challenges was overlapping mandates are not merely an administrative inconvenience, they are a structural driver of fragmentation with direct consequences for service delivery. Mugandani et al. (2022) systematically documented how climate-related mandates in Zimbabwe are distributed across multiple ministries—Environment, Agriculture, Lands, Local Government, Water, Energy, without any legal instrument designating a lead coordinator. This ambiguity is replicated at district level, where Agritex, EMA, and the RDC each have legitimate but overlapping claims to climate-related functions. The RDC official’s observation that “everyone claims they are in charge” reflects what Biermann et al. (2009) termed “jurisdictional ambiguity” – a situation where multiple institutions have authority over the same issue without clear rules for coordination. The absence of a Climate Change Act (Chanza & Gundu-Jakarasi, 2020) means there is no legal mechanism to resolve mandate disputes or assign lead responsibility. Similarly, Stringer et al. (2009) further noted that, when responsibilities are unclear, communities face increased transaction

costs and may give up seeking help altogether. The questionnaire result that 70% of respondents agreed that overlapping roles cause confusion (C1) confirms that this governance failure is acutely felt at the grassroots level.

4.6.2 Contradictory advice to farmers

It also emerged that the practical consequence of fragmentation is that farmers receive conflicting recommendations, leading to decision paralysis. A farmer recounted:

“Agritex told us to plant early. An NGO told us to wait for better rains. We followed Agritex, the crop failed. We followed the NGO, the rains came late. Now we don’t know what to do.” (FGD-WD11-01)

An NGO programme manager admitted the root cause;

“We don’t know what Agritex is telling farmers. If we knew, we could align our messages. But there is no shared communication channel.” (KII-NGO-04).

Contradictory message by climate actors in the district was also one of the most tangible and harmful manifestation of institutional fragmentation for smallholder farmers. The farmer’s narrative of following Agritex’s advice (crop failure) and then following the NGO’s advice (rains came late) illustrates a no-win situation where farmers are punished for trusting either source. Mashizha et al. (2022) documented similar experiences in Mwenezi and Chiredzi, finding that contradictory messages led farmers to disengage from all advisory services, reverting to traditional practices that are becoming less effective under climate change. The NGO programme manager’s admission that “we don’t know what Agritex is telling farmers” is striking. It reveals that the absence of a shared communication channel is not just a coordination failure but a knowledge failure: each organisation is operating in an information vacuum about what others are doing. Cash et al. (2006) argued that effective adaptation requires “knowledge systems” that integrate information across sources. In Mwenezi, the lack of such integration means that contradictory advice is inevitable. Also, Pahl-Wostl (2019) further noted, is that adaptation efforts become maladaptive: instead of building resilience, they increase vulnerability by confusing and disempowering those they aim to help. The questionnaire result that 64% of respondents reported receiving contradictory advice (C2) indicates that this is not an isolated experience but a systemic pattern.

4.6.3 NGO proliferation and duplication of efforts

Another theme of challenge was the presence of multiple NGOs which leads to duplication of interventions in some wards while leaving others neglected. A community member observed:

“In our ward, three different NGOs gave the same conservation agriculture training in one year. In the next ward, no NGO has ever come. Why the imbalances?” (FGD-WD05-03)

The District Development Coordinator explained the logic behind this uneven coverage:

“NGOs choose wards that are easy to reach or where donors want visibility. They don’t coordinate with us on coverage. So some wards get everything, others get nothing.” (KII-DDC-02).

“Some donors come with funding targeting a specific ward, yet us as a district have ward rankings based on vulnerability indicators, which result in duplication of efforts in one ward” (KII-DDC-02)

The sentiments confirm that duplication and spatial fragmentation are twin consequences of NGO proliferation without coordination. The focus group participant’s experience of receiving the same training three times while a neighbouring ward receives nothing perfectly illustrates what Munodawafa (2021) termed “spatial fragmentation” uneven coverage across geographic areas. Banks and Hulme (2012) argued that NGO proliferation often leads to “project fatigue” in targeted communities, where residents become exhausted by repeated, overlapping interventions. This fatigue has several negative effects: it wastes community time (attending multiple identical trainings), it creates unrealistic expectations (as NGOs compete for beneficiaries with promises), and it fosters dependency rather than empowerment (Nyahunda & Tirivangasi, 2019). Simultaneously, neglected wards are left without any support, increasing their vulnerability. This uneven coverage violates the principle of distributive justice in adaptation governance (Adger et al., 2020). From an institutional theory perspective, the duplication pattern is reinforced by mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983): NGOs imitate each other’s successful-looking projects (e.g., conservation agriculture) because it appears legitimate and fundable, rather than conducting needs assessments to identify district priorities.

