

**Economic Policy Reforms and
Meso-Scale Rural Market
Changes in Zimbabwe
The Case of Shamva District**



**Edited by
LOUIS MASUKO**

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Chapter 10

STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT, AGRICULTURE AND THE ROLE OF FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS IN ZIMBABWE: A MESO-SCALE STUDY OF THE SHAMVA DISTRICT

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PART ONE: BACKGROUND

Section One: Introduction

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In mid-1990, the Zimbabwe Government announced its intention to inaugurate an economic reform programme, the so-called Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) which was to begin with some liberalisation measures in October of the same year. The detailed programme was to start in 1991 and run in phases, the first phase being from 1991-95. At the end of the first phase, it became prudent to assess the impact of the programme on the various sectors of the economy and society. This study looks at the impact on Agriculture but more specifically, on the role of farmers' organisations. The focus is on the Shamva District in the Mashonaland Central Province.

1.1 THE IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE

1.1.1. The Place of Agriculture in the Zimbabwean Economy

Although Zimbabwe is acknowledged to have a strong and diversified manufacturing sector which contributes up to 25% of GDP, agriculture remains a major foreign exchange earner and a leader in employment. "Not only is it the largest employer of labour, it is still arguably the 'engine of growth' in the economy, as any comparison of GDP and agricultural growth rates will show" (ILO, 1993, 45). Tables 1(a) to (c) indicate the significance of agriculture in the national economy.

Table 1(a) indicates that agriculture is only second to manufacturing in contribution to GDP. It plays a leading role in export generation, employment creation and food production. Agriculture's role in providing both wage and self-employment is critical. Twenty-five percent of the formal wage labour sector is in agriculture's large-scale commercial farms (LSCFs). These workers have over 1.5 million family members who depend on them (ILO, *op. cit.* 46).

Table 1(a): Role of agriculture in the Zimbabwean economy, c. 1990 (compared with that of manufacturing) (Percentages)

	Agriculture	Manufacturing
Incomes		
Sectoral GDP/total GDP	22.1	30.1
Sectoral exports/total exports	30.0	33.0
Employment		
Share in wage employment	24.3	16.5
Share in wage bill	7.6	22.4
Communal farm households/total households	53.0	
Small-scale commercial plus resettled households/ total households	3.7	
Commercial farm wage earner households/total households	15.0	
Food security		
Calories per capital total requirement	120.0	
Manufacturing linkage		
Percentage of industrial inputs from agriculture	55.0	

Notes: Communal farm households estimated at one million in 1990, small-scale commercial and resettled households at 70,000, and national total at 1.9 million households.

Wage earners in the commercial sector totalled 290,000 in 1990. They are assumed to support an equal number of households, or some 1.5 million people altogether (including themselves).

Calories per capita per day in normal years = 2,600; requirement 2,200.

Source: ILO 1993 p. 47.

The major form of employment in Zimbabwe's rural areas is self-employment. The official statistics always miss this out, thus under-estimating the contribution of agriculture:

When self-employed people have been properly accounted for, altogether some 70% of the population, households or labour force are employed in the agricultural sector, making it the clear-cut leader in terms of employment generation (*Ibid.*).

The sector is also a source of over 50% of the inputs used in the industrial sector. As the saying goes: "When agriculture sneezes, everybody catches a cold in Zimbabwe". This depicts accurately the pivotal role of agriculture in Zimbabwe's total economy.

Table 1(b) Employment (in 000s) and Employment Elasticity in Major Economic Sectors, 1980-1990

Sector	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	Elasticity 1980-90	r ² (n=0)
1. Agriculture, forestry and fishing	327.0	294.3	274.3	263.5	271.2	276.4	275.5	277.0	284.6	290.0	290.0	0.00	0.1
2. Mining and quarrying	66.2	68.2	63.7	60.4	54.5	54.3	54.9	56.7	57.7	55.7	51.4	-1.90*	0.52
3. Manufacturing	159.4	173.2	180.5	173.4	166.3	169.6	176.9	177.4	187.3	195.3	197.1	0.56*	0.86
4. Electricity and water	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.9	7.3	7.7	8.2	8.2	8.6	8.8	8.7	0.32*	0.86
5. Construction	42.2	47.1	51.1	49.4	45.3	44.8	47.4	49.6	58.6	66.6	75.8	-0.45	0.25
6. Finance, insurance and real estate	12.5	13.8	14.6	15.8	15.7	15.3	15.4	16.3	17.2	17.1	17.6	0.88*	0.74
7. Distribution, restaurants and hotels	70.3	75.0	79.8	80.6	80.2	78.3	81.2	83.6	87.3	91.9	96.0	0.40	0.12
8. Transportation and communication	45.6	49.1	50.4	49.4	50.1	50.0	50.7	50.7	51.1	51.9	53.3	0.54*	0.76
9. Public administration	71.1	83.2	81.3	82.5	88.9	90.8	90.8	93.5	92.4	93.5	93.4	0.70*	0.88
10. Education	41.9	59.1	71.8	78.0	83.8	89.2	95.7	98.8	100.4	104.2	108.1	1.05*	0.99
11. Health	15.2	16.3	18.9	19.9	19.9	19.9	21.8	22.0	22.8	23.6	25.0	1.00*	0.98
12. Private domestic services	108.0	104.6	101.4	99.8	98.0	98.6	100.1	101.0	102.0	102.4	102.1	0.98	0.96
13. Other services	43.8	47.3	51.7	54.7	55.2	57.6	62.5	61.7	68.8	71.2	73.7	0.99*	0.99
Total formal employment	1 009.9	1 037.8	1 046.0	1 033.4	1 036.4	1 052.5	1 081.1	1 085.1	1 131.2	1 166.7	1 192.2		
Total non-agricultural formal employment	682.9	743.5	771.7	769.9	765.2	776.1	805.6	819.5	854.2	882.1	902.2		

*Significant at 5 per cent confidence interval

Source: ILO, 1993 p. 27.

1.1.2 The Place of Agriculture in Shamva

The predominant activity in the district under study is agriculture. Three main systems of farming are found in Shamva and these are smallholder communal area (CA) farming, large-scale commercial farming (LSCF) and resettlement models A and B. The CA system is the most predominant and is the major focus of this part of the study although resettlement and LSCF farming systems were also looked at. For a more detailed exposition of the place of agriculture in Shamva, see the contribution by Arnaiz in this project. Suffice it to say here that mining is also a strong economic activity in Shamva with mainstream gold mines such as Shamva Mine and Madziwa Mine located in the area with a plethora of small-scale mining claims and gold panning activities.

1.2 FORMAL STRUCTURE OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

1.2.1 The Ecological Profile

Before outlining the formal structure of the agricultural sector, it is important to give an outline of the ecological profile of Zimbabwe at the outset. With an area of about 390 000sq. km, Zimbabwe is dominated in its central areas by a plateau which in the Eastern part has elevations rising about 1800m above sea level. As the plateau declines only gradually, about a quarter of the country is above 1200m. The plateau is characterised by relatively high altitude (the highveld) which has the richest agricultural endowment in the country.

The agricultural potential of soil varies considerably, but soils with good fertility and moisture retention qualities have their higher proportions on the highveld (the plateau).

Most of the rain is convective in origin and there is a strong correlation between precipitation quantity and elevation (though the northern and eastern sections of the highveld get more rain than regions of comparable elevation in the south and west). Rainfall declines sharply on both sides of the plateau, but the country's rainfall exhibits a high degree of local and spatial variation.

This tendency towards variability is most marked in the regions where annual precipitation is relatively low. Since the lower elevations also experience higher average temperatures and evapotranspiration, the risks associated with dryland cropping increase rapidly in the middle and lowveld. Despite significant local variations in the quality of soils, rainfall is the primary limiting factor for agricultural production and the principal basis for agro-ecological zoning in the country (Stoneman 1988, 64).

Natural Region I covers the Eastern Highlands and receives rainfall above 900 mm p.a., some of its areas getting over 1500 mm. p a. High elevations and low temperatures allow this rainfall to have good impact on agriculture, making the area suitable to tea, coffee, fruit and forest crops and to intensive livestock production. Only 1.8 per cent of the country's total land area falls into this Natural Region (Stoneman *op. cit.* 65-66).

Natural Region II, accounting for 15 percent of total land area, is suitable for primary intensive farming. Occurring in the highveld around Harare, it has a summer rainfall ranging from 750-1000 mm. It is suitable for growing maize, tobacco, cotton, wheat and other grains and is suitable for intensive livestock production (*ibid.*). This Region is also usually divided into two, viz, Natural Region II a and II b. National Region II b is really bordering on Natural Region III but is slightly better endowed than the latter.

Natural Region III, accounting for 18.7 percent of total land area is suitable for semi-intensive crop and livestock production. Average annual precipitation declines in this zone to 650-800 mm. Rainfall intensity and variability increase. High summer temperatures mean water requirements are greater and the effectiveness of the rain which does fall on agricultural activity is reduced. "Hence, cropping in this region tends to be unreliable, particularly for maize which needs substantial moisture at specific periods of plant development" (*ibid.*).

Natural Region IV receives 450-650 mm average rainfall per year. The most suitable cropping regime is of drought-resistant varieties. Semi-intensive livestock production may also be undertaken with this cropping regime. Mid-season dry spells which are frequent in this region make dryland cropping risky business indeed.

Natural Region V is composed of mainly the hot and dry lowveld of the Zambezi and Sabi-Limpopo River basins. The rainfall is slight and erratic, making the region suitable only for extensive livestock production where there is no irrigation. This region, together with IV above account for 64.5 percent of the total national land area.

Clearly, only 16.8 percent of the country's land area is in the zones which can support intensive rain-fed crop and livestock production. Conditions in over half of Zimbabwe are inadequate for the above and are only suitable for livestock and game rearing.

This uneven spatial distribution in agricultural potential has played an important role in the historical evolution of Zimbabwe's agrarian structure. Through its control over access to land and agricultural institutions, the settler colonial state helped shape distinct farming systems. White settler agricultural areas (now called Large-Scale Commercial Farms) and black Tribal Trust Lands (now called Communal Areas) formed the major farming systems. A small group of African farmers were given freehold title or incorporated on state farms (Stoneman *op. cit.* 66-67).

I will return to this issue in the section on the formal structure of the agricultural sector in Zimbabwe. Our object of investigation lies in Natural Regions II a, II b and III. For more on this, see the chapter by G.M. Savanhu on the same project.

1.2.2 Formal Structure of the Agricultural Sector

Zimbabwe has a bi-modal agrarian structure which is a product of a long historically evolved system of land tenure. On the one hand, the LSCF developed feeding mainly on the labour resources of the small-scale communal (CA) sector occupying the poorest lands. "Land distribution inequities, historically and institutionally undervalued migrant labour and a social security system characterised by subsistence on physically and infrastructurally marginalised soils, indigenous woodland and veld areas, enabled the present bi-polar agricultural sector to emerge" (Moyo, 1991, 2).

The LSCF developed with institutional support and employed advanced technical levels of production which achieved higher yields while the CA sector, utilising poor techniques and basically underpaid family labour, almost stagnated with subsistence production. Moyo again:

On the one hand, the LSCF with the best land and favoured state resource allocations evolved into a sophisticated farm sector . . . (using) large-scale machinery, irrigation, electricity, fossil fuel advanced techniques and cheap labour to produce a diverse range of output at extremely high production levels. The LSCF sub-sector depends heavily on imported inputs (machinery, energy, fertilisers and agro-chemicals), but also accounts for over 70% of current agricultural exports. On the other hand, the CAs, or small farmers survive on low yields, underpaid family labour, partial application of improved advanced techniques, land scarcity, lack of irrigation and other infrastructure. The output is narrowly based on maize, small grains, cotton and patches of legumes and vegetables, for mostly own consumption, with increasing maize and cotton marketing (*Ibid.*).

Thus, as a product of the history of land apportionment, the agricultural sector came to be characterised by these different systems of production. The LSCF occupied the prime agricultural land (Natural Regions I, II and parts of III) and used sophisticated production and marketing techniques and had high financial returns while the CAs produced mainly for subsistence in areas which, as already mentioned, are badly endowed for dryland cropping (Natural Regions IV and V). Simple or traditional forms of techniques are employed and livestock is grazed communally (Hifab and Zimconsult, 1989, xxvii).

Modifications to this otherwise still basic structure were made in the post-independence period. The programme of resettlement has had more than 60,000 families moved out of the overcrowded communal lands carrying up to 800 000 households, into parts of former LSCF areas. The independence government also set up large-scale state farms. Today, in between the two dominant agricultural systems, the LSCFs and CAs, are found Resettlement Schemes comprising mainly the small plot-holders under the Model A Scheme and collective co-operatives under the Model B Scheme; small-scale commercial farms (SSCFs) and the state farms [See Tables 1(c) and 1(d)].

Table 1(c): Distribution of Agricultural Land in Hectares by Natural Region and Agricultural Sub-Sector

Natural Region	Communal Areas	%	LSCF	%	Resettlement Model A		Resettlement Model B		SSCF	%	State	%
					Model A	%	Model B	%				
I	119 882	0.7	418 900	3.0	6 783	0.4	14 471	21.7	7 300	0.5	6 457	8.2
II	1 427 739	8.7	3 982 397	28.6	308 840	18.5	32 663	48.9	252 100	17.8	1 042	1.3
III	2 798 955	17.1	2 438 772	17.5	782 187	46.9	19 641	29.4	536 100	37.9	14 614	18.6
IV	1 780 382	47.6	3 519 098	25.2	506 702	30.9	—	—	523 000	36.9	22 609	28.7
V	4 228 622	25.9	3 583 679	25.7	64 721	3.8	—	—	97 600	6.9	33 980	43.2
Total	16 355 580	100	13 943 446	100	1 669 233	100	66 775	100	1 416 100	100	78 702	100

Source: Mandaza, I. (ed.) *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition*, CODESRIA, 1986, p.186.

Table 1(d): Land Distribution, C. 1990

	Commercial Areas	Large-scale Commercial Sector	Small-scale Commercial Sector	Resettlement	Total
Total area (000 ha)	16 365	11 213	1 239	3 290	39 070
%	42	29	3	8	100
% of land in Regions I-III	26	56	54	57	36
Number of farms	1 000 000	4 660	8 500	52 000	1 065 million
Average size (ha)	16	2 406	145	60	

Source: ILO 1993, p.48.

Since independence in 1980, the parastatals, most of which were set up in the colonial and UDI periods to service the LSCF, have adjusted themselves significantly to service the CAs. So have government institutions, particularly those of research and extension. However, it is still contended that the bulk of parastatal services have remained largely targeted at LSCFs, particularly, in the Northern provinces surrounding the main towns and areas endowed with the most extensive of rural infrastructure. Similarly, private sector agricultural services remain focused in the same farming areas because of effective demand while CA farmer groupings, cooperatives and "sub-merging" rural traders inefficiently procure inputs from these private dealers and services from government, (Moyo 199, 2-3).

Below is a brief outline highlighting the major developments in the above-mentioned sub-sectors which are the main focus of this study.

1.2.2.1 *The Communal Area Farming Sector (CAs)*

About 57% of Zimbabwe's population is found in the Communal Areas (CAs), which as already noted are mainly in Natural Regions IV and V. Madondo (1992) asserts that 90% of all communally occupied land falls in Natural Regions III through V, with 74% of the areas in Natural Regions IV and V: "The areas are fairly densely populated. 81% of the estimated 5.9 million of the communal population is found in Natural Regions III-V and 74% of the areas in Natural Regions IV and V", (*ibid.*, p4). According to Shopo, estimates showed that between 1961 and 1977 the number of CA cultivators increased by 88% from 349 000 to 675 000. The total area under cultivation increased by 91% from 1.15 million ha to 2.2 million ha at the expense of grazing land (in Mandaza, 1986, 177).

It is these people for whom survival is a hazard. The migrant labour system has left the structure of the population dominated by the female sex, children and geriatrics, because males, younger and middle aged people migrate to urban and commercial farm centres in search of work or to work. Their land is seriously degraded and production is hampered by lack of access to productive inputs, diminished means of production (in the sense of draught power) low technique and labour shortage, (*ibid.*, 187).

A smaller proportion of CA households are in more favourable regions, and it is these that have been able to take advantage of support services and inputs offered after independence in 1980. Specifically, these are cultivators based in areas falling under the Natural Regions II and III which are in the Mashonaland and the Midlands provinces in particular.

The concern of the government in making the CAs more productive is unequivocal. CAs were discriminated against in the interest of creating a dualist system of economy (See Government of Zimbabwe, Three-Year-Transitional

National Development Plan (TNDP, 1982, 3). Thus support services and capital inputs were at independence channelled to the CA cultivators to boost their productive capacities. But as Moyo says:

The evidence on surplus crop production among such households glaringly reveals the importance of land quality as a major factor in the peasantry's ability to take advantage of state support services (Moyo in Mandaza *op. cit.* 187).

But is land quality the only factor? Grigg suggests that the introduction of technology may alter the value of the land to the cultivator. Moyo suggests something almost the opposite of this. What are the other factors? What factors limit the impact of technological input in changing/raising the quality of land?

An interesting study on crop technology in the CAs was undertaken by Ashworth (1990) as a background study for the World Bank. Ashworth noted that,

Apart from fertilizer, improved varieties and pesticide use on maize and cotton, improved production technology for other crops is little used, except perhaps for sunflower. For other crops, new technology is either not available, does not exist, or is considered too risky. In a number of cases the technology exists — improved varieties for sorghum, millet and groundnuts — but due to a breakdown in the total technology chain, is not available to communal farmers, a serious matter in the semi-arid regions especially (xii-xiii).

Ashworth's survey covered CAs in eight provinces and four Natural Regions of Zimbabwe.

An important point to make on Ashworth's findings is the determinacy of rainfall which makes the risk factor fundamental. Also, there is the importance of livestock, particularly cattle, in CA agri-production. These function both as a source of draught power, income and occasionally meat and milk. Also, Ashworth observed that maize dominates the crop regimes but there is a crop diversity which shows that CA farmers have developed this strategy as a risk minimizing strategy (*ibid.*, 11).

Off-farm income has become an integral part of CA productive activity. This may involve seasonal or occasional labour by some family members either for other CA farmers or on LSCFs or estates or in urban centres; or participation of members in income-generating projects (IGPs) such as savings clubs, gardening, baking, sewing or other handicraft production. This aspect of the technical technology of CA productive activity reveals a fundamental fact of ecological and socio-economic differentiation:

The proportion of household income derived from off-farm activities varies widely but is of relatively higher significance in the poorer Natural

Regions. Also, cattle owners appear to derive a lower proportion of annual income from off-farm activities than those without cattle . . . (*ibid.*, 9).