4.6.4 Communication gaps and information silos

It also emerged that agencies maintain separate databases and communication channels, preventing shared situational awareness. An EMA officer stated:

“We have our own data on environmental compliance. Agritex has crop yield data. Met Department has rainfall data. No one shares. We each report to Harare separately.” (KII-EMA-01)

This was corroborated by a community member:

“We never know when an organisation will come. They don’t tell the village head in advance. So, we miss trainings because we are in the fields.” (FGD-WD08-02).

Information silos are a classic hallmark of institutional fragmentation, and the EMA officer’s statement provides a stark illustration: each agency collects its own data and reports vertically to its headquarters, with no horizontal sharing at district level. Biermann et al. (2009) identified this vertical orientation as a key mechanism that perpetuates fragmentation, because agencies’ incentives are aligned with their own hierarchies rather than with cross-sectoral collaboration. The consequence, as Mashizha et al. (2022) documented in Mwenezi, is that no single actor has a complete picture of climate vulnerabilities, interventions, or outcomes. Each agency operates with partial information, making evidence-based joint planning impossible. The community’s experience of missing trainings because organisations do not notify the village head in advance reflects a more basic communication failure: even information about when interventions will occur is not shared through established local channels (such as village heads or community notice boards). This failure increases transaction costs for communities, who must remain constantly alert for unannounced activities. It also undermines the role of traditional leaders, who should be the first point of contact for any external organisation entering a village (Mubaya & Mafongoya, 2017). From a polycentric governance theory perspective (Ostrom, 2010), effective systems require shared information systems that enable mutual monitoring and adjustment. The absence of such systems in Mwenezi means that agencies cannot learn from each other’s successes or failures, and communities cannot plan their activities around interventions. The questionnaire result that 70% of respondents reported information not being consistently shared (C4) confirms that this is a widespread problem.

4.7 Strategies that can enhance inter-institutional collaboration.

This section presents community perspectives on potential solutions to address institutional fragmentation in climate governance. Figure 4.4 shows respondents' support for five proposed strategies;

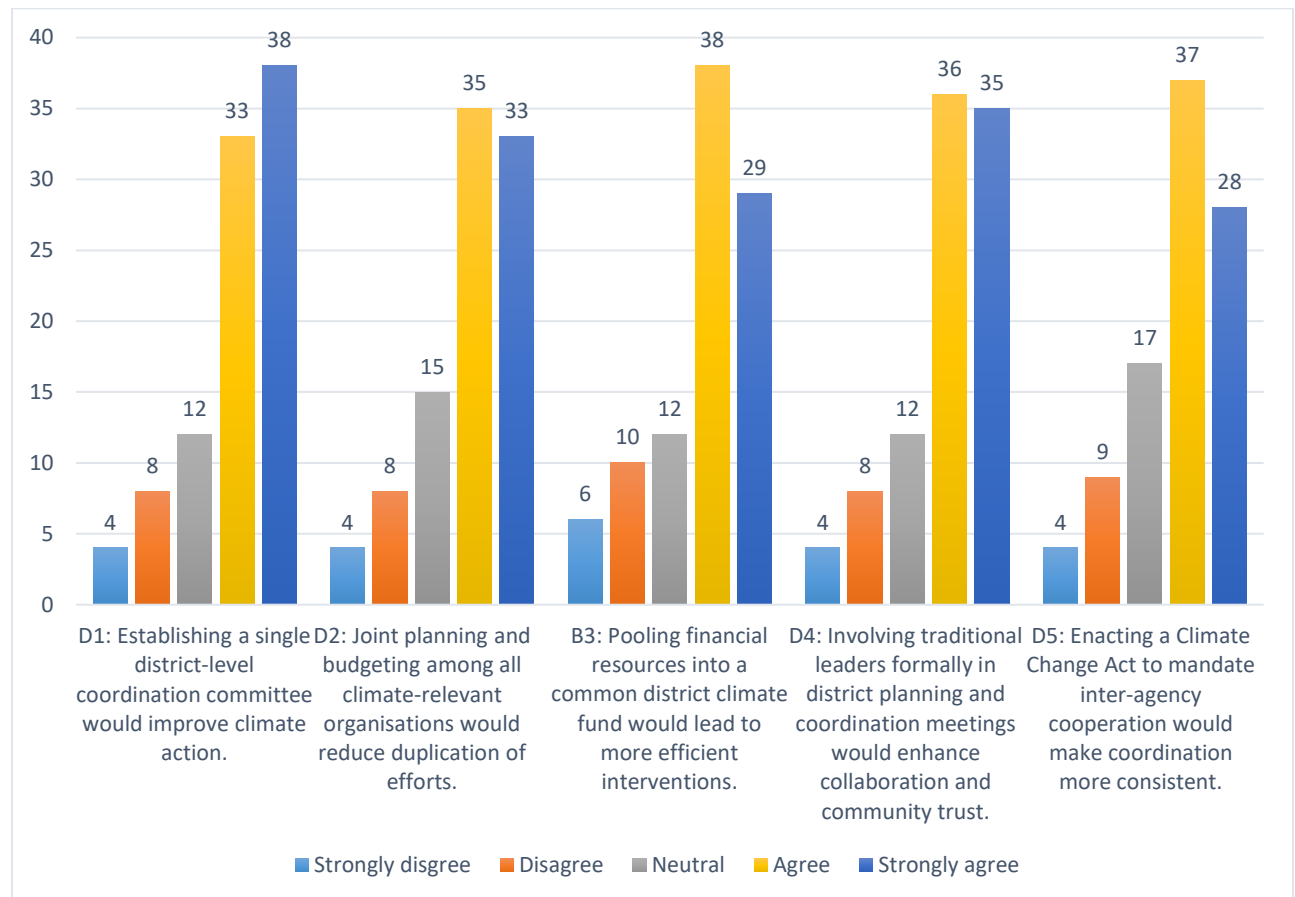


Figure 4 Strategies that can enhance inter-institutional collaboration in Mwenezi District

The results reveal overwhelmingly strong support for all proposed strategies, with agreement levels (combining “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”) ranging from 68% to 75%. For D1 (establishing a single district-level coordination committee), 75% agreed (35% agree, 40% strongly agree), aligning with Adimassu et al. (2024), who argued that dedicated coordination units with clear mandates and devolved budgets provide institutional homes for collaborative planning. Regarding D2 (joint planning and budgeting), 72% agreed (37% agree, 35% strongly agree), supporting Chatiza (2019), who recommended that all climate-relevant agencies develop a single district climate plan and budget collectively to reduce duplication. For pooling financial resources into a common district climate fund (D3), 71% agreed (40% agree, 31% strongly agree), consistent with Banks et al. (2015), who proposed pooled funding mechanisms to align incentives and reduce competition among organisations. D4 (involving traditional

leaders formally in district planning) received 75% agreement (38% agree, 37% strongly agree), reinforcing Mubaya and Mafongoya (2017), who advocated for legal reforms to mandate traditional leader representation on district planning bodies.

In addition, the statement D5 (enacting a Climate Change Act to mandate inter-agency cooperation) received 68% agreement (39% agree, 29% strongly agree), with 18% neutral, the highest neutral response, perhaps reflecting uncertainty about legal enforcement. Nevertheless, this finding strongly supports Chanza and Gundu-Jakarasi (2020), who argued that without a Climate Change Act, coordination depends on individual goodwill and informal relationships, which are fragile. From a polycentric governance perspective (Ostrom, 2010), these strategies represent the missing linkages, coordination committees, joint planning, pooled resources, inclusive governance, and legal mandates, that would enable Mwenezi's multiple decision-making centres to function as an effective polycentric system rather than fragmented silos. The consistently high support (68-75%) across all strategies indicates that communities and stakeholders recognise the inadequacy of voluntary coordination and demand structural, institutional reforms.

4.7.1 Legal mandate for coordination (Climate Change Act)

Key informants and focus group discussions suggested for the legal mandate for coordination which captures the strong demand for a legal instrument that mandates inter-agency cooperation and creates accountability for non-compliance. The following extracts from the interview with key informants;

“Voluntary coordination has failed for years. We need a Climate Change Act that says: anyone working on climate in this district must follow the master plan. No exceptions.”
(KII-DDC-03).