One of the problems faced by CA cultivators today is the government's reform policy, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) which seeks to liberalise the economy and allow the market forces a greater role in determining allocation of resources. The philosophy behind the programme is that improved agricultural pricing and markets, civil service reduction and monetary reforms will lead to overall growth in the agricultural sector (Moyo, 1991 3). Indeed, as we have said already, the importance of agriculture lies in that the success of ESAP hinges on the reaction of the agricultural sector. That is why with the devastating drought of the 1991-92 season, the government was looking into modifications of the ESAP while some social sectors called for its scrapping altogether.

Many were noting that the economic reform policy was coming at a time when modifications were in place to make the CA sub-sector more viable. The reform programme came within the framework of a bi-modal agrarian structure in which the CAs were disadvantaged all-round. It was argued that only the LSCF stood to gain from ESAP while the CAs were to face serious difficulties, (Madondo 1992; Moyo 1991). The government sought to redress this imbalance by subsidising CA farm input costs (seeds and fertilisers) for maize and cotton production. The criticism levelled against this policy was that it was not only limited and was a form of drought relief — therefore not developmental as such — but would tend to benefit the already better-off farmers who were the ones who tended to organise themselves into groups! The CA farmers, and the Small-Scale Commercial Farmers, criticised the ESAP for the difficulties they would face due to their poorer land qualities and the institutional arrangements which were historically discriminatory against them. The Government CA subsidy policy was also criticised for being piecemeal and fraught with the usual administrative delays in implementation. The question of land reform came squarely on to the agenda.

This had the makings of a political crisis since acute land hunger in the CAs caused by over-population, erosion and the results of the liberation war, made land redistribution even more pressing since under-utilisation and monopoly appeared to be the twin evils in the LSCF sub-sector. Only 40 per cent at most of the arable land on such farms was cultivated [Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) 1991-92, 15]. The EIU further notes that apart from monopoly and under-utilisation in the LSCF there were glaring discrepancies between and within the two sub-sectors, the LSCF and the CAs:

The situation is made more complex by discrepancies within the various sectors. In both the commercial sector and the communal lands there are considerable differences between rich and poor farmers in terms of

productivity and land ownership and use. While white farmers own about 50 per cent of all farm land, about 60 per cent of this land is owned by only 10 per cent of them. An estimated 50 per cent of all agricultural production comes from about 10 per cent of the farms. Marketed output from communal areas (about 20 per cent of the total output) similarly comes mainly from a minority concentrated in Mashonaland North and East (*ibid.*).

Government enacted the Land Acquisition Act in 1992 in order to acquire land from the LSCF sub-sector for resettlement purposes. This law generated much controversy with opposition from organised white farmers but with much support from organised black middle and lower organised farming interests. The general national popular feeling was also in support of the Land Acquisition Act while intellectual critics argued that the Act had diluted expropriatory power and therefore likely to be ineffective.

1.2.2.2 Large-Scale Commercial Farms (LSCFs)

This sub-sector has approximately 4,400 white farmers who have freehold title. It is estimated that about 300 to 400 black farmers have joined this group since independence in 1980. The importance of this sub-sector cannot be in doubt. Moyó noted thus:

In 1984 it produced 75% of the total agricultural output and 90% of the marketed output. In that year, out of Z\$398 million realized from agricultural exports, 56% came from LSCF tobacco sales, 15% from their cotton, 13.8% from sugar and 8.8% from maize. In broad terms the 1981 agricultural export earnings contributed 46% of the total domestic export value, a level not previously achieved since 1975. The role of the LSCF in foreign exchange earnings and as a major employer of permanent labourers (165,000 persons) and seasonal labourers (56,000) and the strong linkages with the service and industrial sectors of the economy cannot be overstated (Mandaza *ibid.*, 192-3).

Although by 1987, the total permanent employees in the LSCFs had declined to 137746, this increased to 144520 in 1991, 149043 in 1992, 147116 in 1993, 150804 in 1994 and 153642 in 1995 (Kanyenze and Sibanda forthcoming).

In dealing with this sub-sector Loewenson (1988) noted that in the mid-70s it was heavily dominated by foreign ownership, with local farmers constituting 70% of producers but covering only 23% of the land. We have already indicated that the growth of LSCFs was through state and other institutional support. Infrastructure and recruitment and control of labour were critical in this process.

1.3 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The general problematic of this study is the development of agriculture under conditions of structural adjustment and economic liberalisation. Precisely, what

impact would the SAP have on agriculture, particularly, smallholder agriculture? In the context of economic reform, what role would be played by the often overlooked farmers' organisations in assisting the producers to overcome any production and marketing constraints.

We have noted the historical evolution of a bi-modal agrarian structure characterising Zimbabwe's agriculture today. We have also indicated that at independence, the government embarked on an aggressive interventionist agricultural policy whose objective was to redress the resource disparity between the LSCF and the smallholder sectors. Specifically, the state sought to: enhance national food self-sufficiency; increase smallholder food and cash crop production; increase smallholder household incomes and standard of living; and stimulate foreign exchange and earnings.

The interventionist policy employed several policy instruments such as pricing, marketing, subsidies on credit, input price controls (e.g. on fertilizer, seed, etc.), research and extension policies and public investment in transport, market and social infrastructures (Arnaiz, M.E.O. and Sibanda, A.E.; 1995, 2). Marketing, credit and pricing policies were implemented mostly through the parastatal marketing boards and the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) in the form of subsidies. With this strong state effort, some sectors of smallholder producers increased their share of marketed commodities particularly in maize and cotton. Maize sales increased by 662% from 1980 to 1990 and cotton sales increased by 206% during that same period.

Although the smallholder sector increased its share of marketed output, we have noted that the actual distribution of the gains amongst the smallholders has been skewed towards those with better ecological resource, infrastructure, capital and skill to adopt the new technical packages. Critics pointed out that while current prices for maize, cotton and other controlled commodities rose right through the 1980s, real producer prices fell for all crops save for only wheat. Consequently, there was a net transfer of capital and resources from the agricultural sector to the manufacturing and processing sectors. This taxation of agriculture depressed both agricultural employment and growth (*Ibid.*).

The subsidies to the agro-parastatals and investments in non-material productive sectors such as social infrastructure development, contributed to Zimbabwe's national deficit and have been cited by the multi-lateral finance institutions as a key factor in the country's low economic growth rate. It is against this background and with the objective to stimulate both economic and agricultural growth that the Government introduced the ESAP. This programme set out to:

- eliminate subsidies to parastatals;
- transform the parastatals into commercial companies;
- remove restrictions on domestic and foreign marketing of agricultural commodities with the exception of the staple food, white maize;

- remove import restrictions on agro-inputs;
- de-control the prices for domestically produced fertilisers;
- restrict government investments to non-productive sectors; and
- reform monetary and exchange rate policies [Government of Zimbabwe, (GoZ) 1990].

While the government expected rural livelihoods to rise as markets become more competitive and regionalised, representatives of smallholder farmer interests and other critics argued that the total market liberalisation will negate many of the post-independence market gains made by the small-scale sector. This would in turn result in accelerated poverty and household food insecurity in the rural areas. The state, through the parastatal marketing board system undertook many of the costs involved in linking a diverse and broadly dispersed smallholder sector with a highly centralised manufacturing and processing sector. Without this institutional network of supporting agricultural services, it is unlikely that small-scale producers would be able to respond positively to the price incentives offered by a deregulated market due to a number of conditions in the rural areas including:

- thin and disarticulated markets;
- overburdened land and water resources;
- erratic rainfall;
- poor levels of communication, transportation and marketing infrastructure; and
- missing credit markets (Arnaiz & Sibanda *op. cit.* p. 2).

As Zimbabwe moves from a state-controlled to a market driven economy, greater demands will be made on the rural populace and their institutions to bring about rural economic development. An important but often overlooked component of smallholder development in Zimbabwe has been the role played by farmers' organisations in assisting small-scale producers to overcome production and marketing constraints. In fact, a number of studies including Bratton (1986) point out that collective action by farmers is a necessary complement to either state-based or market based development strategies. Whereas individual smallholder producers may be disadvantaged by the institutional and market changes arising from ESAP, organised groups of farmers can:

- i) reduce information, coordination and bargaining costs;
- ii) realise economies of scale and
- iii) advocate for smallholder demands in both the political and economic arenas (de Janvry and Sadoulet, 1993; Uphoff, 1993).

Collective action by farmers can mitigate some of the negative impacts arising from the capitalist transformation of peasant economies. However, it does not necessarily lead to the equitable distribution of benefits amongst different classes of smallholder producers (Bratton, 1986; Zinyama, 1991). Hence while

proponents of smallholder organisation are optimistic regarding the ability of these social structures to facilitate rural economic development (see for example Chavunduka *et al*, 1985; Eicher, 1990), empirical studies warn that development will be skewed in favour of those farmers with the capital and assets necessary to invest in economic and political activities (Herbst, 1990). As state and donor investment in the rural areas declines, the process of rural stratification is further hastened by the droughts of 1991-1992 and 1994-1995 which have destabilised production systems, and caused food and cash shortfalls in the rural areas.

This study proposes to investigate:

- i) the ways in which different classes of agricultural producers have organised themselves both economically and politically in post-ESAP Zimbabwe, and
- ii) the effectiveness of these organisations in improving members' standard of living.

To date, no such study has been undertaken in this country. Given the government's continuing commitment to economic structural adjustment, studies on farmers' organisations and rural economic development can assist policy-makers in designing more effective economic reform programmes and policies, as well as contribute to a general understanding of the role of farmers' organisations in the development process.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study will use the district as the spatial unit of analysis for two reasons. Firstly, since the implementation of ESAP, the key levels of decision-making influencing the relative profitability of different small-scale production enterprises has moved from the national to the district level. Secondly, recent constitutional changes placing greater administrative and allocative responsibilities in local government means that many of the key leverage points in the policy making process affecting smallholder agriculture have also dropped from the national to the district level (Masuko, 1995). Hence local-level organisations and lower structures of national-level organisations now have greater opportunities to organise economic activities and influence policies affecting agriculture. The district or meso-level now presents an ideal arena for investigating micro-level responses and outcomes to macro-economic policies.

Broadly, this study will consider the role of farmers' organisations in facilitating rural economic development within the context of economic structural adjustment in Zimbabwe. The study poses five research questions namely:

1. How do different types/classes of smallholder producers understand ESAP?
2. How have different types/classes of farmers organised in response to ESAP?
3. What types of economic or political activities have their organisations initiated in order to promote their members' interests since the implementation of ESAP?

4. How successful have these organisations been in implementing these activities?
5. What has been the impact of these activities on members' livelihoods and household food security?

To answer these questions, this study will:

- identify different types of farmer organisations in the study district;
- identify the types of services and political activities initiated by these organisations in response to ESAP;
- develop a typology of farmer organisations based on activities (functions) and membership requirements;
- identify organisational and contextual factors contributing to, or detracting from their effectiveness in the political and economic arenas; and
- assess the distributional impact of these organisations' activities (i) between members and non-members and (ii) among members with regards to livelihood and household food security.

1.5 STUDY HYPOTHESES

This study proposes two sets of hypotheses relating to the potential impact of farmers' organisations on people's livelihoods and household food security status. The hypotheses relate to the types of activities and effectiveness of different types of farmer organisations within the economic and political arenas. This chapter will make a focus on the political arena in the main, but since the separation of political and economic arena is only by a thin line, the strong overlap will be obvious and issues of economic concern will be analysed as well. M.E.O. Arnaiz makes a more detailed analysis of economic issues (see chapter by Arnaiz in this book).

The study proposed the following hypotheses from the onset:

1. Smallholder farmers who are resource poor or women farmers will less likely feature in farmers' organisations and therefore, will have little influence on political and social policy decisions.
2. Farmers' Organisations representing better-off farmers will most likely be effective in influencing certain key decisions of political institutions or preventing such decisions from being taken to their disadvantage than resource-poor or women farmers.
3. Poorer farmers are more inclined to be subsistence procurers and therefore, less prone to being organised than better-off farmers who are more inclined towards a cash crop production and being organised.
4. Poorer farmers will be more preponderant in political, social and religious/cultural organisations that are less directly agri-productive than better-off growers.
5. Organisations representing poorer farmers are less likely to be successful in making their members successful in utilising fully the infrastructure provided than organisations representing better-off farmers.

Section Two

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 ON THE HISTORY OF FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS IN ZIMBABWE

There does exist some considerable literature on farmers' organisations or collective action groups among farmers in Zimbabwe. The different sub-sectors of the farming sector in Zimbabwe have evolved different groupings of farming interests.

M.E.O. Arnaiz, D.M. Merrill-Sands and B. Mukwende (1995) point out that for farmers' organisations to effectively represent their members, there ought to be in place, at a minimum, constitutional conditions and legislation protecting the right to organisation and freedom of speech. Also, channels need to exist for farmers' organisations to influence policies at the level at which they are made. Without this, "farmers' organisations tend to remain informal, localised and a-political" (p. 8).

The history of farmers' organisations in Zimbabwe reflects the state's attempts to regulate the structure of interest group representation in the agricultural sector and, therefore, the participation of different classes of farmers in agricultural and technology policy-making (*Ibid.*).

We have noted the bi-modal structure of Zimbabwe's agrarian sector. Before UDI, the colonial state policy objective was dictated by the demands of influential white settler groups and the need to increase overall production. During the UDI period — (1965-80) — policies had a slight switch with the aim to entrench white settler farmers on the land for food and national security.

The Land Apportionment Act (LAA) of 1930 formalised the bi-modal agrarian structure which has existed in Zimbabwe unto this day. It set up separate areas for European settlers and Africans and gave settlers approximately 65% of all agricultural land, including all the higher rainfall areas (*ibid.*). Mufema writes that:

The 1930 LAA laid the legal foundations of colonial land and agricultural policies in colonial Zimbabwe. It segregated the country into non-competing racial units and laid the basis for the land and economic division of the country. It post rationalized and codified previous colonial grabbing of land in the country (Mufema, 1997, 9).

The colonial state pursued

a white agricultural policy . . . based on the attraction of white settlers and settling them on large estates in the high potential areas and supporting them with financial and not least institutional and legal means (*Ibid.*).

The Native Reserves were later called Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) and were re-christened Communal Areas (CAs) after independence in 1980. Arnaiz *et. al* have also noted that the colonial state built separate institutional systems for the development of settler and African agriculture.

The Ministry of Agriculture was responsible for settler commercial agriculture and had under its jurisdiction the research system and marketing boards. The Department of Native Affairs (later the Ministry of Internal Affairs) was responsible for peasant agriculture. This dualism in the administration of the sector continued until independence in 1980 (Arnaiz *et al op. cit.* 8).

The importance of noting the historical evolution of this dualism lies in the fact that it underpins today's situation in the farmers' organisation scenario. Such organisations developed and grew on the basis of this dualism. There are today three national farmers' organisations in Zimbabwe, namely: the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU); the Indigenous Commercial Farmers' Union (ICFU); and the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU). The CFU represents around 4 000 white commercial farmers, the ICFU about 400 African large-scale commercial farmers and the ZFU, about 200 000 farmers drawn from the communal, resettlement, peri-urban plot-holders and the small-scale commercial farming interests. The ZFU is clearly the largest, in terms of numbers, of all the farmers' unions (Mufema, *op. cit.*15).

The history of the CFU goes back to the 1920s when regional producers' associations came together to organise the purchase of inputs and marketing of output. In the 1930s, these associations were lobbying to encourage state intervention in the agricultural sector in order to protect white commercial farmers from the negative effects of falling world prices for major commodities. They achieved the state intervention which established a single channel marketing system through the parastatal boards. The associations also lobbied for subsidies at the expense of indigenous farmers, to improve water and soil conservation and transport infrastructure (Arnaiz *et al, ibid.*).

As the state gained greater control over agricultural marketing, regional producers' associations responded by forming a national farmers' union, the Rhodesian National Farmers' Union (RNFU) in 1942. The establishment and development of the RNFU was facilitated by the passage of the Licensing and Levy Act of 1942 which made it mandatory for all commercial farmers to buy a farmers' licence from the union. This legislation also conferred on the RNFU the right to collect a levy from its members' product sales (*ibid.*, 8-9).

The establishment of the RNFU was to have a lasting landmark on the development of agriculture in Zimbabwe. It established a strong political base for not only economic development but political development as well. Arnaiz *et al* tell us that the boom in white agricultural production from 1950-80 was founded on the strong political base established by the RNFU. The union not only participated in agricultural policy-making with regard to prices, infrastructural development and diversification, but also lobbied for policies to help white farmers acquire improved technologies suitable for their production

systems and environment. The union was on the executive boards of the marketing parastatals. From 1970 onwards it sat in the Agricultural Research Council (*ibid.*).

The RNFU, which became the CFU is today the strongest and better organised union of farmers in Zimbabwe. This strength is a historically carved one. By way of summarising the basis of its power, Herbst declared that:

What makes the white farmers especially powerful is their extremely good organisation. Their status as the most powerful and sophisticated political group in Rhodesia can be traced back to the passage of the Farmers' Licensing Act and the subsequent establishment of the RNFU in 1942. To meet the demands of World War II, the colonial government needed the farmers' cooperation in increasing food production. And the farmers were able to use this leverage to persuade the government to pass the Licensing Act. To this day, the CFU . . . is possibly the only farmers' union in the world enjoying a government-enforced closed shop. This closed shop allows Zimbabwe's white farmers to undertake costly research and lobbying exercises of enormous sophistication (J. Herbst in S. Baynham; ed. 1992, 132).

It is farmers organised in such a way and taking much of the good rainfall areas of the country that would definitely be better placed to gain from an ESAP than any other.

The oldest farmers' organisation standing for the African farmers' interests was founded in 1938 by small-scale commercial farmers in the Native (later African) Purchase Areas. Mufema says this first union was called the Bantu Farmers Association.

It was a quasi-political group operating alongside and as part of the Rhodesia Bantu Voters' Association, the Matabele Home Society and the Southern Rhodesia Native Welfare Society (Mufema *op. cit.* 16-17).

In 1942, the African Farmers Licensing Act officially recognised the farmers' association as the African Farmers' Union (AFU) and as the sole representative of African farmers. The Act provided legal sanction for payment of subscriptions to the union by farmers in the African Purchase Areas. In 1980, the AFU renamed itself the Zimbabwe National Farmers' Union (ZNFU).