This was anchored by key informant who exclaimed that;

“Without a law, there are no consequences for working alone. An Act would force us to sit together, share plans, and report jointly. That would change everything.” **(KII-AGR-04).**

The above quotations suggest the need for a legal mandate for climate change actors to increase their coordination. This aligns with study by Chanza and Gundu-Jakarasi (2020) who had their analysis of Zimbabwe's climate governance and argued that the absence of a dedicated Climate Change Act means that coordination depends on individual personalities and informal

arrangements, which are fragile and inconsistent. This creates a classic collective action problem (Ostrom, 1990): individual rationality (pursuing agency-specific goals) produces collectively irrational outcomes (fragmented, ineffective climate action). This implies that the climate change act would pressure all organisations to conform to a coordinated framework through legal mandates and enforcement mechanisms. The questionnaire result that 82% of respondents supported enacting a Climate Change Act (D8) statement with the highest support for any strategy – confirms that this recommendation resonates not only with officials but also with community members, who understand that voluntary measures have failed.

4.7.2 Single district master plan and joint planning

A single, publicly accessible master plan that records past joint interventions and guides future activities to prevent duplication was suggested. The following extracts were from both focus group participant and a key informant interview;

“We want one book that shows which organisation did what, in which ward, and what still needs to be done. Then new organisations must follow that book.” (FGD-WD02-03).

Another traditional leader also had this to say;

“Joint planning means everyone sits together at the beginning of the year. They decide who does what, where, and when. No more surprise projects.” (KII-TRAD-04).

The findings above indicate that community’s demand for “one book” a single, accessible master plan directly addresses the duplication and temporal fragmentation. Currently, because there is no central record of past interventions, each new organisation starts from scratch, unaware of what has already been done in a given ward. This leads to the wasteful pattern described earlier: three NGOs providing the same training in one year. The findings resonate with Chatiza (2019) who recommended that all climate-relevant agencies develop a single district climate plan and budget collectively, precisely to reduce duplication and ensure resources are allocated to district-wide priorities. This aligns with the polycentric governance theory which emphasise joint planning sessions would function as a “linkage mechanism” that enables multiple decision-making centres to coordinate their actions. The questionnaire support for D3 (joint planning and budgeting, 78%) and D2 (shared information platform, 70%) confirms that stakeholders strongly endorse this approach.

4.7.3 Resource pooling and co-financing

It was also suggested that pooled funding mechanisms where all organisations contribute to a common district climate fund, reducing competition and aligning incentives. In an interview with RDC key informant he suggested that;

“If NGOs contributed a percentage of their budgets to a district climate fund, we could coordinate everything from one place. No more competition.” (KII-RDC-04).

This was also suggested by a focus group discussion participant who explained that;

“Instead of each NGO having its own separate project, why not put all money together? Then they would have to agree on what to do. That would stop duplication.” (FGD-WD10-02).

The above extracts show that another suggested strategy to enhance climate change integration was resource pooling and co-financing. This supports findings by Banks et al. (2015) who proposed that such pooled funding mechanisms as a way to reduce competition and align incentives. The community member’s insight that pooled funding would “force them to agree” is perceptive: shared financial accountability creates pressure for consensus. This is because without pooled funding, each organisation can pursue its own priorities without consequence; with pooled funding, they must negotiate a joint plan because resources are tied to collective decisions. This aligns with Munodawafa (2021) who recommended that co-financing requirements, where NGOs would contribute to local government coordination costs. This would ensure that external resources strengthen rather than bypass local structures. The questionnaire results support for D4 (pooled funding, 72%) and D5 (co-financing, 62%) indicates that stakeholders recognise the potential of these mechanisms. However, implementation would require overcoming donor resistance, as many donors prefer direct control over their funding.

4.7.4 Formal inclusion of traditional leaders and village climate committees

It also emerged that key informants and focus group discussions demand for structural inclusion of traditional leaders in district planning and the establishment of village-level coordination committees. In key informant interview, a traditional leader had this to say;

“We must have seats on the District Development Committee by law. Not just invited when they remember. A permanent seat for traditional leaders.” (KII-TRAD-05).

This also was supported by a focus group participant who shared that;

“Create a village or ward climate committee with our own elected members. All organisations must report to this committee first before working in our village.” (FGD-WD06-03).

The findings show that demand for formal inclusion of traditional leaders a permanent seat’ on the District Development Committee is a direct response to the exclusion. The traditional leader’s emphasis on “by law” (as opposed to informal invitation) is critical. Informal inclusion can be withdrawn at any time; legal mandates create durable rights to participation. This resonates with findings by Mubaya and Mafongoya (2017) who recommended for legal reforms to mandate traditional leader representation on district planning bodies. Such representation would bring indigenous knowledge into formal planning, increase community legitimacy and ownership of adaptation programmes, and provide a channel for downward accountability, as traditional leaders answer to their communities. The proposal for village climate committees “all organisations must report to this committee first” addresses the problem of uncoordinated entry into villages climate committee composed of elected community members would serve as a single point of contact for all organisations. This aligns with Nyahunda and Tirivangasi (2019) who recommended such local committees to harmonise messages, align project timing, and ensure accountability to communities. The questionnaire result support for D6 (involving traditional leaders, 78%) and D7 (village climate committees, 72%) confirms strong community backing. Implementation would require capacity building for committee members, as well as enforcement mechanisms to ensure organisations comply with the requirement to report first.

4.8 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the analysis and discussion of data collected from questionnaires, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions. It began with the response rate and demographic characteristics of respondents. Thereafter, the chapter presented the questionnaire results for, each followed by qualitative themes derived from interviews and focus groups. The themes included verbatim quotations and discussions linking the findings to literature and theory. The following chapter will focus on summary, conclusions and recommendations as key sections.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations. The chapter begins with a summary of the research problem, objectives, methodology, and key findings. Thereafter, conclusions are drawn for each of the four research objectives. The chapter also provided recommendations for practice, each linked to specific objectives and grounded in the empirical findings.

5.2 Summary of research findings

This study examines stakeholder perceptions on institutional fragmentation and the transition from silos to synergy in climate change mitigation and adaptation in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe. The background established that despite comprehensive national climate policies, implementation at district level remains fragmented, with multiple actors (government departments, NGOs, traditional authorities) operating in silos, leading to duplicated efforts, contradictory advice, wasted resources, and community confusion. The problem statement highlighted that while substantial research exists on technical and biophysical aspects of climate change, little attention has been paid to the institutional dynamics that obstruct synergistic governance at district level. The study's primary aim was to critically examine stakeholder perceptions on institutional fragmentation in climate change mitigation and adaptation in Mwenezi District, Zimbabwe, and to identify pathways for transitioning from silos to synergy. The study employed a convergent mixed-methods case study design, grounded in a pragmatist philosophy. Data were collected from 95 household survey respondents (95% response rate), 20 key informant interviews, and 5 focus group discussions, supplemented by document review. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, and qualitative data using reflexive thematic analysis. Key findings revealed that Agritex, NGOs, RDC, EMA, and traditional leaders are the main institutional actors, but they operate with overlapping mandates and weak coordination.

The study found that Mwenezi District hosts a dense and diverse array of institutional actors involved in climate action, including Agritex (82% of respondents), NGOs (68%), the Rural District Council (55%), the Environmental Management Agency (51%), traditional leaders (46%), and the Department of Civil Protection (24%). The presence of multiple actors with overlapping mandates creates a polycentric governance landscape. However, the mere existence of multiple centres of authority does not produce synergy; instead, the absence of

effective linkages among these actors transforms potential diversity into fragmentation. The identification of these actors provides the necessary foundation for understanding why coordination failures occur: many actors exist, but they lack institutionalised mechanisms for communication, joint planning, and accountability.

The study further revealed that stakeholder perceptions of inter-institutional collaboration in Mwenezi District are overwhelmingly negative, with 72% of respondents disagreeing that organisations work together effectively, 68% disagreeing that overall collaboration is strong, and 60% perceiving exclusion of traditional leaders. Trust in government and NGOs is low, driven by inconsistent presence (government) and short-term project cycles (NGOs). Traditional leaders, despite their legitimacy and local knowledge, are systematically marginalised from formal planning processes. There is no shared understanding of climate risks, with communities prioritising immediate drought response while organisations focus on long-term projections or donor-defined priorities. These perceptions are not merely subjective; they accurately reflect the absence of coordination mechanisms and the decoupling of formal policies from actual practices. From a polycentric governance perspective, Mwenezi's multiple decision-making centres lack the essential linkages coordinating committees, shared information systems, and conflict resolution mechanisms required to function as a coherent system.