The ZNFU called for the construction of schools, hospitals, roads and marketing depots in the Native Purchase Areas. This was in addition to lobbying for favourable producer prices and credit schemes for members. In 1971 the Licensing and Levy Act was amended and the African Licensing Act (1942) was repealed in order to bring both white and black farmers under one law. However, this move was fraught with bitterness and confrontation as the black farmers' union's operational capacity was curtailed (Mufema *ibid.*, 20).

However, despite the politically-motivated obstacles of the new Act, the union found ways of advancing African farmer interests. It used some of the cotton levy funds to form a company which bought agricultural inputs in bulk in order

to reduce costs to the farmer. It purchased printing machinery for its official journal in order to avoid the high costs of hiring commercial printing. The state policies effectively weakened the African farmer's capacity to intervene in the agricultural produce market. Mufema again:

The provision of transport was high on the agenda of the union. However, the shortage of capital to purchase lorries partly due to the failure to raise revenue from the Levy Act and the unwillingness of commercial and government controlled financial institutions to provide loan facilities to the union remained a thorn in the flesh. The problem related to the provision of adequate and timely transport facilities to bring inputs to the farmer and to deliver produce to the markets continued to inhibit African farmers' progress throughout the colonial period (*ibid.*, 21).

Apart from all this, the union remained in a kind of political wilderness. This was because, first; its class basis was narrow. It represented the 'elite' of the African peasant farming community. Small-scale commercial farmers only represented a small fraction of all African smallholders and this fraction was the union's base. Second, it was effectively excluded from the structure of agricultural policy, on the marketing boards and other organisations with a mission to develop commercial agriculture (Arnaiz *et al op. cit.* p. 8). It could therefore, never be effective in championing and advancing the interests of its members, let alone those of the African farmers in general. The political-legal environment was simply not conducive, yet also, the union itself had a narrow class base.

Almost parallel to the development of the ZNFU was another development of a farmers' collective group in the African peasant sector. This was the National Farmers' Association of Zimbabwe (NFAZ). NFAZ was formed in 1981 as a national association representing communal and resettlement farmers. Its origins dated back to the days of the National Association of Master Farmer Clubs which had been organised by officials in the Department of Conservation and Extension (CONEX) in 1967. In the then Victoria (now Masvingo) Province, these clubs came together and formed the Victoria Provincial Association of Master Farmer Clubs. Quite distinct from the history and origins of the ZNFU, the NFAZ "grew out of a government programme promoting the adoption of modern farming methods among African peasant farmers. The Master Farmer Programme was designed to teach farmers through education, example and persuasion" (*ibid.*). Mufema also notes that:

The NFAZ was inaugurated to accommodate all communal producers with the main objective of encouraging communal farmers to increase their agricultural production through the proper use of land (*op. cit.* 17).

The Victoria Association and the National Association of Master Farmer Clubs (NAMFC) had most of their funding provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Technical and financial backing came from the CONEX Department. Because it was considered to be a purely technical organisation, the NAMFC also benefitted from the financial assistance of the white RNFU. This was its paradox. It had a base nearly down to the grassroots of the African peasantry, yet at the same time it was funded by the colonial state and its white agricultural bourgeoisie. The inevitable contradictions would arise in so far as it could not be silent on the demands of its social base:

Although its activities revolved around the Master Farmer Training Programme and farmer-to-farmer extension, the association gradually began to publicise and represent the demands of its members. It was cautioned by the extension service, with which it was closely allied, that it would lose government support if it continued to behave like a 'farmers' union'. In response, the association deliberately excluded any mention of representing members' demands in its constitution, although in reality it continued to do this (Arnaiz *et al*, *op. cit.* p.8).

So then had developed the farmer interest organisations in Zimbabwe up to the time of independence. So then had the bi-modal agrarian structure laid the basis for the fragmentation of agricultural classes in the country. After independence, the new state attempted to reverse the colonial legacy and emphasized agricultural, infrastructural and human resource development in the smallholder sector. The state abolished the institutional separation between commercial and peasant agriculture by (i) putting the departments responsible for agricultural development in both sectors under one Ministry, that of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement; (ii) rationalizing the extension services (formerly geared to each sector) into one unit to form the Department of Agricultural, Technical and Extension Services (Agritex); and (iii) expanding the mandate of national research institutions to encapsulate the technology needs of small-scale producers in low rainfall areas. Resettlement was also embarked on, but with modest success (*ibid.*).

So at independence there were three national level organisations representing three major classes of farmers — large-scale commercial, small-scale commercial and communal area farmers. However, it must be added that even the last one was led by the better-off farmers of the communal sector! Those who could join Master Farmer training were not the poorest farmers. I submit that such farmers remained unrepresented. But the three that existed were not equals. The CFU was the strongest and most organised. It was financially self-sufficient, utilizing the funds from its levy, farmer licence fees and investments in agri-business ventures. It had a staff of 100 at headquarters with people calling expertise in research, economics and business. The ZNFU was also self-financing to a great extent (from the farmer licence fees and the levy), but it was organisationally the poorest. "Seeing itself principally as a lobbying organisation, it had a national

office in Harare but no provincial or field offices" (*ibid.*). The NFAZ had no right to levy its members on farm sales. It relied on member subscriptions and donor funding. It was the weakest of the three, but after independence it widened its membership base by including women and non-Master Farmers. With more donor funding, it built up a national headquarters and set up provincial offices (*ibid.*, 9-10).

The new government recognised the ZNFU and NFAZ as legitimate representatives of African farmers. The two were then invited to participate in agricultural national policy development alongside the CFU. Their representatives were put on the marketing parastatal boards, the Agricultural Research Council and other commissions. With this new role, the two made strides in winning on policy issues for their constituencies e.g. construction of more marketing depots and roads in the CAs, credit for small-scale farmers, more favourable marketing policies and prices and the creation of an institution — the Farming Systems Research Unit — within the national research system. All this contributed to smallholder maize and cotton booms experienced immediately after independence onwards (*ibid.*).

The independence government encouraged the three unions to merge. Although this was imminent at several instances, it never really came about except an interim umbrella committee set up in 1985 known as the Joint Presidents' Agricultural Committee (JPAC). It comprised the presidents of the three unions and served as a forum to discuss marketing, pricing and other agricultural issues. Though convenient at times, it was not smooth sailing and collapsed in 1991 due to irreconcilable differences over the government's land reform programme. The land reform programme brought the class contradictions to the open. The state, aware of the formidable power of the CFU class interests, decided to play the old political card of nationalism. It encouraged the two black farmers' unions to merge in order to lend it support for the land reform programme. The merger took place in 1990 and was ratified at a joint congress in 1991. The ZNFU President became the President of the new union — the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU).

The new union, with a broad membership representing five types of farmers, had two categories of farmers — the *active* who are affiliated, have paid subscriptions and have voting rights, and the *inactive*, who are affiliated to the union's clubs in communal and resettlement areas, have not paid yearly fees and have no vote. In the 1993/94 period, the ZFU represented about 17% of all communal and resettlement farmers (inactive and active) and 40% of the Small-Scale Commercial Farmers (SSCF) (*ibid.*).

The union is today a big multi-layered organisation after inheriting elements of the NFAZ organisational structure. It has clubs at village level, communal and resettlement farmers and producers' associations at ward level representing the SSC farmers. Above this are area councils (at ward level with 8-10 clubs)

then district councils, eight provincial councils and lastly the National Council at the apex. The Annual Congress is the highest decision-making body. The union has seven council committees which address specific areas: such as Management, Finance, Production, Livestock, Land and Mobilisation, Women and Youth Development and Treasury. The union also formed Commodity Committees as in CFU and these cater for such specifics as grains, cotton, oil seeds, horticulture, tobacco, small animals, beef, dairy, tea and coffee. These were set up to deal with specific issues affecting the production and marketing of these commodities and to influence policy regarding the same. Operating at primarily national level, they have representatives at the provincial level and where relevant, at district level as well (Arnaiz *et al*, *op. cit.*).

The ZFU decentralised, starting in 1991, to district level with a coordinator and support staff. This was meant to strengthen the links between national and grassroots levels and enhance efficiency in service delivery.

With this kind of infrastructure and social base, the ZFU should have been in relatively good standing to intervene in assisting its members to participate in the economic reform programme without serious disruption to their socio-economic endeavour. Besides, the ZFU was on a sound financial base if compared with the situation in the pre-independence period. It is said to have a funding base today of approximately Z\$25 million and this increased significantly from 1994 when the union was granted the right to collect a variable levy on the sale of certain smallholder crops. This levy accounts for about 60% of the ZFU's funding and it has considerably increased the independence of the union and its interventionist muscle on issues of research on technology suitable for the environment of its members, etc.

Today, the ZFU is much more selective about the kinds of assistance it seeks from donors and it insists upon maintaining control over the design and administration of donor-funded projects (*ibid.*, 12).

The union gained confidence and power with these new developments. In 1994 it tabled its policy positions in areas such as technology, land, water, marketing and conservation (*ibid.*). Its President (now late) challenged government to reform the water laws which discriminated against smallholder farmers and called on his members to defy the existing regulations. The economic reform programme posed immense challenges for the ZFU. The new liberalised environment called for the development of the technical, lobbying and networking capacities of its field staff and local leaders. It is precisely how organisations such as the ZFU have performed in assisting farmers that this study is all about.

The survey on local farmer organisations by L.M. Zinyama in the CAs of Mhondoro and Save North, brought out results which could be instructive when considering a pre-economic reform period and comparing with a post-reform one (L.M. Zinyama in Fraser and Mackenzie, 1992). Zinyama studied farmer organisations and their role in the above two CAs during 1983-4. This was an

early independence period when the new state, as already indicated, was reversing the colonial legacy and intervening strongly in agriculture to boost smallholder productive capacity. The state was not withdrawing as it certainly has done with the economic reform programme. Zinyama's study concluded that local farmer organisations had played a decisive role in complementing the state effort in the rural sector. The farmer organisations did this by mobilising producers into *mutual-help groups*, to deal with the labour shortage problem; *farmer training groups*, to deal with the training needs of farmers. The state extension service preferred working with organised groups due to the need to reach many and save on costs; and *marketing groups* which were promoted by state, private and welfare donor agencies in order to encourage marketing of crops as a group, getting credit as a group and sourcing inputs as a group to facilitate easier service delivery and debt recovery.

One important point that emerged from Zinyama's study is that it was invariably the better-off farmers that joined groups, those with the implements, draught power and ability to source inputs, plough and plant in time and harvest better. It is these that were preferred by state, private and welfare agencies. The poorer farmer was actually left in his/her poverty although officially, no one discriminated against him or her! The rural sector is socially differentiated. It is not just the poverty of the person but that poverty can be entrenched and reproduced by:

- a) the quality of his/her land and environment;
- b) the facilities and infrastructure and kind of service delivery available to him/her; and
- c) whether he/she has the real potential to adopt the technical package presented to him/her and utilise it productively.

Zinyama's study brought out this differentiation in a stark way. The potential to intervene and gain in a reformed economic regime is determined by these important factors.

2.2 ON STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND AGRICULTURE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

On a more theoretical note, there are questions which are raised about the justification of the structural adjustment programme itself, specifically in this context as it relates to agriculture. The adjustment programme calls for state roll-back from marketing services through parastatal boards. It calls for removal of subsidies and encourages commercialisation of parastatals. It operates a philosophy that market determined incentives would be enough to dynamise agricultural productive endeavour. In the bid to reduce budget deficits, public expenditure on infrastructure, skills and research is reduced, in many countries the infrastructure collapsed completely.

There is a growing realisation that in much of sub-Saharan Africa, agriculture plays a pivotal role in the economy. Progress in this sector definitely stimulates rapid progress in other sectors (G.K. Helleiner in Stewart, F; Lall, S; and Wangwe, S; 1992). Helleiner criticises the philosophy of state withdrawal or roll-back in agriculture:

There is by now fairly wide agreement that neither appropriate incentives alone nor increased supportive investment alone is sufficient to effect agricultural improvement; both are necessary. What must ultimately drive agricultural progress in Africa, just as it has everywhere else, is technical progress leading to increases in total factor productivity; and in smallholder agricultural systems — this will require a major public sector role (59).

Helleiner points out that even the World Bank has no faith in the quick efficacy of the market mechanism and the price incentive. Non-price factors are important in resource allocation:

— but price policies are by no means the only possible instruments of government agricultural policy. Agricultural production of all kinds is likely to be responsive to expanded investments in feeder roads, provision of subsidies on inputs, improved research and extension activity and the like (*ibid.*).

This problem is also grappled with by Mkandawire (1989) who says of the structural adjustment programmes: their recommendations are usually for the dismantling of parastatals that deal with the agriculture sector, the removal of pan-territorial prices that African governments have often introduced to ensure regional equity, the transformation of land tenure to allow for individual ownership of land and free play of market forces in decontrolled land markets. Mkandawire notes that this new orthodoxy was being widely adopted in Africa with 'overvalued' currencies being devalued, food subsidies removed, parastatal monopsonies dissolved as 'market forces' are unleashed. As a result of all this, Africa was witnessing an unprecedented spate of policy changes in agriculture. But what are the expected outcomes?

For Africa, it is the improvement in production of export crops that hold the most promise and for which the new measures are intended. One boon to agriculture that is supposedly wrought by structural adjustment is better prices to direct producers and the unburdening of the peasantry of extremely inefficient bureaucracies that have thus far controlled marketing channels — the delivery of essential inputs and even incentive goods in the rural areas. It is argued that 'privatization' of these activities will bring to the peasantry the benefits of free enterprise and competition (Mkandawire, 13).

Mkandawire poses the fundamental question of whether it is prices or structural constraints that account for low production, or what are the supply elasticities of agricultural output? He notes thus:

Two pieces of evidence suggest that the 'getting prices right' may be too simplistic a solution. First, there is the evidence of extremely low supply elasticities. — A World Bank study shows that although poor price and exchange rate policies have had generally negative impact on agricultural performance, such policies are not the most important factors explaining agricultural performance in Africa (*ibid.*, 13-14).

Mkandawire suggests that in general food crop prices have grown much faster than those of export crops and yet food production has not increased. This evidence, he says, suggests that there are many other structural factors which continue to blunt the effects of price changes on output. These include technological, organisational, institutional constraints, poor infrastructure etc. He also notes that other critics point out that while new adjustment measures may improve incentives to farmers, they may adversely affect production by weakening the state's capacity to maintain vital infrastructure and providing extension services, by increasing the cost of agro-inputs.

There is a widespread tendency for governments to apply the largest budget cuts to expenditures on infrastructure and directly productive activities. The negative effects of such cuts on agricultural production may well exceed the positive impact of incentives.

Pro-SAPs proponents have countered this view arguing that these cuts may force a re-orientation of expenditures in favour of agriculture or even result in a better management of the reduced resources. Mkandawire doubts that such gains could cancel out the effects of declines in overall expenditure. Even some pro-price reform enthusiasts are skeptical. Mkandawire cites their skepticism thus:

These reforms required complementary public investments in the field . . . (of research, transport and credit) to realise the potential but during the period under examination, the level of such investments has been radically reduced. Much of the hard work which African governments did to boost agricultural supply through amendments to price and exchange-rate policy during the early 1980s, . . . was undone by their simultaneous cuts in government development expenditure which dismantled much of the pre-existing structure of support services to farmers (*ibid.*, 15).

In any case, it is wrong to take the countryside as a homogeneous mass likely to benefit uniformly from the market and price reforms. The rural sector is differentiated. Mkandawire writes thus:

It should be noted here that the growing social differentiation in African agriculture and the tendencies of different social groups to grow different

crops, responses to incentives will tend to differ from class to class and commodity to commodity. In Zambia, for instance, high supply elasticities were largely confined to a number of commodities largely produced by large-scale capitalist farmers. More importantly, the responses of the different crops will depend on who produces them, for what and with what means. Social differentiation in access to means may therefore, largely account for output responses and composition (*ibid.*, 17).

This fact was brought out by Zinyama (already cited here). C.K. Eicher makes the point even more strongly:

It is also time to stop thinking of African countries and sub-regions as if they were all the same. Because of vast differences in initial population densities, natural resource endowments, rainfall and current availability of technology, there are vastly different prospects for agricultural development among individual countries and sub-regions (in Stewart *et al* eds. *op. cit.*; 100).

Eicher, emphasising the pivotal role to be played by African smallholder middle farmers, highlighted the social differentiation within the African farmer population: He noted the following processes in this context:

- *Resource-poor farmers*: a new class of resource poor farmers was emerging as a result of rapid population growth and declining farm sizes. Such farmers included the growing landless and bands of refugees from established social fabrics. They were net buyers of food and sellers of their family labour-power to resource-rich farmers. They engage in a range of non-farm activities to generate additional income to secure basic needs. (*The poor rural strata or the poor peasantry* — my terminology).
- *Small-holders and headers*: These are farmers and headers who rely mainly on family labour to produce food, livestock and export crops for domestic and international markets (*The middle rural strata or middle peasantry* — my terminology).
- *Middle or 'progressive' farmers*: They operate productive activities by use of family and hired labour, a pair of draught animals or hire of tractor services. They are not terribly risk-averse and can therefore risk farm innovation, provide seasonal jobs to resource-poor farmers and generate a marketable surplus. (For Zinyama, they are the rural strata that can be found in Master Farmer training clubs):

Membership of farmer training groups is also differentiated in terms of social status and age. First, members tend to be drawn from the middle and upper social strata of the rural population, that is, from households who already possess adequate land, farming implements and cattle. They are also more likely to have greater access to sources of cash — with which to purchase farm inputs such as hybrid seed and chemical fertilizers. These

groups therefore exclude the poorest of the farming population (Zinyama *op. cit.*, 52). (The rich peasants, my words).

- *Large-scale farmers*: These occupy, own and operate commercial farms, estates and plantations. They include the foreign-owned land properties. A new class of such commercial farmers is emerging from retired army personnel, merchants, active and retired civil servants and other members of the new professional class. They are usually absentee farmers for whom the term 'soldier or telephone farmers' has been coined. They amass political power and are skilled in extracting subsidies and services from the state and international agencies for the purposes of "getting agriculture moving" (The rural bourgeoisie proper — my words) (Eicher *op. cit.* 86).

Eicher says three implications arise from this pattern of rural social stratification. The first is that diverse policies, technological packages and institutional innovations are needed to deal with these social types in the countryside. A "development strategy that relies on a standard package of 'technological bullets' is too narrow to assist the diverse agrarian structure in Africa today" (*ibid.*, 86-87).