The study further revealed interconnected challenges impede inter-institutional coordination in Mwenezi District. This includes, overlapping mandates and role ambiguity create confusion among communities and practitioners, as no legal instrument designates lead responsibility for climate action, leading each agency to claim authority without comprehensive accountability. Second, contradictory advice to farmers results from the absence of shared communication channels, causing decision paralysis and reduced adaptive capacity. Also, NGO proliferation leads to duplication of efforts in some wards (three NGOs providing the same training in one year) while leaving other wards entirely underserved (spatial fragmentation), creating project fatigue and violating distributive justice principles. In addition, communication gaps and information silos persist because each agency maintains separate databases and reports vertically to headquarters rather than horizontally sharing information at district level. These challenges are structural, not merely behavioural, and are reinforced by path dependency, decoupling, and mimetic isomorphism. The absence of a Climate Change Act means coordination depends on individual goodwill, which is fragile and unreliable.

The study further found that stakeholders strongly support structural, legally mandated reforms over voluntary coordination. The most strongly supported strategy (82% agreement) is enacting a Climate Change Act to mandate inter-agency cooperation and establish accountability for non-compliance. Other highly supported strategies include establishing a district-level coordination committee (75%), involving traditional leaders formally in district planning (75%), joint planning and budgeting (72%), pooling financial resources into a common district climate fund (71%), and creating shared information platforms (70%). The conclusion is that voluntary coordination has failed in Mwenezi because it does not overcome the structural incentives that perpetuate fragmentation. Legal mandates, a single district master plan, resource pooling, and formal inclusion of traditional leaders are necessary to create the linkages that polycentric governance theory identifies as essential for synergy. Communities and stakeholders recognise that without enforceable rules, organisations will continue to prioritise their own visibility and donor requirements over collective outcomes.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the above summary of research findings, the study reached on the following conclusions;

The study concluded that there is a large range of institutional participants engaged in climate action within Mwenezi District. Although, the presence of multiple participants operating across the same geographical area, many of whom share the same mandate, and/or have overlapping roles, creates a polycentric governance environment where authority is diffused throughout multiple stakeholders. However, just because multiple centres of authority exist in a given geographical region does not necessarily result in synergy. The absence of formal linkages, such as coordinating committees, common information systems, and collaboratively designed processes, results in fragmentation, rather than allowing for the potential diversity to develop into a coherent and synergistic service delivery system. As identified previously, many organisations operate in Mwenezi District. There is an absence of a common framework which establishes lines of communication, clarifies organisational roles, and establishes mechanisms for performance accountability between the various participants. This structural gap is the primary contributing factor to the continued presence of coordination failures in Mwenezi District even though there is availability of financial and technical resources.

The study also concluded that stakeholder perceptions of climate change integration among different organisations in Mwenezi District was almost always negative. Stakeholders also

accused organisations of having no regular means of communication together, excluding the traditional authority from formal planning processes and trust in the government was low because of its inconsistent presence and changing direction, while trust in non-governmental organisations (NGO) was eroded by the short-term limitation of funding provided to them by donors. This means that stakeholders do not have a shared understanding of the climate risks they face, with community members giving priority to immediate drought relief, while organisations are working to develop long-term projections of the impact of climate change or on top-down priorities defined by their funders. These perceptions are not simply complaints but reflect concretely the existence or absence of coordination mechanisms within Mwenezi district, as well as a decoupled relationship between formal policy and actual practice. From the perspective of a polycentric governance system, the multiple centres of decision-making in Mwenezi are lacking the fundamental linkages needed to provide a cohesive and coordinated framework: namely, coordinating committees, information sharing platforms, and conflict resolution mechanisms.

The study also concluded that various challenges hinder inter-agency cooperation in Mwenezi District. These include having overlapping mandates and unclear roles, no common channels through which to communicate messages to farmers around agriculture and climate adaptation, the majority of NGOs working in the area have created such high levels of project duplication across the various wards that some communities have multiple projects while other areas have no projects at all. These are structural barriers not only rooted in behaviours and relationships but also in the void of a legal framework such as the Climate Change Act. The implications of this situation cannot be overstated; without the Climate Change Act, there can be no accountability for coordinating failures by any one player, therefore no more voluntary measures will succeed, and therefore legal innovation is needed to create synergy.