Eicher says the second implication is that "raising food prices may not be in the best interest of resource-poor farmers who are often net food buyers, except indirectly by increasing the demand for labour on middle and larger farms" (*ibid.*). To assist resource-poor farmers requires the promotion of rural small-scale industry, putting together special credit programmes for traders, food-for-work and school feeding programmes. The third implication is that the middle farmer should be 'resuscitated' and acknowledged as a positive force in "getting agriculture moving". Their low potential for risk aversion and high potential for innovative endeavour should be tapped.

Eicher concludes with a call for support to smallholders and middle farmers. He argues for a strong investment in human resources and research to break Africa's dependence on so-called foreign 'experts' (expatriates). He argues that from Zimbabwe's green revolution in maize production comes the important lesson of investment in research on traditional crops and technologies suitable for low rainfall areas. It is not state roll back that should be emphasised, according to Eicher, but increased public expenditure on agriculture (*ibid.*, 100).

Helleiner's interrogation of the privatisation or deceleration of public intervention in agriculture concluded with a call for a strong public intervention:

Obviously, the role of public sector activity in the provision of infrastructure, research and development, appropriate supportive institutions and the like remains critical to such longer-term outcomes. The role of the government may therefore be larger, not smaller, . . . But it will be different (Helleiner, *op. cit.* 59).

The question Helleiner next addresses is: what then should such a role of the state be? That there has been no consideration of this issue points to little attention

to such a role with respect to export marketing and input supply. He concludes that in the African circumstances of poorly developed transport systems and other infrastructure, great distances between producers and ports, and a relatively dispersed population, large margins between export and producer prices are to be expected and are not *prima facie* evidence of inefficiency. This, therefore, means that it is not a question of privatisation *per se*, but other structural constraints:

... there may be much to be gained by the stimulation of more competitive private activity in pre-export activities — bulking, transport, credit, processing, etc. and in input distribution. But the general case for the abolition of state export marketing boards for smallholder crops is a dubious one. When in normal circumstances there are potential advantages from government ownership of these enterprises, 'modern management practices must be employed within them if the potential is to be realised . . . (*ibid.*, 60).

Nevertheless there is as yet no evidence that state export marketing boards are anymore inefficient than private ones. Writes Helleiner:

There have not yet been any careful across-the-board studies of the efficiency consequences of African privatisation, or efficiency improvements within still public enterprises. One (World) Bank study notes that apparent improvements in public enterprise finances are attributable largely to cuts in investment and price increases rather than to efficiency gains (*ibid.*, 61).

The conclusion to this review can only be by posing the questions for the study. Given these complex problems relating to the abstract and the concrete regarding structural adjustment programmes, how does the farming population in the Shamva District evaluate the impact of the reform programme all round? Given the stark fact of rural social stratification, do farmers' organisations particularly, those representing the smallholder sector succeed in representing the interests of members effectively? Are the organisations organically linked to their social bases? What is the impact of this social differentiation on ability to represent effectively the farmers' interests? Given the perceived centrality of the role of the small farmer in Africa's agricultural development strategy, how are the farmers' organisations and state agencies combining effort in provision of training and other supportive services to boost the productive intervention of this farmer? These and many other questions are in our mind as we unravel the farmers' situation in the Shamva District at the close of the first phase of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in Zimbabwe.

PART TWO: METHODOLOGY

Section 3: Methodology, Coverage and Profile of Respondents

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research started with a literature review covering some studies and theoretical raw material on farmers' organisations and SAPs.

The study used a political economy approach in order to understand:

- i) the ways in which farm interests are organised,
- ii) the strategies/activities they have adopted to deal with ESAP and
- iii) factors contributing to successes or failures in assisting members to improve their livelihoods.

The political economy approach was particularly useful in the Zimbabwean context because of the historically strong relationship between the state and selected societal interests. The study concentrated on understanding the political economy of rural economic reform at the district level. Research is restricted to the district level except when the farmers' organisations in question are national level organisations such as the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU) and the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU). With these, the research spilled to cover representatives at the national, provincial and district levels.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected using both the quantitative and qualitative methods. This research report emanates from analysis of data obtained from the survey of small and some large scale commercial farmers in the Shamva District. The survey was to investigate the effectiveness of farmers' organisations in:

- i) responding to members' demands in terms of types of activities organised, and
- ii) in implementing those activities.

It was also to find out what the farmers' assessment of the impact of ESAP was on their productive activities and livelihoods.

3.2.1 Sampling Procedure

A stratified random sample of smallholder farmers was drawn up from the major sample of the main survey (This study was part of a larger study of the Shamva District) of the research project. The small farmers' organisation sample took a random 50% of the sample population in all the wards and villages covered in the main survey. The same households covered in the main survey were covered by this study of farmers' organisations. The large-scale commercial farms covered were being the number known to exist in Shamva. Data was collected through use of a survey questionnaire.

The study on smallholder organisations used a structured questionnaire and the sampling frame ensured adequate representation of members and non-members of farmers' organisations. The sample was also stratified according to:

- i) dryland versus irrigated,
- ii) higher rainfall versus lower rainfall areas, and
- iii) distance to business centres or growth points; variables identified by previous studies as influencing the level of smallholder agricultural production and marketing as well as organisational activity.

3.2.2 Fieldwork

The field study was undertaken by a team of seven enumerators who included one University of Zimbabwe student and six 'O' Level school-leavers recruited from the area under study. They were supervised by the principal researcher/author. Enumerators were recruited and trained during the first ten days of the field study period during the second week of January 1996 by the principal researcher at the DAPP Ponesai Vanhu Centre in the operational area.

3.2.3 Data Analysis

Data was processed and fed into the computer and then analysed using SPSS. For more qualitative data collection, focus group interviews were carried out together with further interviews with key informant agents in parastatal, farmer organisations and private agencies operating in the district in May/June 1997. A peer group workshop was held in Chinhoyi in early March 1997 at which researchers on the team presented first drafts of their findings. There were subsequent confirmation of results workshops in Shamva itself in March 1997 at which randomly selected people from the target population were invited. Further focus group interviews were conducted in May-June 1997 covering selected wards but representative of all types of smallholder farmer organisations found to exist in the district.

With such methodological rigour, there is sufficient confidence that the results being presented here are a strongly accurate representation of what is on the ground in Shamva.

3.3 COVERAGE

The survey, which was undertaken between January 10 and February 16, 1997 covered eight wards in the Shamva District. Altogether 212 households were surveyed from these wards. The names of the wards and the number of households covered in each ward (with the number of respondents broken down by sex) appear on Table 2 below.

Table 2: Number of Respondents by Ward by Sex

Ward	Number of respondents by sex			Percentage
	Male	Female	Total	
Chihuri 1	3	11	14	7
%	21	79	100	
Mupfure 2	7	3	10	5
%	70	30	100	
Goora 3	11	15	26	13
%	31	69	100	
Mutumba 7	15	20	35	18
%	43	57	100	
Chidembo 9	13	21	34	17
%	38	62	100	
Gono 11	20	19	39	19
%	51	49	100	
Mupfurudzi 14	16	8	24	12
%	67	33	100	
Sanye Rest. 16	9	8	17	9
%	53	47	100	
TOTAL	94	105	199	100
%	47	53	100	

Missing Cases: Total = 13 or 6%

The Wards covered were Chihuri Ward 1, Mupfure 2, Goora 3, Mutumba 7, Chidembo 9, Gono 11, Mupfurudzi 14, and Sanye Resettlement 16. Altogether there are 212 households covered but only 199 responded with adequate information. These 212 represent 50% of the major sample. There were 94 males and 105 females among the respondents, each representing their households. Of all the households covered therefore, 94% responded well and that is a perfect statistical basis for reaching tight conclusions.

Of the 34 LSCFs covered, 19 responded. This represents 56% of all the LSCFs said to be in Shamva. On the fuller detail regarding coverage of the LSCFs, see the chapter by Matanda and Jeche on the same project. The rest of the foregoing detail on the profile of respondents relates to smallholder C.A.s' respondents.

3.3.1 Profile of Respondents

3.3.1.1 Religion

Generally, the greater part (40%) of the respondents were of Apostolic Faith religion. This underlines the dominance of this religion among the households in Shamva. A significant proportion (32%) follow own traditional beliefs. The Christian religion is insignificant save for the Salvation Army denomination (17%) (See Table 3(a) below.)

Table 3(a): Number of Respondent Households by Religion

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
Traditional	1	68	32.1	32.2	32.2
Apostolic	2	85	40.1	40.3	72.5
Salvation Army	3	36	17	17.1	89.6
Roman Catholic	4	8	3.8	3.8	93.4
Church of Christ	5	2	0.9	0.9	94.3
Other	6	12	5.7	5.7	100
Total		211	99.5	~	

Missing Cases = 1 or 0.5%

Table 3(b): Number of Respondents by Ward by Religion

Ward	RELIGIOUS GROUP						Total
	Traditional Freq	Apostolic Freq	Salvation Army Freq	Roman Catholic Freq	Church of Christ Freq	Other Freq	
Chihuri 1	3	7	1	—	1	2	14
%	21	50	7	—	7	15	100
Mupfure 2	1	9	—	—	—	—	10
%	10	90	—	—	—	—	100
Goora 3	7	11	6	1	—	1	26
%	27	42	23	4	—	4	100
Mutumba 7	6	12	11	3	—	3	35
%	17	34	32	8	—	9	100
Chidembo 9	9	14	8	2	1	—	34
%	26	41	24	6	3	—	100
Gono 11	22	6	8	1	—	3	40
%	55	15	20	3	—	7	100
Mupfurudzi 14	9	11	1	1	—	1	23
%	39	48	4	4	—	5	100
Sanye Rest 16	8	9	—	—	—	—	17
%	47	53	—	—	—	—	100
Total							199

Missing cases 13 or 6%

3.3.1.2 Age of Respondents

There were 98 males and 113 females covered, being 46% and 54% respectively. The greater proportion of respondents was in the 31 to 60 age group. There is a significant proportion of very old people (over 61) in both sexes, with more of the females in the over 76 group.

Table 4: Age of Respondents by Sex

Age Group	Frequency			Valid Percent		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
18-30	15	18	33	15.3	15.9	16
31-45	33	39	72	33.7	34.5	34
46-60	31	33	64	31.6	29.2	30
61-75	17	15	32	17.3	13.3	15
76+	2	8	10	2.1	7.1	5
Total	98	113	211	100.0	100.0	100.0
%	46	54	100			

3.3.1.3 Educational Level of Respondents

Table 5(a): Level of Education

Value Label	Freq	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
None	31	14.6	15	15
Grade 1-7	119	56.1	57.8	72.8
Form 1-2	32	15.1	15.5	88.3
'O' Level +	24	11.3	11.7	100
Missing	6	2.8	Missing	
Total	212			

Table 5 (b): Level of Education by Sex

Value Label	Frequency			Percent		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
None	6	25	31	6	23	15
Grade 1-7	53	66	118	56	59	58
Form 1-2	21	11	32	22	10	15
'O' Level +	15	8	24	16	8	12
Total	95	110	205	100	100	100

Table 5(a) shows that above 15% of the respondents had no education at all. Nearly 60% had education between Grades 1 and 7, 16% up to Form 2 and 12% up to 'O' level. There is a significant level of illiteracy which definitely needs to be further reduced. Educational level by sex shows that illiteracy is higher among females whose proportion also significantly declines among those with Form 2 and above (See Table 5(b)).

Table 5(c): Educational Level by Religion

Religion	Level of Education									
	None		Up to G. 7		Up to F. 2		'O' Level+		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Traditional	9	29	38	32	13	41	6	25	66	32
%	14		57		20		9		100	
Apostolic	11	35	48	41	9	27	14	59	82	40
%	13		59		11		17		100	
Salvation Army	6	19	23	19	5	16	1	4	35	17
%	17		66		14		3		100	
Roman Catholic	3	10	3	3	1	3	1	4	8	4
%	38		38		12		12		100	
Church of Christ	1	3			1	3			2	1
%	50				50				100	
Other	1	4	6	5	3	10	2	8	12	6
%	8		50		25		17		100	
Total	31	100	118	100	32	100	24	100	205	100
%	15		57		16		12		100	

Missing Cases 7 or 3%

The Table above shows that there is little correlation between type of religion and level of education. In all the religious types, the bulk of the adherents had education up to Grade 7. All of them had some respondents without education although this situation is more pronounced among the traditional belief adherents and the Apostolics. But these also have a significant proportion of their adherents having 'O' level and above education. The only conclusion to be drawn on these variables is that the situation reflects the dominance of certain religious types rather than influence by education *per se*.

3.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The major limitation of this study is that although it was a two-year programmed project, its methodological approach was one of a one-shot survey. One-shot surveys have limitations of being unable to establish a trend. What is presented here therefore is only a photograph of the situation between 1996 and 1997.

Also, there had been no pre-reform study of the area so that a comparison could be made between the pre-reform and post-reform periods.

Another limitation is with some aspects of the data. The poor database with respect to the LSCFs has restricted analysis in a significant way. The rate of non-response on many aspects is high enough to cause concern on a project of this nature and has effectively limited the comparative analysis.

PART THREE: FINDINGS

Section Four: Training in Agriculture

4.0 FARMERS' TRAINING

About as fifth of our respondents had Master Farmers' Certificates and 14.2% were Master Farmer Trainees. The overwhelming majority did not have this training and were not even undergoing such training (See Tables 6 and 7).

4.1 MASTER FARMERS

Table 6 shows that all in all, only 20% of the respondents giving information on this variable were certified Master Farmers. This percentage is generally low and the numbers of certified Master Farmers needs to improve. Mutumba seems to have the highest proportion of certified master farmers although this is not any much higher than Mupfurudzi, Chidembo and Sanye Resettlement. The situation in Chihuri, Mupfure, Goora and Gono needs to drastically improve. Whether this situation is improving will be gauged by analysis of the numbers in Master Farmer training which we look into next.

4.2 MASTER FARMER TRAINEES

The data on Table 7 shows that there is no Master Farmer training in Chihuri; it is very low in Mutumba, Goora, Mupfurudzi and Sanye. It is even lower in Chidembo. Mupfure and Gono have higher incidence of Master Farmer training. However, Master Farmer training is generally low at 15% overall in the wards covered. This is even lower than the incidence of certified Master Farmers. The conclusion can only be that master farmer training needs to be improved or expanded and, particularly so in the Chihuri, Mutumba, Chidembo, Mupfurudzi and Sanye Resettlement Wards.

4.3 MASTER FARMER TRAINING AND RELIGION

Next we consider whether there is any relationship between Master Farmer training and religious background.

Table 8 shows very little if any correlation between religious background and master farmer training. Master farmer certificate holders are almost non-existent among Catholics and were actually non-existent among Church of Christ and other religious adherents. They are significantly present among traditional believers, Apostolics and Salvation Army adherents. We can only conclude that this situation reflects the predominance of these latter religious groups rather than any religious influence on attitude to master farmer training. A further elaboration of this should emerge after analysis of the religious background of those who were in master farmer training at the time of the survey (See Table 9).

Table 6: Certified Master Farmers by Ward

Master Farmers	WARD										Total Freq	Total %						
	Chihuri Freq %	Mupfure Freq %	Goora Freq %	Mutumba Freq %	Chidembo Freq %	Gono Freq %	Mupfurudzi Freq %	Sanye Rest Freq %	Total Freq	Total %								
Yes	2	14	1	10	4	15	9	26	8	24	6	15	6	25	4	24	40	20
No	12	86	9	90	22	85	26	74	26	76	34	85	18	75	13	76	160	80
TOTAL	14	100	10	100	26	100	35	100	34	100	40	100	24	100	17	100	200	100

Missing Cases 12 or 25%

Table 7: Master Farmer Trainees by Ward

Master Farmer Trainees	WARD										Total Freq	Total %						
	Chihuri Freq %	Mupfure Freq %	Goora Freq %	Mutumba Freq %	Chidembo Freq %	Gono Freq %	Mupfurudzi Freq %	Sanye Rest Freq %	Total Freq	Total %								
Yes	0	0	3	30	4	15	3	9	1	3	11	28	4	17	3	18	29	15
No	14	100	7	70	22	85	32	91	33	97	29	72	20	83	14	82	171	85
TOTAL	14	100	10	100	26	100	35	100	34	100	40	100	24	100	17	100	200	100

Missing Cases 12 or 25%

Table 8: Master Farmer Training & Religion

Master Farmers	RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND								Total Freq	%		
	Traditional Freq	Apostolic Freq	Salvation Army		Roman Catholic		Church of Christ				Other Freq	
			%	%	Freq	%	Freq	%				Freq
Yes	13	19	22	8	22	1	13	0	0	0	41	19
No	55	81	66	78	28	7	87	2	100	12	170	81
TOTAL	68	100	85	100	36	8	100	2	100	12	211	100

Missing Cases 1 or 1%

Table 9: Master Farmer Trainees by Religion

Master Farmer Trainee	RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND								Total Freq	%		
	Traditional Freq	Apostolic Freq	Salvation Army		Roman Catholic		Church of Christ				Other Freq	
			%	%	Freq	%	Freq	%				Freq
Yes	13	19	13	15	2	0	0	0	0	2	30	14
No	55	81	72	85	34	8	100	2	100	10	181	86
TOTAL	68	100	85	100	36	8	100	2	100	12	211	100

Missing Cases 1 or 1%

Again the situation is the same as with certified master farmers. There are no master farmer trainees among Catholics and Church of Christ adherents. They have a significant presence among traditionalists and Apostolics. They exist to a lesser extent among Salvation Army adherents. We cannot conclude that Protestantism equals anti-farmers' training since this training is significant among Salvation Army adherents and Apostolics. It also exists among those of other religious persuasions. The conclusion again can only be that the situation reflects predominance of certain religious groups rather than an attitudinal influence by religion. However, the religious groups such as the Salvation Army and the Roman Catholic could be persuaded to influence their members more positively towards agricultural training.

4.4 CERTIFIED MASTER FARMERS BY SEX OF RESPONDENTS

Table 10: Certified Master Farmers by Sex

Master Farmers	SEX OF RESPONDENTS					
	Males		Females		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	22	22	19	17	41	19
No	76	78	94	83	170	81
TOTAL	98	100	113	100	211	100

Missing Cases = 1 or 1%

The proportion of certified master farmers is higher among males than among females. This would lead us to recommend that more training of women should be emphasized. The percentage difference between the sexes is, however, not that big although it does exist (see Table 10).

4.5 MASTER FARMER TRAINEES BY SEX

Table 11: Master Farmer Trainees by Sex

Master Farmer Trainees	SEX OF RESPONDENTS					
	Males		Females		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	22	22	7	6	29	14
No	76	78	106	94	182	86
TOTAL	98	100	113	100	211	100

Missing Cases = 1 or 1%

Table 11 shows that there is even less master farmer training among women. This situation is quite untenable given that women constitute a significant proportion of the communal agricultural productive force. More emphasis

should be directed on agricultural training of women. During the workshops and focus groups meetings the participation of women was put on the table. One female Master Farmer said she was the only woman during training. Women were reluctant to join. Another problem was that the training itself aimed at the household, so the man would go for it while the woman performed the domestic chores. The personpower shortage also hampered the participation of both spouses if the children were of school going age. Nobody remained at home. However, the point remains that women have to be encouraged, especially the younger ones, to join agricultural training. Zinyama, who is cited in this study, found that younger women whose husbands worked in towns were not keen to participate in such activities.

On this aspect, just as the Zinyama study found out, our first hypothesis that resource-poor or women farmers would less likely feature in farmers' organisations appears to be vindicated. Master farmer training was conducted through groups of farmers i.e. group training. If women farmers were not in such training then, they were not going to be able to influence political and social policy decisions through any farmer association or group.

4.6 MASTER FARMERS BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Table 12: Certified Master Farmers by Educational Level

Certified Master Farmers	None		LEVEL OF EDUCATION				'O' Level+		Total	
	Freq	%	Up to G. 7 Freq	%	Up to F. 2 Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	3	10	23	19	8	25	5	21	39	19
No	28	90	96	81	24	75	19	79	167	81
TOTAL	31	100	119	100	32	100	24	100	206	100

Missing Cases 6 or 3%

According to data on Table 12 above, the educational level of respondents does seem to influence attitude to master farmer training. The percentage proportion of master farmers is highest among those with education up to Form 2 and 'O' level. It decreases with the decrease in level of education. A point to make though is that no one can be a Master Farmer without knowing how to read and write. Therefore, having no education at all does not seem to mean not knowing how to read and write. It can only be concluded that respondents took 'no education' to mean not having attended formal school. 10% of those with "no education" at all were master farmers. These people were not illiterate.

The conclusion we make from this analysis is that adult education should be encouraged and facilities provided as this would seem to give confidence to the rural population to join master farmer training. This point should emerge also

in the analysis of the educational level of those in master farmer training at the time of the survey.

4.7 MASTER FARMER TRAINEES AND LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Table 13: Master Farmer Trainees by Level of Education

Master Farmer Trainees	None		LEVEL OF EDUCATION						Total	
	Freq	%	Up to G. 7		Up to F. 2		'O' Level+		Freq	%
Yes	0	0	21	18	5	16	4	17	30	15
No	31	100	98	82	27	84	20	83	176	85
TOTAL	31	100	119	100	32	100	24	100	206	100

Missing Cases 6 or 3%

Data on Table 13 above confirms that education is important for participation in master farmer training. None of the respondents without education were in master farmer training at the time of the survey. It does serve to emphasize the point that adult education should be made available to the rural cultivators who should be encouraged to enrol and take part in agricultural training. There is however no evidence that the higher the level of education the greater the potential to take part in agricultural training. However, there is ample evidence that some level of education positively influences attitude to participation in agricultural training such as master farmer training.

4.8 MASTER FARMER TRAINING AND MEMBERSHIP OF FARMERS' GROUPS

Next we consider whether there is any relationship between membership of farmers' groups and master farmer training.

4.8.1 Certified Master Farmers and Group Membership

First we look at certified master farmers and their relationship to farmers' groups or if any household member belonged to such groups.

Table 14: Certified Master Farmers and Group Membership

Certified Master Farmers	GROUP MEMBERSHIP					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	29	25	12	12	41	19
%	71		29		100	
No	86	75	85	88	171	81
%	50		50		100	
TOTAL	115	100	97	100	212	100

There appears to be only a slight difference between master farmers and non-master farmers in terms of membership of farmers' groups. Only 25% of those who belonged to farmers' groups were master farmers. Only 12% of the non-group members were master farmers. Thus, it does not follow that if one is a master farmer one will automatically join a farmers' group. However, there is a point to make that if one is a master farmer one is very likely to be a member of a farmers' group as well. The reverse however is not necessarily true because the propensity towards group membership and non-group membership among non-master farmers was fifty-fifty.

4.8.2 Master Farmer Trainees by Group Membership

Table 15: Master Farmer Training by Membership of Farmers' Group

Master Farmer Trainees	GROUP MEMBERSHIP					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	20	17	10	10	30	14
%	67		33		100	
No	95	83	87	90	182	86
%	52		48		100	
TOTAL	115	100	97	100	212	100

The situation with master farmer trainees is the same as that with master farmers. The percentage proportions are however lower. Only 17% of the group members were master farmer trainees while only 10% of the non-group members were trainees. Those who were master farmer trainees were very likely to be group members. However, again the converse was not necessarily true since more than half of the non-Master Farmer trainees were group members.

Generally on Master Farmer training, during the focus groups, it was established for a fact that Agritex preferred training farmers in groups. Although there was no official discrimination on participation, it was expected that a trainee should at least have some implements and land in order to put the ideas into practice. It would appear therefore, that those who are resource-poor in these terms would be barred from such training. Agritex had stopped the practice of on-farm training whereby the Extension Worker had a field where he demonstrated his skills and the local farmers learned by his example.

One possible exclusion mechanism is the literacy issue. Illiterate farmers could join the training but because at 'field days' and during the training, the trainees were expected to take notes, one had to at least be able to read and write. Moreover, if one wanted to advance to Advanced Master Farmer training, they had to be literate and understand English. In any case, the situation had even been reviewed from the old practice whereby anyone could join. It is now

required that for ordinary Master Farmer training, one has to have a booklet where they fill in their hectareage, pegging and other activities. "This means that if a person has no field, or education, they cannot fill in this booklet", said a member of a focus group of Master Farmers and Trainees. "So in a way, nowadays they discriminate against those without resources and education", he said, adding that some extension officers were "lazy and did not even write down notes for their trainees, yet some were good". He said "some teachers actually use chalk and a board. Others are lazy and don't put much effort because they expect you all to have been through 'O' level".

Clearly, there is discrimination against the resource-poor and the illiterate farmers in the provision of this training. The service delivery system also seems to bar greater utilisation by women.

Agritex's officers at the results confirmation workshops confirmed that Master Farmer training was low. They blamed the farmers for not coming forward, not even their group or club leaders. One officer suggested that:

May be those who give input and financial loans should give only to holders of Master Farmer Certificates. That would force more people to join because they seem to come only when some creditor or donor insists on training.

The other problem cited by Agritex workers was of some farmers not taking the training seriously. They would attend erratically. This led to their being disqualified. "It is important that one considers oneself a student and attend two years continuously when on this training, otherwise the certificate will be meaningless", she said. Once disqualified, the farmers were demoralised.

There was also the issue of training in groups. It was said people had not appreciated the importance of such mode of training because they no longer saw what to compare with. People who joined groups were not necessarily united with one purpose. Some had an idea of rearing cattle, others just chickens, some other things. When they saw no experience to learn from, they deserted and the group itself falls away. An Agritex officer, rather dejectedly commented thus:

"We really do not know where to start with this Master Farmer Training. Even this group approach is not doing."

In summary, both the farmers and Agritex seemed to agree that there were problems with the current Master Farmer Training Programme. Although the effort of Agritex was generally commended, a review needs to be done. If our treatment of the question of training the smallholder farmers was anything to go by in the literature review, there can be no justification for curtailment of public resources for this training. While the group approach remains a good idea in so far as more can be reached, on-farm demonstrations rather than just field-days and competitions, are also important. A way has to be found to revamp this training if the small producer has to recapture and retain his means of survival in the countryside. Without this training, smallholder farmers are ill-equipped to face the music of the structural adjustment programme.

What is more, this training was producing leaders of others. Master Farmers in the focus groups in Mutumba Ward confirmed that some of them were chosen to be group leaders because of the example they were showing to others. "If you are a leader who is doing well in farming, people will listen to you better than when your field is just as bad as theirs. When you try to talk to them with your bad field, they will just laugh and go away!" said one member during the meeting.

However, it must be emphasized that Master Farmer training is not the only form of training which exists for farmers. However, for the extension service it seemed to be the main form and our respondents indicated it as the main form existing.

Section Five: Small Farmers' Organisations

5.0 MEMBERSHIP OF FARMERS' ORGANISATIONS

Fifty-four percent of the respondents claimed that they or some members of their households belonged to certain farmers' groups. 46% did not belong to any group. Such groups included cotton growers groups (under the Cotton Company of Zimbabwe, the so-called Cotco Groups); the AFC groups (organised to access credit facilities from the Agricultural Finance Corporation, the so-called AFC Groups); the ZFU groups (Groups of the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union); the Chibuku Group (groups growing crops to supply Delta Corporation subsidiaries (Chibuku Breweries) in the brewing industry; grazing groups which operate grazing schemes; Tobacco Associations which comprise members who grow tobacco (the so-called ZTA groups i.e. groups of the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association); Fishing groups whose members engage in fishing and other groups which include non-farmer groups such as political and religious ones. We will examine members' participation and the activities of each group one by one.

5.1 COTTON COMPANY GROUPS OR COTCO GROUPS

About 37% of the respondents belonged or had members of their households belonging to this group. As many as 63% did not belong to this group. It emerges from the major study that 55% of the respondents in Shamva grew cotton. Not all who grew cotton belonged to Cotco groups (See the chapters by Arnaiz and by Masuko in this monograph).

5.1.1 Type of Cotco Group

The type of Cotco group that most belonged to was the Loan group. About 92% of those who belonged to the Cotco group belonged to the Loan group. People received input loans to grow cotton in order to sell to the Cotton Company of Zimbabwe. Only 1% mentioned belonging to the marketing type of Cotco group.

However, it must be stated that the line is very thin between the loan group and the marketing group. Table 16 shows what the activities of the Cotco groups were.

Table 16: Activities of the Cotco Group

Activity	No. of Respondents Participating	
	Freq	%
Getting Loans	49	70
Marketing Output	1	1
Growing Garden Crops	1	1
Growing Crops on Contract	9	13
Farming	7	10
Other	3	5
TOTAL	70	100

The main activity of the Cotco group is obviously getting loans for cotton farmers who market their cotton in turn to the company. The next most important activity is growing crops on contract. That is obviously growing cotton to market to the company. This is almost the same as the loan activity. It is also the same as cotton farming.

5.1.2 Membership of Cotco Group and Farmers' Training

Below we consider membership of the Cotco group among master farmers and trainee master farmers.

5.1.3 Master Farmers and Cotco Group Membership

Table 17: Certified Master Farmers and Cotco Group Membership

Master Farmers	COTCO GROUP MEMBERSHIP					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	21	27	20	15	41	19
%	51		49		100	
No	57	73	114	85	171	81
%	33		67		100	
TOTAL	78	100	134	100	212	100

Table 17 shows that a small majority of master farmers were members of the Cotco group. However, that up to 49% were not members should pose questions as to why this is so. One explanation could be that many of those master farmers did not need the loans that the Cotco group arranged or they simply got the

loans on their own. We further analyse this below where we consider to which type of Cotco group master farmers belonged.

Of all the master farmers who were members of the Cotco group, 21% were members of the Loan group. The rest did not state which type they belonged to.

Table 18: Trainee Master Farmers and Cotco Group Membership

Master Farmer Trainees	COTCO GROUP MEMBERSHIP					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	13	17	17	13	30	14
%	43		57		100	
No	65	83	117	87	182	86
%	36		64		100	
TOTAL	78	100	134	100	212	100

Only 17% of the Cotco group members were master farmer trainees. However, of all those who were master farmer trainees, up to 43% were Cotco group members. Although this proportion is slightly lower than that among certified master farmers, it is still reasonably high. Again, that up to 57% of the master farmer trainees were not Cotco group members raises some questions. Why did master farmer trainees join the Cotco group?

Of all the master farmer trainees who were Cotco group members, 77% were members of the Loan group. Thus, the main reason for membership was to get input loans. It means those who were not members of the Cotco group either did not need such loans or organised them on their own or were barred from getting such loans due to defaulted repayments. The rest of the trainee master farmers who were Cotco group members did not state which type they belonged to.

Farmers on the Resettlement Model A scheme were in the focus group discussing Cotco group membership and evaluating this type of organisation. They claimed that Cotco gave input loans to farmers to grow cotton and sell it to them but they (Cotco) discriminated against those (farmers) who had not planted cotton before. This was because the amount of input loan one got depended on previous performance. During this researcher's interview with Cotco in Bindura, it emerged that to an extent there was such discrimination, but the company was really being 'cautious' in taking risks. Cotco argued that it had three groups of farmers viz those who were new in growing cotton and new in joining the Cotco scheme (NN). Next were those who were new in the scheme but had grown cotton before (NS). The third were the old ones who have always been there in both cotton growing and the scheme (Old). Certain criteria were used in assessing the loans to the last two groups and that is where

history of past performance counted. With the first group, it was risky business, but the company did not turn away the applicant. They advised the applicant to buy own seed, compound fertilisers and then plant. After planting the applicant had to come and invite the company to assess the crop and then see what the needs were. "It is important to come early before the crop is damaged", said the agent. Some applicants believed that they were being turned away and then never returned or they returned too late to have their crops saved.

It appeared that the farmers had no clear understanding of this operating philosophy with respect to new applicants. Farmers however criticized Cotco for not giving them the inputs like fertilizers as per their requirements. This was in fact a bitter issue among farmers. They claimed that there was a rigid policy of giving 25 kg of seed (enough for one hectare) and only two bags of fertilizer (not enough for a hectare). Agritex was said to recommend six bags of fertilizer for a hectare but Cotco would not budge. Farmers ended up with too much seed. A senior chairman of the Cotco group in the district put it bitterly this way:

I speak as a senior chairman of the Cotco group in the district. Yes, Cotco helps but it is actually damaging the people. This is because they do not give people adequate inputs. They give a person two bags of fertilizer per ha and 25 kg cotton seed. The cotton you grow only grows to a certain length and produces three balls. You have inadequate harvests. We made recommendations through ZFU and Agritex that we need four bags of fertiliser per ha but Cotco refused. When we went to their offices to explain why this requirement they bought 5 kg of buns and offered us transport back to our homes. We rejected their buns and transport. It is for this reason that farmers are unable to repay loans. They don't harvest enough because they don't get enough inputs.

Another member suggested that Cotco had no expert knowledge of assessing requirements of farmers in the cotton business:

They only started the loaning business when, with the 1991/92 drought they ended up with excess seed. They then decided to sell seed on loan to farmers and were getting a lot of money this way. They are thus benefitting a lot from the sale of seeds. In Zimbabwe there are different Natural Regions and Cotco does not consider this. Here, in Region IV, our soils need three bags of fertiliser per ha, not two. As a result of using two bags we are actually damaging our soils. It is better in Region II in Magazi. In our Region IV here, no one is being successful borrowing from Cotco . . . The fact that we were borrowing and producing nothing from the borrowed resources brings us to the conclusion that Cotco is impoverishing us. We would be better-off without their loans.

The impoverishment was precisely in what happened if loans were not repaid: "In the event that you fail to repay, they take your cultivator, plough, beds and

wardrobes. They take anything"! said the interviewee above. This point was echoed by several others.

Cotco itself acknowledged this problem but argued that the situation had changed. The limits had been set due to the numbers of farmers requiring assistance. 25 kg of seed was given for 2,5 ha. It came in that package and was not unpackaged. Fertilisers had to be rationed because of demand. The situation had changed but still Cotco had the guideline that if a farmer was getting 500 kg or less per ha, he/she was not financed because he/she showed no sign of improving. Financed easily were those getting 1 000 kg and marketing to the company. Assessment of crops was left to the group the farmer belonged to although at times Cotco itself assessed. Cotco argues that they collaborate with Agritex and are aware of the different Natural Regions. They indeed had different packages for different regions.

It appears though that there was some truth in the farmers' charges because Cotco admitted to most of them and said that they had just reviewed their approach:

We now go to the nitty-gritty. The problem though is that the farmers also do not come with adequate information on their needs so that we can assess an appropriate credit limit. They do not even bring their soil types for us to examine.

There was obviously a problem but one that was not insurmountable. Another problem cited by farmers concerned crop chemicals, the pesticides for the cotton crop. First, the farmers claimed these were not released on time. Second, farmers had to endure the cost of going to Cotco for these inputs instead of them being delivered nearer to them. Cotco was said to have only specific dates when they will release a pesticide. If farmers went before that time they got nothing even if their crop was being attacked by pests. A member of the focus group said:

Usually by the time we are given the pesticides the pests will have done damage and the cost of the pesticides becomes just an additional useless burden . . . The truth is, the pesticides will be there. Cotco will give you Rogor and 85 and tell you to 'go and spray. When the red ball worms appear, come for the other pesticides'. They will give you 85 again and you will see that the pest is resisting the chemical. You go and tell them that you now need Karate. They will not give you that until the demarcated date . . . They don't even come even if you ask them to come and see your crop.

The Cotco group chairman added that there was a big cost in terms of time and resources in shuttling to and from the Cotco depots for different inputs at different times.

"Large-scale commercial farmers do better because they do not suffer the way we do. They have their inputs delivered on time at once before the planting season starts and in adequate quantities", he said.

The farmers claimed that if the rains came early, the red ball worms came in December but the Cotco pesticide for this is only released in February. The crop would have been severely damaged.

When all this was put to Cotco, the response confirmed the alleged situation. Cotco argues that it has a corporate image to protect and the guidelines which it announced and followed on pesticide dates were recommendations from research, not arbitrary decisions:

We have a corporate image to protect and have the industry at heart. There are alternative pesticides that are available. Those should be used before February or else the pest will develop an immunity. After all, there are so many things (pesticides!) on the market which are sold by some companies without any respect as to the sensitivities of the cotton industry.

The official also indicated that some unscrupulous farmers had the habit of selling the pesticides and other inputs without using them. That is why the company was cautious. The company agreed that sometimes the inputs were not coming in on time and in adequate quantities:

This was poor forecasting on our part. Now we can forecast our requirements and place orders in time and get them. We did have the problem one and a half seasons ago when we did not have enough inputs. Then we tried to spread the cake we had so that everybody could get something though not adequate. We have now resolved this problem. We are now well stocked with inputs for the farmers.