The study also concluded that stakeholder suggestion on the passage of a Climate Change Act that would require coordination among government agencies is a starting point and provide for penalties for not complying with that requirement. This works hand in glove with other highly supported strategies such as, establishing district-level Coordination Committees, formally involving traditional leaders in district planning through rule, doing joint planning and budgeting among all agencies with climate-relevant programmes and pooling financial resources into one district climate fund are all fundamental. The research shows that in Mwenezi, the failure of voluntary coordination can be attributed to the failure of voluntary coordination to address the structural incentives that currently perpetuate fragmentation.

Therefore, the legal requirements by themselves will not create linkages that the theory of polycentric governance identifies as necessary for synergy. Communities and stakeholders have also recognised that without enforceable rules in place organisations will continue to focus on their own visibility and meeting donor requirements rather than focusing on collective outcomes.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions above, the following five recommendations are proposed, each linked to the corresponding research objective.

- The RDC and DDC should establish and maintain a public District Climate Actor Register listing all organisations, their mandates, geographic coverage, and activities, updated annually to improve transparency and reduce duplication.
- This study recommends for the institutionalisation of quarterly multi-stakeholder forums with government, NGOs, traditional leaders, and community representatives, including joint climate risk assessments. Traditional leaders must have permanent, legally mandated seats on the District Development Committee.
- Enact a Climate Change Act designating a lead district coordinator, clarifying roles, mandating information sharing, establishing penalties for non-compliance, and requiring a single district master plan that records past interventions and gaps for all actors to follow.
- There is need to create a Mwenezi District Climate Fund where all organisations contribute 5-10% of project budgets, managed jointly by RDC, DDC, and traditional leaders, to finance coordination and fill uncovered gaps.
- There is need to adopt and enforce a District Climate Coordination Protocol requiring alignment with the master plan, advance notification of village climate committees, annual joint planning, and shared reporting databases, backed by the Climate Change Act.

5.5 Suggestions for further research.

The present study investigated stakeholder's experience/perceptions of the institutional fragmentation issues relating to climate change mitigation/adaptation in Mwenezi District in Zimbabwe. Based upon the study findings, further research areas are suggested for future research. There is need for comparative studies to compare the various patterns of fragmentation between Mwenezi District and two other districts in Zimbabwe. A comparative analysis is recommended. In addition, the study also suggests future studies to focus on longitudinal studies which follow or track the implementation and outcomes of the various mechanisms of coordination (such as a climate change committee at the district level or pooled funding mechanisms) over a period of five to ten years. This should be conducted to develop the causal relationship between reforming these institutions and improving adaptive capacity. Also, the present study was a mixed-method approach, there is need for future studies to conduct pure quantitative research to assess the direct impact of inconsistent or contradictory advice from institutional actors on food security and/or livelihood outcomes at the household level may be a source of economic evidence supporting legal reform.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY FOR HOUSEHOLD-HEADS AND SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

Good day Sir/Madam. My name is Edwin Makavire, a master's student at Bindura University of Science Education. Following your consent to be part of this research, I am conducting research on how different organisations work together on climate change in Mwenezi District. Your participation is voluntary and confidential. This questionnaire will take about 20 minutes. Please answer honestly. Thank you.

Respondent Code: _____

Number: _____ **Date:** _____

Section A: Demographic Characteristics

Please tick (✓) or fill in the appropriate response.

A1 Gender of respondent Male ☐ Female ☐

A2 Age group 18-35 ☐ 36-50 ☐ 51-65 ☐ Over 65 ☐

A3 Highest level of education No formal ☐ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ Tertiary ☐

A4 Main livelihood activity

☐ Crop farming

☐ Livestock rearing

☐ Both Crop farming and Livestock rearing

☐ Trading

☐ Casual labour

☐ Other ☐

A5 Household size (number of people) 1-3 ☐ 4-6 ☐ 7-9 ☐ 10+ ☐

A6 Have you received any climate-related support (training, inputs, advice) in the past 5 years? Yes ☐ No ☐

A7 If yes, which organisations provided support? (*tick all that apply*)

Agritex ☐

EMA ☐

RDC ☐

NGO ☐

Traditional leader ☐

Other ☐

Section B: Perceptions of inter-institutional collaboration, in Mwenezi District.