On the issue of debt recovery and impounding of property, the official agreed that this was so and explained thus:

We deal with groups. Debt recovery is the responsibility of the group. If the group says it has failed to make its members pay, we advise it that it shall get no more credit as a group. We then impound the property of the defaulters. You see, we do not form the groups. It is the farmers who do so. We only advise them to get the people they know will not give problems. We appreciate natural disasters like droughts, water logging, etc, which lead to crop failures. If this happens, the farmers can even get the facility the following year but there is no automatic cancellation of debt. We still expect to be paid what we are owed. We tell the groups that they must make assessments of their crops together with Agritex and inform us during the season and not leave it until after harvesting and then say 'my crop failed, I have not harvested anything'. We suspect side marketing there and we would not tolerate that because our inputs would have been used on credit. That is why we impound property.

This problem is obviously a very vexed one and it requires both parties to find a solution that works. What is obvious is that it is not just 'prices' that matter to farmers but other 'constraints' such as these that need to be addressed. Many farmers were then resorting to selling their cotton to a private international company, Cargill, avoiding the commercialised former parastatal, Cotco.

Cargill did not give input loans. They only "bought the cotton and disappeared until the next season", said one farmer. They paid farmers on the spot while Cotco delayed as they took time to process stop orders before issuing cheques. At the time of rounding-off of the survey though, in the 1997 buying season, even Cotco was issuing cheques within 24 hours in order not to be outdone by the opposition. So competition had brought some advantages to the farmers.

Cargill gave no credit to farmers. It only sold planting seed for cash. It paid for the produce — maize and cotton — on the spot. It also asked farmers to form groups which would be registered. The company supplied the groups with empty bags and transport for produce if requested.

The company claims it does interact with farmers during and before the season starts, contrary to what some farmers suggested. It had a coordinator who attended both meetings with farmers and field days. The official was also sent out on request from farmers. The coordinator also explains to or shows the farmers how cotton grading is done. There was much liaison between the company, Agritex and the farmers' organisation (ZFU). Agritex communicated the problems of farmers to the company and the company invited the ZFU to its organised meetings.

There was no formal training offered to the farmers by the company except mere information on how the company operates. Its cotton grading system was also transparent and the farmer was free to enter the grading room and ask questions. If there was a dispute with the grading the farmer had a right to arbitration in the normal way as in Cotco.

Cotco itself was said to train farmers' leaders on how grading was done. Farmers complained that this was done in a shade under a special light. When they returned to their real life situation they could not advise others on how the grading was done because the cotton looked the same without that special light. Cotco agreed but could not help the situation. Cotco was also criticised for storing the farmers' cotton for too long in Shamva before taking it to Harare for grading. The cotton got spoiled and consequently fetched a lower grade. Farmers called for grading facilities in Shamva.

At the time of rounding up the research, competition was still hot with a price war going on between Cotco, Cargill and the Boka Group. The price war, though important for the farmer, was nevertheless not the 'only' thing that matters as we noted in the literature review. There are other structural constraints which are equally important.

There was the feeling that the economic reform programme had revealed the weaknesses of Cotco which were allegedly destroying it. Definitely, farmers were having misgivings about continued loyalty to Cotco. Membership of Cotco groups was dwindling, not growing. Some felt that Cotco would collapse as it would fail to reach its target of the marketed cotton. That meant there would not be enough for ginning. Farmers were disillusioned and did not like delays

with their payments as they had many immediate problems to resolve. Cargill was taking advantage of the situation. However, Cotco was bravely fighting back and modernising its operations and paying more attention to the farmers' concerns. The fuller outcome of the cut-throat competition unleashed by ESAP remains to be seen. However, it is the farmers with the resources, the know-how and the good infrastructure who are better placed to take advantage of this situation. The poor farmer remains a by-stander in his poverty! Our third hypothesis that poorer farmers were more likely to be subsistence producers and therefore less prone to being organised than better-off farmers who were inclined towards cash crop production and being organised has been proved to be true with respect to Cotco groups. Poorer farmers did not find it easy to grow cotton because of lack of facilities to do so. Cotco's criteria for giving inputs loans does discriminate against the poorer farmer who would then be unable to join a Cotco group. Only 37% of our respondents belonged to Cotco groups. It is recommended that a way be found to assist poorer farmers who would like to enter cotton production but do not have the resources, material and intellectual, to do so. There is no alternative to strong state intervention in this aspect as part of human resources development and of dynamising agriculture. The market forces cannot do this.

5.2 AFC GROUPS

Only 15% of the respondents were members of AFC groups. We will likewise examine the type of AFC groups that farmers were members of and the activities that these groups performed. The AFC groups which existed were the loan groups, the sorghum group and the irrigation group. The only group of significance is the loan group to which belonged 97% of all those who belonged to the AFC groups.

Table 19: Activities of AFC Groups

Activity	NO. OF FARMERS	
	Freq	%
Loans	23	72
Growing crops on contract	2	6
Farming	2	6
Other	5	16
Total	32	100

Clearly, getting loans or arranging credit facilities was the activity most farmers joined the AFC groups for. Other minor activities were growing crops on contract or doing other farming activities.

5.2.1 Master Farmers and AFC Groups

Next, we consider master farmers' membership of AFC groups and what activities they joined the groups for.

Table 20: Master Farmers and AFC Group Membership

Master Farmers	AFC GROUP MEMBERSHIP					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	11	34	30	17	41	19
%	27		73		100	
No	21	66	150	83	171	81
%	12		88		100	
TOTAL	32	100	180	100	212	100

Table 20 shows that only 27% of the master farmers were members of the AFC groups, and only 34% of the members of AFC groups were master farmers. Although this does indicate the low level of qualification of rural farmers, in the sense that very few were master farmers, it also shows that the greater majority of master farmers were not utilising the facilities of the AFC.

Ninety-one percent of all master farmers who were members of the AFC groups were loan group members. Thus, almost all joined in order for loans to be arranged for them. Others were members of the sorghum and irrigation groups but in our sample these were extremely negligible.

5.2.2 Trainee Master Farmers and AFC Groups

Table 21: Trainee Master Farmers and AFC Group Membership

Trainee Master Farmers	AFC GROUP MEMBERSHIP					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	8	25	22	12	30	14
%	27		73		100	
No	24	75	158	88	182	86
%	13		87		100	
Total	32	100	180	100	212	100

Twenty-seven percent of the master farmer trainees were AFC group members, and 25% of all AFC group members were master farmer trainees.

All the trainee master farmers who were AFC group members were members of the Loan Group. This means that they all joined in order to have credit facilities arranged for them.

It can be concluded that almost all master farmers and all the master farmer trainees joined the AFC in order to have access to credit facilities.

Regarding farmer's evaluation of AFC group membership and AFC services, there was widespread dissatisfaction with (a) the interests charged and (b) the fact that if a farmer failed to repay due to a disaster in the season, no more loans were available to him/her, (c) the group lending approach was hurting those farmers who were honest:

"Our problem with the AFC is that their interest rates keep on increasing. They used to be 5%, then 10% now 23%. This is a lot of money and at the end of the year you will owe them a lot of money. When you repay the loan and interest you remain with nothing", said one member during focus groups at Mupfurudzi Resettlement.

The AFC explains that it uses borrowed money and that money has interest. There is nothing that could be done about the interest rates because they are the cost of borrowing. Besides, 8% of the loan a farmer borrowed went to the AFC as "an administration fee". When asked by the author how the 8% was arrived at, the AFC explained that it reflected administration costs and the AFC alone determined this rate. This percentage could of course be rather excessive for a development-oriented institution. However, ESAP transformed the AFC into a commercial bank and perhaps focus should be made towards creation of a financial institution tailored for the smallholder farmer and not operating as a commercial bank.

On the group lending approach, one focus group member at Sanye Resettlement said:

When a person is starting-off, the AFC tells him/her to form a group in order to be eligible for a loan. But their condition is that in a group of 30 people, if one defaults then all of you are automatically disqualified from getting another loan. We tried to talk to them to change this condition and they would not budge. When we look at this system as farmers, the AFC is not helping us and most farmers are failing to make it. Their group lending scheme is not good for both the good and the bad farmer.

The point is that the AFC decided to adopt the group lending scheme precisely because it was difficult and costly to service small-farmers individually, and also so that the loan recovery rate would be improved through peer group pressure. This was obviously not working. An Extension Worker also confirmed the problem. He said:

"We have explained to the AFC that the group lending scheme is failing and a lot of farmers are being let down. We are advocating for a return to the individual loan scheme".

The farmers pointed out during the results confirmation workshops that none of them in Shamva had benefitted from the AFC's 3% concession upon repayment of the loan in full. This could be because none had ever repaid in full.

Farmers argue that the AFC should give loans to farmers who pay back. But that defeats the whole group lending approach. The AFC itself argues that there is no collateral when lending to a small farmer. The AFC Act allows attachment of movable property in case of default but the exercise was costly. The group approach was meant to allow coverage of a larger number of farmers at a lower cost and in the absence of collateral, the group would be responsible for loan recovery. If one defaulted and the group failed to recover, the AFC disqualified the whole group until its loans were repaid. This is one reason why many farmers, even master farmers, were not members of the AFC groups. That even the group lending approach was not working well was also revealed by the AFC officer on the ground who declared that:

We are not recovering at all. It is very difficult. We had a stop order system with the GMB and Cotco. But the GMB terminated this arrangement and Cotco's system is not working well because due to the delays on payment of farmers, the farmers escape to Cargill. Cotco is arguing that they lose business to Cargill due to the AFC stop-order system. So they are no longer helping us well. As for tobacco, now there is the Boka group. They are now doing the stop order for us but we are not sure for how long. We are not recovering well, not even from the large-scale commercial farmers who now have other sources of finance. They can just desert us or even sell their farms and leave us with a problem.

This problem definitely requires serious attention. The smallholder farmer cannot improve without loan facilities. Agritex had the programme of promoting savings clubs whereby farmers would save in order to buy own inputs and avoid these formal lending institutions. While this approach was working better, it could only be open to the farmer who was already better-off. Farmers are differentiated and the poor farmer has nothing to save because he/she is just poor! So he/she cannot be in a savings club, can only be in 'a cycle of poverty club'! Again, with respect to AFC and Agritex approaches for credit facilities, our hypothesis about poorer and better-off farmers is as true as has been seen with respect to Cotco groups.

Farmers charged that the AFC demanded loan repayment in full despite natural disasters for the season. The AFC retorts that it was considerate of such situations:

"We understand when there are natural disasters like droughts or armyworms. We do not write-off the debt and it will still attract interest but we need to know how the farmer will pay", said an AFC officer.

During the results confirmation workshops, the AFC suggested that it might stop financing grain producing farmers because of the GMB's move to stop the stop-order system unless the farmers indicated precisely how they proposed to

repay. The point is that everyone has an interest in this. If the AFC stops financing grain production, it can collapse as an institution, but both producers and market concerns will equally suffer. Food security would definitely be in jeopardy. A national solution to this is the only way out and the state cannot fold its arms under the guise of economic reform. Pro-active rather than reactive action is imperatively prudent.

However, the AFC had become very strict on its lending criteria. Even communal farmers are now required to have collateral. Tobacco growers were encouraged to have fixed deposits with commercial banks.

Farmers suggest that the AFC should revert to its old system of lending to an individual farmer. Also, one member claimed that:

Formerly, in the event of a drought, all AFC credits would be reclassified as medium term loans to be repaid in three years. Nowadays however, they do not differentiate between failure to repay as a result of drought or as a result of just not wanting to repay debt. Now we want them to go back to the old system of making loans medium term . . . All we want is for our loans during drought to be converted to medium term. A farmer does not only work to repay loans, there is a lot of other problems we have to deal with in our lives. There is more to life than just farming and repaying debts.

This issue requires national consideration. Smallholder farmers cannot make fixed deposits in commercial banks. The AFC now operates collateral. This is business sense. However, although adequate time is given to farmers in debt to explain their situation, the fact that their equipment and other things necessary for their productive life are impounded in debt recovery does not only lead to shunning of AFC groups and their services but to cheating and recycled poverty. The state cannot withdraw from this responsibility. Making small farmers viable requires this credit facility among other things. The market forces undisturbed are pure theory. The reality for development requires public intervention and nowhere else is this more vital than in smallholder agriculture. However, this must be in conjunction with regulated and also market determined credit facilities and self-help savings groups. That only 15% should be members of AFC groups proves that our hypothesis number 5 is also true. Poorer farmers are unable to join AFC groups precisely because of fear of impoverishment. But more than this, only the better-off farmers can join such groups because of the requirements as stated herein.

5.3 ZIMBABWE FARMERS' UNION (ZFU) GROUPS

Sixteen percent of the respondents were members of ZFU. Below are the types of ZFU groups and the numbers who belonged to them.

Table 22: Membership of the ZFU Groups

ZFU Group	Freq	%
Loan Group	32	91
Sorghum Group	2	6
Fishing Group	1	3
Irrigation Group	2	6
Total	35	100

5.3.1 Master Farmers and ZFU Groups

Table 23: Master Farmers and ZFU Groups

Master Farmers	ZFU GROUP MEMBERSHIP					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	12	34	29	16	41	19
%	29		71		100	
No	23	66	148	84	171	81
%	13		87		100	
Total	35	100	177	100	212	100

Table 23 shows that only 29% of the master farmers were ZFU members. Of all the ZFU group members only 34% were master farmers. This is disappointingly low and it only underlines the fact that the ZFU has a lot to do to mobilise master farmers into its ranks. It is true that master farmers themselves are a small proportion of the population, yet even so, this small proportion should be totally mobilised.

5.3.2. Master Farmer Trainees and ZFU Membership

Next we consider those who were in master farmer training at the time of the survey and their membership of ZFU groups.

Table 24: Master Farmer Trainees and ZFU Membership

Master Farmers	ZFU GROUP MEMBERSHIP					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	8	23	22	12	30	14
%	27		73		100	
No	27	77	155	88	182	86
%	15		85		100	
Total	35	100	177	100	212	100

Table 24 shows again that very few of those in master farmer training were members of ZFU groups. Only 27% of the master farmer trainees were ZFU group members. It must be mentioned though that those who were not in master farmer training were even less inclined to join ZFU groups. (Only 15% of them were ZFU group members.) Again the conclusion can only be the same as in master farmers, that the ZFU has to work hard to attract master farmer trainees and others into its ranks.

As seen on Table 22, the bulk of the ZFU group members joined the loan groups. This is probably inhibiting for those who have no need for loans. The range of activities undertaken by the ZFU groups needs to be expanded for greater participation.

5.3.3 ZFU Membership and Membership of Cotco Groups

In this section we consider ZFU membership and Cotco group membership: How many ZFU members were Cotco group members and what type of Cotco group they belonged to.

Table 25: Cotco Group Membership by ZFU Membership

ZFU Members	COTCO GROUP MEMBERSHIP					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	17	22	18	13	35	17
%	49		51		100	
No	61	78	116	87	177	83
%	34		66		100	
Total	78	100	134	100	212	100

From Table 25 we can see that nearly half of the ZFU members were Cotco group members. Their proportionate membership was higher than among non-ZFU members. Next we consider ZFU membership and type of Cotco group membership. The data shows that all the ZFU members who were Cotco group members belonged to the Loan Cotco Group. Thus, the main reason for membership was to get input loans. We must remember though, that with Cotco, it was expected that those who got input loans would market their cotton to the company. So therefore, loan Cotco groups were supposed to be at the same time marketing groups.

Table 26 shows that less than half of the ZFU members were AFC group members. However, as in the Cotco groups, the ZFU proportionate AFC membership was higher than among the non-ZFU members. Besides, up to 44% of the AFC group members were ZFU members. Although less than half, this proportion is significantly high and shows the high extent of utilisation of the AFC by ZFU members in the district.

5.3.4. ZFU Membership and AFC Groups

Table 26: AFC Group Membership by ZFU Membership

ZFU Membership	AFC GROUP MEMBERSHIP					
	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	14	44	21	12	35	17
%	40		60		100	
No	18	56	159	88	177	83
%	10		90		100	
Total	32	100	180	100	212	100

Considering the kind of AFC group the ZFU members belonged to, the data reveals that all the members joined the AFC loan group. Thus, the main reason the ZFU members joined AFC groups for was getting access to loans.

It emerges from the data that membership of ZFU groups is quite low. Given the pivotal role that the ZFU as the sole representative of small farmers should be playing, this is a worrisome situation. One important point to recapture is that being in a ZFU group does not mean being a ZFU member. This was confirmed by the Zinyama and Arnaiz *et al* studies mentioned in this study. Farmers assessed the ZFU sometimes, most times, very negatively and charged that the union did little or nothing for farmers. But this may be precisely because the ZFU operates with the philosophy of *active* and *inactive* membership. Inactive members may simply organise themselves into ZFU clubs and associations and gain achievements to their benefit. They will not be ZFU members and will not attribute their gains to the ZFU. Quite rightly. But this is an organisational weakness. Arnaiz *et al* noted this weakness thus:

ZFU's clubs and associations have initiated a diverse and impressive number of activities to address the needs of their members. While this has positive implications for maintaining and increasing ZFU membership, it might also weaken the organisation in the long-term if members begin to see the benefits gained from club/association membership as different from those realized through holding a ZFU membership card. In order to strengthen the affiliation between the ZFU and its base units, the national level needs to increase the visibility of its efforts to assist its clubs and associations (*op. cit.* 29).

5.3.5 On the Assessment of the ZFU

The farmers laid down several complaints against the ZFU. The following are the main ones:

5.3.5.1 *The Levy*

We have explained in the literature review on farmers' organisations how the levy on crop sales came about. This levy was deducted from small-scale commercial farmers and appropriated by the then ZNFU. With the merger of NFAZ and ZNFU into the ZFU, the levy was spread to cover all farmers and was appropriated by the ZFU to improve its financial and organisational capacity. It was never explained to the small farmers by a leadership that was basically of large-scale and small-scale commercial farmers. Said a farmer during one research workshop:

Yes, the ZFU is good but it came in a bad light. They did not explain to us both members and non-members why they were taking our money. They take a certain percentage of our total sales. Because they deduct this money from everyone, we all now say we are ZFU members, but they say no, you must pay \$20 to join otherwise you are an inactive member.

A district leader of ZFU explained that the joining fee was still payable otherwise one remained an inactive affiliate even if one was a member of a ZFU club or association. It was explained that levies were always discussed at ZFU meetings and farmers were told that before 1992 every producer was levied and the communal and resettlement farmers' levies went to the state for infrastructural building, for the development of agriculture. The ZFU Chairman said,

since 1992, that money goes to the ZFU and it is used for the development and running of the ZFU office. Some of that money was now going to be sent to the provinces for workshops and training of farmers on commodities and for use by the farmers.

The ZFU at the district office agreed that it had not handled the issue of crop levies well and needed to correct this. It was learned from one cotton company that due to the bitterness of farmers over this issue, a certain MP had banned the collection of the levy in his/her constituency. There are doubts, however, as to the veracity of this since the levy is a legislated instrument.

5.3.5.2 *Poor Representation*

The farmers charged that the ZFU had failed to represent them effectively, particularly on the issue of input and producer prices. Said a farmer during the results confirmation workshops:

The ZFU does not intervene on prices. Its benefits hardly trickle down to the ordinary farmer and that is why there are very few farmers who are ZFU members.

During the focus groups at a Resettlement Scheme, the farmers painted a bleak future for the ZFU. A spokesperson put it this way:

The ZFU will not survive and people will not join for several reasons. Firstly, the ZFU said we would not be taxed on a lot of merchandise. But

when we go to the Farmers Coop shop with the ZFU card, we get taxed. Secondly, they promised to ensure that producer prices remained high. This has not happened. They did not come back to us to explain why they failed us on the producer prices. Thirdly, they promised to control prices of inputs, the fertilizers. These prices went up and the fertilizer is difficult to get. The union will not grow but collapse because it is not honest with the farmer, especially the resettlement farmer.

There was no satisfactory answer from the ZFU on the issue of representation save only to say that people needed to join and attend meetings. On being taxed, it was said there were benefits if one had a ZFU card. There were discounts when one had a ZFU membership card. The person had to pay an annual subscription of \$25 apart from the \$20 joining fee. There were sales tax exemptions on inputs, stock feeds etc. not on household groceries. "The problem with farmers," said the ZFU, "is that they let their cards expire and then think they can use them regardless. They also think they can get tax exemptions on anything, but it is for farming inputs only". That the ZFU really had problems in representing its disparate social base was revealed when farmers questioned the advice of the ZFU Acting President in May 1997 that farmers should hold on to their maize and not sell to the GMB until the negotiated price was announced. Apparently the GMB announced a lower price than what had been agreed to with the ZFU. A member of the focus group in Mutumba Ward questioned the wisdom of the Acting President's advice and charged the ZFU for not being the appropriate representative of poor farmers. He said:

"I wonder what class of people the ZFU represents. I once read a book which said there are three classes of people in this world, namely: the very rich, the middle-class and the very poor".

Then directing his question to the ZFU district leader at the meeting he continued:

"Which class does your organisation represent?"

The answer was:

"We represent the farmers who are very poor".

This of course was not very true. So the questioner continued:

Are you therefore aware of what will happen to the maize of those poor farmers that you are advising to hold on to their maize? Their grain will be destroyed by termites while they are holding on to it. Your organisation has not invested in any safe storage facility for the farmers to use to hold on to their grain, has it?

The leader was embarrassed but to save face, he said:

"The Acting President's announcement was a way of showing the nation that the GMB was cheating. There is however no guarantee that the GMB will increase the prices".

The questioner then summed up as follows:

There is no organisation representing small farmers in this country. The Acting President making such announcements does not know the situation of poor farmers. He does not know our grain is being destroyed by termites and rain while holding on to it. He does not know we have no proper storage facilities. He does not know we have school fees to pay and that cannot wait until September. He does not know our poverty!

The ZFU leader warned the farmer thus:

“But if you send your maize you will lose”, and the farmer responded:

“Either way we are still going to lose. There is no one representing farmers in the Communal Areas, only those in the Commercial Areas. The ZFU is not representing us.”

Poor representation was linked to poor organic links with the base. At the Resettlement Scheme, the farmers charged that the ZFU simply ignored the farmers. The leadership never came down even when requested. Said a spokesman during the focus group meeting:

“People were told to form ZFU groups and to buy cards. Only a few people went and bought the cards and they became individual members. We cannot say the ZFU is really active in this scheme” (SANYE).

Another farmer added that a ZFU provincial leader once came down to the scheme. She invited the farmers to her farm (a large-scale commercial farm) and implored the farmers to form groups and buy ZFU cards. There were no groups formed and people were just not interested. When the cards of those who had bought them expired, only a handful renewed them.

The above shows that the attitude of farmers also needs to change. They simply shunned an organisation for farmers. However, the leadership of the ZFU's credentials do need to be interrogated. This research, which covered large-scale commercial farms in the area as well, discovered that many in the ZFU top leadership were actually large-scale and small-scale commercial farmers and not smallholder farmers of the communal and resettlement population. This does present problems of a class nature and the smallholder farmers can justifiably have misgivings about the honesty of such a leadership in representing their interests. This issue was brought out also by Arnaiz *et al* who reported that:

At the national level, ZFU serves a broad and diverse membership ranging from large-scale indigenous commercial farmers to largely subsistence-oriented communal area farmers (Arnaiz, this volume).

The difficulty with this diverse social base is that contradictions do emerge and the credibility of the representative body comes into serious question as a result. In the Arnaiz *et al* study, this emerged in Gokwe North:

The conflict between the interests of different types of farmers was underscored by interviews with members in Gokwe North where the ZFU

membership includes small-scale commercial, communal area and resettlement area farmers. Small-scale commercial farmers complained that the ZFU responded more favourably to the demands of communal and resettlement area farmers. Similarly, communal and resettlement area farmers believed that ZFU services addressed the needs of small-scale commercial farmers more than their own. These findings highlight an important problem for the ZFU (*ibid.*, this volume).

Indeed they do. And the situation is worse in Shamva where a fourth class of farmers is represented — the LSCF and which seems to be at the helm of the leadership. Apart from Sanye Resettlement, Mupfurudzi also seemed to be lukewarm towards the ZFU. When farmers were asked during the focus groups if they ever invited the ZFU to their scheme, they said:

“No why should we, the ZFU is not really active here”.

To those who held ZFU cards the question was put as to whether they held meetings or whether they knew their ZFU representatives. The answer was No. So why were cards ever bought?

One farmer said:

Some ZFU members tried to make others join. When the late Mr. Kativhu, the area ZFU leader was still alive, he used to move around and call for ZFU meetings and training of farmers. People however did not attend. The problem with the training was that it was held at Chakonda, some 15 to 20 km from here. We could not go there with our wives but we wanted our wives and children to be trained. The ZFU leaders at Chakonda were not enthusiastic about training us.

Another one added:

“We only buy membership cards because we want sales tax exempted”.

A ZFU club leader at the meeting said:

“The problem is, when we club leaders call for a ZFU meeting, some people just ignore us and say we want to squeeze them of their \$20 (the ZFU joining fee), so we just leave it”.

A farmer expressed the class contradiction, now between the communal and resettlement farmers thus:

“The main problem is that the ZFU members in resettlement schemes are not as strongly represented as those in communal areas”.

We have already cited the exchange between a ZFU district leader and a communal area farmer in Mutumba where the ZFU was charged of not representing communal and resettlement farmers but commercial area farmers. So there we have it.

The problem with the class cleavage is that a representative organisation leading such diverse class groups has to be conspicuously sophisticated enough to weave together a programme that accommodates everyone. This of course is impossible where an organisation has to deal with interest demands on the ground and, daily. On the political field, a popular-democratic interpellation

would accomplish the task, but even then, only for a moment while dealing with the anti-nation or a foreign element. On the interest group front, stagnation and collapse of the representative group would occur sooner as the class interests would clash daily. The representative group would at best be ineffective, at worst be dismissed as irrelevant as crystallization along class lines ensues. Referring to the studies by Bratton and Bingen (1994); Olson (1971); and Zinyama (1992), Arnaiz *et al* made the most correct statement thus:

Previous studies of rural organisations suggest that increasing membership heterogeneity leads to increasing difficulties in identifying, prioritising and responding to members' demands. Organisations that represent a narrower range of interests will be more effective at representing and servicing members' needs (*ibid.*, this volume).

It would appear that the capture of the communal and resettlement area social base by the ZNFU during the merger was a move more of political expedience than of common class interest. The primary objective was the combination of national patriotic forces into a 'national bloc' to counter the anti-nation, the social bloc of white large-scale commercial farmers resisting the land reform programme. Perhaps there should have been no merger between NFAZ and ZNFU. But then, NFAZ itself had questionable origins in so far as it did not emerge and develop spontaneously and autonomously representing small and poor communal farmers. It still represented the better-off of the CA sector. Maybe an organisation truly representing poorer farmers should have emerged.

There is no prediction possible as to how this contradiction will be resolved by the ZFU. There is even no formula for resolving it except leaving it to the field of the class struggle.

5.3.5.3 Communication

This is the last but one of the main issues raised by farmers on the problems with the ZFU. Farmers felt the communication channels were not effective. The ZFU communicated through chairpersons' reports, ZFU staff visits and the farmers' magazine. These channels were found by Arnaiz *et al* not to be effective. The same is true in Shamva. Farmers in Shamva knew of the late President Mr. G. Magadzire but of noone else. Magadzire was known because he came from Shamva and was a well known personality (declared a national hero when he died in 1996). Some of the problems which arise in the farmers' criticisms of the ZFU are simply because the union is not visible in the things it does for farmers. It operated in a non-transparent way. This is mainly because the ZNFU, which in the main, took leadership upon merger of the two organisations representing farmers, saw itself purely as an advocacy institution. It operated from the capital city and nowhere else. Arnaiz *et al* noted the union's decentralisation programme which we have referred to.

However, if the field experience of this author is anything to go by, a thoroughgoing overhaul of not just the attitude of the district leadership but some of its physical staff in place would be necessary.

While arrangements had been made to meet with the union's marketing officer at the Bindura offices, the officer was nowhere to be found. The whole afternoon he simply was missing. With the aid of an employee, several beer-drinking places were combed up to try and locate the person but to no avail. This was the most senior person in the office who should have been there not only for the researchers' appointment but for attending to farmers who come with problems. None of the staff members knew of his whereabouts. Further research on him revealed that he always played truant to drinking sessions and this had been brought to the attention of his employer. But he was kept there. The farmers were bitter about it but afraid to speak out.

The subsequent interviews held with elected officials at the offices were not very useful because they too displayed poor communication skills. In fact they displayed a high research-aversion syndrome. Only late at the end of the day did they sound forthcoming but by then they were giving the excuse that they had other commitments to attend to.

The above is reported in some detail so that a review of the approach to communication and public relations is effected. If farmers experience a nightmare such as this upon calling to their own office for help, they would be justified to vote with their feet.

We have already indicated the farmers' complaints that the ZFU leaders did not come to visit them or for meetings even when requested. The ZFU leaders at the office claimed that they did hold meetings with farmers but farmers did not turn up even when they were notified well in advance. The provincial chairman suggested that "the many funerals taking place nowadays were demobilising people from such meetings".

At a focus group meeting of Master Farmers and trainee Master Farmers in Mutumba, there arose a burning issue which showed that there was poor communication between the ZFU and the farmers. First was the issue of a cattle scale used for weighing the cattle when there is a cattle sale. This scale was said to be in a state of neglect while farmers' cattle were being weighed by the eye of the buyer in the presence of the ZFU representative who usually connived with buyers saying "the cattle are skinny". The ZFU was suspected by the farmers to be conniving with CSC cattle buyers and the neglect of the scales — which needed only minor repair — was evidence of this connivance.

Another problem related to bad communication was the issue of heifers which were allegedly promised to farmers by ZFU enthusiasts campaigning for people to join the ZFU. At Gono Ward during focus group interviews, the researcher was informed thus:

The ZFU came here once and told people to join the club so they could get heifers on loan. We went and bought cards but in the end only two people got the heifers in this Ward. The truth might actually be that all our money was used to buy those heifers and the ZFU contributed nothing. When the ZFU leaders came they condemned those people who had promised such a thing. They said people should have just been encouraged to join . . .

Sometimes the ZFU misinforms people. In the heifer scheme the ZFU was just acting as an agent. The money was not from them but from government or another donor. We were not informed. In this district there were 53 heifers given, three per Ward and four in Resettlement Schemes. Agritex is supposed to chair and the Veterinary Department to be secretary. ZFU was just part of the committee Preference was given to people with training and those with money in the bank. So, basically the poor remain poorer.

Here was a case of poor communication. At the offices during the interview, the officials condemned the false promises made during campaigns for membership. However, there was no evidence that such condemnation was done during the campaigns or immediately upon the discovery of the fraud. The condemnations appear to have come only after farmers had complained about false promises. That is why farmers had developed the practice of voting with their feet — withdrawing from the activities/meetings of the ZFU, for they believed they would be lied to in order for the liar to get money from them.

5.3.5.4 Discriminatory Service Delivery System

Here the farmers talked about services provided by the ZFU and these were transport (for produce and inputs) and tractors for ploughing.

It was said the ZFU had promised to bring tractors for tillage. The tractors came late in January and could not be used as the planting season was over. A promise was then made that the tractors (two for the district) would come in June. They never did. "We were told that the tractors were delayed in Chiweshe . . . We believe the tractors were rented out to large-scale commercial farms after we said they were late . . .", said a ZFU district leader, to whom a farmer retorted thus:

"Our leadership does not tell us about these things. We are only hearing about the tractors now". The leader replied: "We told those who came to the meeting". The farmer again: "Those you called to the meeting".

On the transport issue, it was said the ZFU had only three lorries for seven districts. The prices charged for this service to non-ZFU members (i.e. inactive ones) were the same as those charged by private transporters. The ZFU was said not to provide this transport for produce to the market while it provided transport for some farmers' inputs. At the results confirmation workshop, ZFU representatives were asked to give figures on how many farmers had benefitted from ZFU transport during the then current season. No figures were available.

Farmers complained that the ZFU trucks transporting produce had never been seen in the area. Said one farmer:

"Those trucks have never been seen in Shamva and they have never been to communal areas, not even to deliver inputs".

The implication was that the trucks served a different category of farmers, not the communal smallholder ones. And another farmer burst out openly:

"A lorry to transport produce or whatever was heard of. It went only as far as Mr. M's farm and was never heard of again".

Mr. M is a well known farmer and leader of the ZFU. When the survey extended to cover large-scale farms, Mr. M appeared on the list as a large-scale commercial farmer.

Because of such discriminatory service delivery systems, members of ZFU groups in Chidembo passed harsh judgement on the ZFU during focus groups:

A spokesman said:

We can only support it (ZFU) on what it does for us. We joined the ZFU because we had seen its work and we will continue to do so if it proves itself. But we thanked it too soon, now we are realizing that it is composed of crooks. If it continues being that way, it will only win where it is already because now we can not even tell others to join. We are not yet satisfied with its services. Now we are worse-off than those who did not join because now the non-members laugh at us. We do not see the difference between us and non-members.

Women at the meeting who had projects also unanimously agreed with their spokeswoman who said:

We view the ZFU as our mother and father, but when we look at what it does for us we get very disappointed. We have women's groups who when they join the ZFU are told that whatever you want we can assist you to get or do. The other women are attracted, they also come and also campaign for others to join and buy cards. At the end of the year we get nothing from the ZFU. When we invite people to renew their cards they refuse. That is what is going to cause the downfall of ZFU. They lie.

Rather like the case of promised heifers!

Our thesis number 5 that organisations representing poorer farmers are less likely to be successful in enabling their members to fully utilise the infrastructure provided is fully vindicated by all the above. Better-off farmers are better placed to take advantage of opportunities for effective infrastructural use. The nature of the existing organisation purporting to represent the small-farmer precludes effective representation of this farmer.

The ZFU should acknowledge the social differentiation among the farmers it purports to represent. This obvious social differentiation inhibits the effectiveness of the organisation in its service delivery effort. A realisation of the class-basis of the differentiation should inform an evolution of differential policies for differential groups of farmers. This is the minimum the ZFU can do. The alternative is a crystallization along class lines and an end to the ZFU as the sole

representative of black farmers in Zimbabwe. After all, black large-scale commercial farmers have their own union.

5.4. GARDEN CLUBS

About nine people or 4% of the respondents were members of the Garden Group. This group carried out activities such as growing garden crops and marketing of output. However, of those who were garden group members, only 1 or 11% used it for marketing of output, 77% for growing garden crops and the rest for other activities.

During the focus group meeting, interviews were carried out in Gono Ward with members of Garden Groups. The interviews focused on the role of the groups, the gender issues, the conditions for entry, the role of state agencies, donors, farmers' organisations, private companies and assessment of the impact of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). Here we will focus on all these issues except ESAP which has a special section of its own in this chapter .

5.4.1 The Role of Garden Clubs

The groups were established mainly to grow crops that would supplement the diet of households, particularly children under the age of five during the severe drought. They grow crops such as vegetables of all kinds and beans. Maize is also grown. The bulk of what is produced is given under the under-fives nutrition programme. The surplus is sold but the market is a problem as "it sometimes gets overflowed", said the members.

The group did face a problem in marketing outside its areas. An attempt to market output in Harare was aborted when the group was robbed. The attempt to market in Shamva town also faced high transport costs. The local market was made up of people who were "lazy" to work on gardens:

"We sell to those who are lazy and do not grow their own vegetables", said one member who added that, "We also donate some vegetables and beans to the pre-school. We do this because the fence we received was from the under-fives nutrition programme".

Most of the group members are also club members. There was a strong overlap between the two. The clubs were teaching people to do sewing and also provided adult literacy classes. The latter were stopped because the teachers were not paid.

The garden groups were very important because they encouraged good farming among the people. Agritex helped the groups to put up shows and competitions as a learning exhibition to the community.

5.4.2 Gender

The groups were said to have a preponderance of the female sex. Asked whether males experienced any barriers to entry, the focus group members, who

comprised two males (three with the Agritex officer) and seven women, claimed there were no such barriers. One woman said males came to her group when it was clearing and constructing the gardens. After that they left saying, "it is the women's thing". Another claimed that there were two men when her group started. However, when they realised that they were being given instructions by women they were not enthusiastic. "They eventually quit because they did not like women's leadership. However, it was not just men because some other lazy women also left", she said. Another one said:

It has always been encouraged that men and women work together. But it is difficult because we are different. Men do not like to join clubs that don't pay immediately. Garden clubs pay off in the long run and women can be content with just having to be able to take even vegetables to cook for children at home at the end of the day.

Not all clubs experienced the negative attitude of males. Another member of the group declared that, "In our group we have six men who joined and we have been all very excellent members".