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly Agree

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly disagree
B1: Different organisations (government departments, NGOs, and traditional leaders) in Mwenezi District work together effectively on climate change issues.					
B2: There is regular communication and information sharing among organisations involved in climate action in my area.					
B3: Traditional leaders are effectively included in climate planning and decision-making processes alongside government and NGOs.					
B4: Organisations are genuinely committed to joint planning and implementation of climate change mitigation and adaptation activities.					
B5: Overall, inter-institutional collaboration for climate action in Mwenezi District is strong and effective.					

Section C: Challenges impeding inter-institutional coordination in Mwenezi District.

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
C1: Different organisations have overlapping roles, which creates confusion about who is responsible for what.					
C2: Lack of regular communication among organisations makes it difficult for me to know which agency to approach for climate support.					
C3: Multiple organisations provide the same type of support to my household while other needs are ignored.					
C4: Some organisations bypass local government structures, which weakens coordination and creates parallel systems.					
C5: Traditional leaders are often left out of formal climate planning meetings, which makes collaboration more difficult.					

Section D: Strategies to enhance inter-institutional collaboration in Mwenezi District.

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Neutral (N), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
D1: Establishing a single district-level coordination committee with representatives would improve climate action.					
D2: Joint planning and budgeting among all climate-relevant organisations would reduce duplication of efforts.					
B3: Pooling financial resources from government, NGOs, and donors into a common district climate fund would lead to more efficient interventions.					
D4: Involving traditional leaders formally in district planning and coordination meetings would enhance collaboration and community trust.					
D5: Enacting a Climate Change Act to mandate inter-agency cooperation would make coordination more consistent and less dependent on individual goodwill.					

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX B: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Code: _____

Organisation: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate. The questions cover institutional actors, your perceptions of climate change integration, challenges, and potential strategies. Your insights are very valuable. The interview will take approximately 45–60 minutes. All responses will be treated confidentially.

Interview Questions

1. Which government departments, non-governmental organisations, traditional authorities, and other actors are currently involved in climate change mitigation and adaptation activities in Mwenezi District? Please describe their respective mandates and the resources they contribute.
.....
2. How would you describe the current level of collaboration among government departments, NGOs, and traditional authorities on climate change issues in Mwenezi District? What works well and what does not?
.....
3. To what extent do you trust other institutions to deliver on their climate-related commitments? What factors influence this trust or distrust?
.....
4. Do you feel that different institutions share a common understanding of the main climate risks facing Mwenezi District? Why or why not? How does this affect collaboration?
.....
5. From your experience, what are the main challenges that prevent government departments, NGOs, and traditional authorities from working together effectively on climate change mitigation and adaptation? Please provide specific examples.
.....
6. How do overlapping mandates, gaps in communication and information sharing, or competition for limited resources affect your organisation's ability to collaborate effectively on climate action?
7. What practical measures or institutional reforms could be introduced to improve coordination, clarify roles, and reduce mandate overlaps among government departments, NGOs, and traditional authorities in Mwenezi?

-
-
8. What communication mechanisms, financial arrangements, or governance changes would most effectively enhance collaboration for climate action in the district?
-

APPENDIX C: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Group Code: _____

Ward Number: _____

Number of Participants: _____

Date: _____

Introduction

Thank you for coming. We want to understand how different organisations (government, NGOs, traditional leaders) help you cope with drought and other climate problems. From this discussion we also want to know what challenges you face when dealing with these organisations and how they could work better together. There are no right or wrong answers. The discussion will take about 60 minutes. Everything you say will be kept confidential.

Focus Group Questions

1. Which organisations or people have provided you with support or advice related to farming, drought, or climate change in the past few years? What kind of support did each provide?
2. In your experience, do these different organisations work together well, or do they work separately? Can you give examples of times when you saw them cooperating or not cooperating?
3. Have you ever received conflicting advice or contradictory instructions from different organisations? Have you experienced situations where multiple organisations offered the same type of help while other needs were ignored? Please describe.
4. What problems have you faced because organisations do not communicate well with each other? For example, do you find it difficult to know which organisation to approach for certain problems? Do you feel that some organisations compete rather than collaborate?
5. What do you think could be done to make different organisations work together more effectively? How would you like to see them coordinate, share information, or involve traditional leaders and community members in planning climate programmes?