Agritex, which was instrumental in promoting garden groups, said their approach was to get a household to join. If a husband joined it was just as good as the wife having joined and vice versa. An Agritex officer said:

If a husband gave consent to the wife to join, then that was good enough, the husband was considered to have joined too. In a household, even in dryland cultivation there were crops which were considered women's and the garden crops grown by the groups are such crops.

Thus there were groups which met with the negative attitudes of males while in others both sexes worked well together.

5.4.3 Conditions for Entry

There were no barriers to entry according to the members. However, founder members paid 50 cents while those who joined later paid \$30. "The reason for the \$30 fee is that late comers did not participate in the construction of the gardens. It is a way of making them contribute to that effort. It also ensures that a person has maximum commitment to the group", said a veteran member who was also a Village Community Worker (VCW).

The members suggested that illiteracy did not constitute a barrier to entry at all times. "The illiterate are not discriminated against, but they cannot become leaders. They are assigned duties which they can comfortably perform," said one woman while another, who championed the issue of laziness as an explanatory concept, said, "No, we do not think a person would back away from joining because they are illiterate. They back away because they are lazy, they also do not believe in the success of such clubs".

However, another member did acknowledge the illiteracy problem as a deterrent:

“There are some people who do not want other people to know that they cannot read or write. As a result they keep away from such clubs because they fear they might be asked to read or write if they join,” she said.

There was no discrimination against the poor, so it was said. However, the \$30 joining fee could be such a deterrent.

One member said:

Both rich and poor join our groups. If a poor person joins, we help them to start other income generating projects. We know that there are poor and uneducated people who may be afraid to join because they might be given leadership positions in which they cannot perform. When these people join we put them in positions where they can be most efficient.

To the question whether it was the better-off who always took leadership positions, the members argued that it was not so at all times. A member who was the secretary of her group said:

It depends on the group . . . In our group, our chairwoman is not rich or literate. We chose her because she has a special way of getting people to work. She refused the post when she was elected arguing that she was illiterate, but we explained to her that one did not have to be literate to lead people in our kind of club.

Another, a committee member of her group, said that the treasurer of her group was not literate but noone could cheat her with money. “You can’t cheat her with counting money because she is sharp”. Others felt that the educated treasurers were likely to steal anyway because they could “fix” the accounts.

So, as far as joining garden clubs is concerned, neither education nor poverty constituted barriers to entry. However, there were cases when these aspects acted as deterrents. Payment of fees could also bar the poor. \$30 is a high fee in rural areas and we have noted the complaints about the ZFU \$20 joining fee.

5.4.4 Role of State Agencies

State agencies were obviously helping the groups. Chief in this was Agritex which encouraged their formation and provided training and advisory services in farming methods. Agritex helped to organise shows and competitions and also sought assistance for the groups in the way of capital inputs such as fences through the under-fives nutrition programme. They also supplied vegetable and maize seed. Local Government institutions also assisted the groups through VIDCOs by providing land. The Ministry of National Affairs assisted by providing training on sewing and development. One or two people were taken

for training then they came back to train others. They also helped with Agritex in home hygiene and selected clubs to receive fences. The political party helped through mobilisation of donor assistance. The local MP was said to have organised sewing machines for the members:

"The machines came through our senior women in the party (ZANU-PF). We had told them that our main problem was that we did not have sewing machines in our clubs", said a spokeswoman.

5.4.5 Donor Agencies

These helped through the under-fives garden nutrition programme which was co-ordinated by Agritex. They provide monies to acquire fences for the gardens. Others are approached to supply sewing machines for the income-generating projects of the clubs. (Such donors included SIDA and World Vision International).

5.4.6 Farmers' Organisations

The ZFU was very active in promoting these groups. However, none of the members at the focus group meeting were from ZFU groups or clubs. As already indicated, such groups do not see any immediate connection between them and the ZFU.

The ZFU encouraged the groups to start adult literacy groups but the problem was who would pay the teachers? The ZFU was also said to have given sewing machines to some clubs. Problems raised by the group with respect to the ZFU have already been dealt with. In general though, the ZFU was said to be "as helpful as Agritex or the Ministry of National Affairs".

In a nutshell, the farmers' organisation, though a little removed from the groups, was nevertheless linked to garden club promotion and assistance with income-generating projects and this was positive.

5.4.7 Private Companies

National Tested Seeds was said to be providing seed. They did not visit the groups' gardens but they invited queries over the effectiveness of their seeds. Seed Co-op was another company that supplied seed. They visited the groups and held field-days in the area. They had "on-farm" trials on some plots in the area and this helped in the training of members.

5.4.8 The Future of Garden Clubs

Generally, members saw the future of the groups as bleak. This was because of poverty and only a few people had disposable resources to purchase their product. The evaluation here coincides with that of ESAP and so shall be dealt with in detail under ESAP.

5.5 OTHER GROUPS

There were other groups mentioned by some respondents but which were so devoid of membership that any analysis would be worthless. These included such groups as the Fishing group which had only one person, the Zimbabwe Tobacco Association (ZTA) group which also had one person, the Chibuku group which had no one but was mentioned to exist, and the Grazing Scheme group which had five people or 2.4% of the respondents.

Those who belonged to the Grazing Scheme group had one member joining the loan group, three operating in the grazing scheme and two being members of the irrigation group. One of the members therefore operated in two groups under the Grazing Scheme group.

The conclusion is that participation in these latter groups has to drastically improve. Perhaps there are impediments to farmers joining such groups. This necessitates consideration of the conditions, if any, for joining such groups.

5.6 CONDITIONS FOR JOINING GROUPS

Ninety-five percent of the Cotco group members said they paid a joining fee to be members of the group. The same was said by 84% of AFC group members; 94% of the ZFU group members; 40% of the grazing scheme members; 89% of the Garden Club members and the one person who was a member of the Fishing group. The rest did not respond on this question but we can assume that everybody paid some joining fee.

5.6.1. Conditions for Reproduction of Membership

The following were indicated by the Cotco Group members as things needed to be done to retain membership of the group.

Table 27: Retaining Cotco Group Membership

Value Label	Freq	%
Nothing	4	5
Subscribe early	19	24
Honour contract	11	14
Renew Cards early	12	15
Clear all Debts	27	35
Other	2	3
Total	78	100

Some did not respond while others mentioned more than one requirement. The most mentioned requirements were clearly the need to clear all pre-existing debts, to subscribe early and to renew cards early. These latter two would appear

Table 28: Retaining Membership of AFC, ZFU, Other Groups

Value Label	AFC		ZFU		Other	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Nothing	—	—	2	6	1	7
Subscribe early	9	28	20	57	6	40
Honour contract	5	16	—	—	7	47
Renew Cards early	2	6	9	26	1	7
Clear All Debts	9	28	1	3	1	7
Other	—	—	—	—	2	13
Total	32	100	35	100	15	100

to be the same thing. Keeping one's part of the agreement or honouring the contract was also quite important.

For the AFC, Table 28 shows that subscribing early and clearing previous debts were leading requirements for retaining membership. Keeping one's part of the agreement was also important. Subscribing early was the most leading among ZFU members, followed by renewing cards early. For Other groups, keeping one's part of the agreement and subscribing early were important.

5.7. FARMERS' ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE OF FARMERS' GROUPS

To the question whether belonging to a farmers' organisation or group was important for increasing crop production, the respondents indicated the following:

Table 29: Importance of Group Membership for Increasing Crop Production

Value Label	Freq	Percent	Valid Percent
Very Important	31	14.6	24.0
Important	63	29.7	48.8
Somewhat important	8	3.8	6.2
Little importance	7	3.3	5.4
Not at all	20	9.4	15.5
Missing cases	83	39.2	—
Total	212	100.0	100.0

Although a significant proportion did not respond, a greater proportion felt belonging to groups was important and very important indeed. Few saw this as not at all important while even fewer felt it has little importance. We conclude that rural cultivators in Shamva feel belonging to a farmers' group is important indeed. Still, we are worried about the significant proportion of the silent ones. Of all those who responded (129), 79% (102) felt belonging to farmers' groups was important. These must be implored to encourage others to join.

Table 30: Importance of Group Membership for Increasing Sales

Value Label	Freq	Percent	Valid Percent
Very important	22	10.4	16.7
Important	70	33.0	53.0
Somewhat important	5	2.4	3.8
Little importance	12	5.7	9.1
Not at all	22	10.4	17.4
Missing cases	81	38.2	—
Total	212	100.0	100.0

The situation with respect to group membership's importance for increasing sales is the same as with increasing crop production. Seventy-four percent of all responding felt group membership was important for increasing product sales. All this though should be seen in the context of the many reservations farmers had about the 'global' institutions under which the groups fell. These are Cotco, AFC and ZFU, in the main. That belonging to groups *per se* was important does not extinguish the fact that with the global institutions as they are, things were not doing well.

5.8 BENEFITS FROM MEMBERSHIP OF GROUPS

Here we examine in greater detail the benefits derived from membership of farmers' groups.

5.8.1. Cotco, AFC and ZFU Groups

Table 31: Benefits of Being Cotco, AFC, ZFU Group Member

Value Label	Cotco		AFC		ZFU	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Nothing	1	1	—	—	3	9
Inputs on Credit	57	73	14	44	8	23
Money	4	5	3	9	—	—
Free Transport	2	3	—	—	—	—
Disc/S. Tax	1	1	1	3	10	29
Profits Accrue	4	5	4	13	1	3
Other incl. Markets	4	5	3	9	7	20
Total	78	100	32	100	35	100

NB: *Disc/S. Tax = Discounts, Sales Tax Exemption*

Getting inputs on credit, was the most leading benefit derived by members from Cotco group membership. Those who belonged to AFC groups also cited the getting of loans for inputs as the leading benefit, followed by ability to get

profits and access to markets. The ZFU organised discounts and sales tax holidays for its members and this was the leading benefit, followed by inputs on credit and other benefits like access to markets.

5.8.2. Garden Clubs and Other Groups

Table 32 shows that among those who were garden club members, other benefits including free inputs such as seed and fences were leading while a significant few saw no benefits from such membership. Garden clubs need to improve their relevance. As for Other Groups, it is difficult to make concrete analysis of them since they remain anonymous. However, organising inputs on credit and free transport provision were the significant benefits for their members. Their benefits are varied as a wide range was cited as shown in Table 32.

Table 32: Benefits from Garden Clubs and Other Groups

Value Label	Garden Clubs		Other Groups	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
Nothing	2	22	1	7
Inputs on Credit	—	—	4	27
Money	1	11	1	7
Transport	—	—	2	13
Discounts, S.Tax	—	—	1	7
Profits Accrue	—	—	1	7
Technical Advice	—	—	1	7
Irrigation Facilities	—	—	1	7
Other e.g. free inputs	3	33	—	—
Total	9	100	15	100

5.8.3 Respondents' Participation in the Farmers' Groups

Below we examine the respondents forms of participation in the Farmers' groups to which they belonged. This is represented in Table 33.

Table 33: Participation by Respondents in Farmers' Groups

Form of Participation	Cotco		AFC		ZFU		Garden Club		Other	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
None	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Chairperson	4	5	2	6	2	6	—	—	1	7
Secretary	5	6	1	3	2	6	2	22	2	13
Treasurer	2	3	1	3	4	13	—	—	3	20
Committee Member	1	1	1	3	—	—	—	—	1	7
Other	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	78	100	32	100	35	100	9	100	15	100

Table 33 shows that very few of the participants were in leadership positions in the groups they belonged to. Only about 5% were on average chairpersons of their groups. On average the same proportion were secretaries except for Garden Clubs. Treasurers were even fewer except in the ZFU and other unspecified groups. Committee members were negligible, being on average 1%. However, let us examine whether participants were involved in decision-making and if so, how, if not, who made the decisions.

To the question whether respondents took part in the decision-making processes or not, 78 (68%) said they did, 29 (25%) said they did not. Those who said they did were asked to state how they did so. The following emerged:

Table 34: Participation in Decision-Making

Participation	Freq	%
Decide as group	28	36
Share ideas	28	37
Decide as leader	7	9
By voting	13	17
Other	1	1
TOTAL	77	100

Missing Cases = 1 or 1%

Participants claimed they decided as a group or shared ideas which led to decision-making. However, only 17% took part by voting. Although decisions may be arrived at without the necessity to vote, voting itself as a principle must be available to all the participants. That only 17% mentioned voting as their form of participation in decision-making is worrying. It calls for more democracy and transparency in the Farmers' Groups.

Those who claimed not to take part in decision-making were asked to indicate who took the decisions. Forty-five percent claimed their leaders did so on their own. The rest did not answer, while only 3% claimed not to know. It is disturbing that 45% should have decisions made by the leadership without their general participation.

5.8.4 Respondents' Ranking of Farmers' Groups

Respondents were asked to rank the groups they belonged to according to whether they were first, second or third ranked.

Table 35 indicates that among those ranked one, Cotco was leading. Among those ranked two, ZFU was leading. On the whole though, the AFC was second among those ranked first. We could conclude that the respondents ranked the Cotco group as the leading, followed by the AFC and then the ZFU.

Table 35: Respondents' Ranking of Farmers' Groups

Farmers' Groups	Rank 1		Rank 2		Rank 3		Total Freq
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
AFC	22	19	6	5	1	1	32
%	69		19		3		100
Cotco	51	44	6	5	1	1	78
%	65		8		1		100
Grazing Scheme	—	—	5	4			5
%	—		100				100
ZFU	3	3	12	10	4	3	35
%	9		34		11		100
Garden Club	4	—	3	3	2	2	9
%	44		33		22		100
Other	3	3	3	3	1	1	15
%	20		20		7		100
TOTAL	115	100	115	100	115	100	115

During the focus groups, farmers were asked to give their rationalisation of the ranking of the farmers' groups they made.

It must be mentioned from the onset that there were farmers who did not give any ranking at all simply because they thought no organisation stood for the smallholder farmer. One farmer in Mutumba declared:

"Out of all these organisations, there is none helping the farmers because the farmer is always having problems".

Another one concluded in an exchange with a ZFU leader thus:

"There is no organisation representing farmers in the Communal Areas, only those in the Commercial Areas".

However, Cotco was leading despite the many problems farmers had with it because of the inputs on credit which it made available, though with problems of adequacy and timeliness. The problem again with Cotco was its alleged insensitivity when debts were not paid. Impounding property including household effects was said to be in bad taste. However, in terms of coverage of the grouped farmers and guarantees of market, Cotco was still leading though facing the challenge from Cargill and Boka Group.

The AFC was placed second because it had fallen from its leading position as a lending institution. The AFC was said to have been the leader before, but fell when it made reforms. Said one farmer:

The AFC was showing potential, but then there is only one problem. If they give you a loan and there is a drought, your crops fail and you harvest nothing, they do not give you another loan until you have paid up the previous one with its interest. They do not give us a chance to revive.

The AFC fell also because of its interests. Another farmer said:

From 1980-1990, the AFC helped farmers a lot. It had credit assistants and inspectors who trained farmers how to read the statements and other things. The AFC used to send quarterly statements explaining your credit situation. But there is compound interest whereby a loan of \$20 000 becomes \$22 000 with the interests, and the \$22 000 also gets charged another interest. This is the big problem with the AFC.

But there was also the problem of group lending. We have already dealt with this in detail. People felt the AFC should revert to its old system where it loaned an individual farmer and not a group. However, because of the credit facilities it offered, it was considered second in helping farmers.

The ZFU was third only because of its representative role. Farmers ranked the ZFU third because they thought the ZFU should represent their interests to the other organisations and the government. While others thought the ZFU was doing this and bearing results, a large number thought the ZFU was not effective and had no future. The following conversation between a ZFU leader and a farmer during focus group meetings is an example of our summary here:

ZFU Leader: There is unfortunately no-one else who can represent us better than the ZFU. The ZFU is there for us but if it works with the help of other organisations such as the AFC, Cotco, GMB, then they can all represent us to government.

Farmer: When the ZFU negotiates with government good deals are made, but when the ZFU comes to us, it does not tell us the truth. It has a blanket which covers what it discusses with government so that we don't see it. We, the farmers cannot go directly to government because we are told to use proper channels which are the ZFU.

Table 36: Acknowledgement of Social & Political Institutions

Value Label	No of Respondents Acknowledging	
	Freq	%
Political Groups	123	58.0
Central Govt	44	20.8
Local Govt	101	47.6
Church	27	12.7
NGOs	46	21.7
Social Welfare	59	27.8
Other	5	2.4
Total	212	100.0

Table 37: Activities of the Socio-Political Institutions

Activities	Political Groups		Central Govt.		Local Govt		Church Groups		NGO Groups		Social Welfare		Other	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
None	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Political	79	64	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	20
Social Welfare	12	10	24	55	11	11	13	48	9	20	51	86	3	60
Farm Extension	1	1	—	—	14	14	1	4	—	—	—	—	—	—
Improve Infrastructure	1	1	14	32	1	1	1	4	5	11	—	—	—	—
Free inputs	8	7	1	2	46	46	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	—
Health Services	—	—	5	11	21	21	9	33	22	48	1	2	1	20
Advice/ Education	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	1	2	—	—
Other	8	7	4	9	4	4	4	15	4	9	2	3	2	40
TOTAL	123	100	44	100	101	100	27	100	46	100	59	100	5	100

We have already indicated the problems farmers had with the ZFU. However, in principle, farmers saw the importance of having an organisation like the ZFU to represent their interests.

5.9 SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

In this subsection we consider some social and political institutions which are operational in the district under study. These range from the political groups to central and local government, to church, parastatal and other groups such as NGOs.

Interestingly, the most recognised groups as operating in the area were the political groups. These included the ruling ZANU-PF party and the opposition ZANU-Ndonga party. The next most acknowledged is Local Government institutions, followed by Social Welfare, NGOs and Central Government.

The data does have anomalies here in that only one person acknowledges the existence of parastatals when up to 32 people were members of the AFC groups. Many even sent their produce to the GMB which still remains a parastatal though partly commercialised. The Church and NGOs are relatively significant in their presence.

5.9.1 Activities of the Social-Political Institutions

For the political groups, obviously the political activities were the leading ones. However, political groups also did welfare activities which were acknowledged by 10% of all those acknowledging political groups. Political groups were also said to provide free inputs. This could have been seed and fertiliser which people received from Central Government. Some respondents interpreted this as being provided by the ruling party ZANU-PF.

Central Government's activities were the following, in order of their importance to the respondents: social welfare activities; improvement of infrastructure and health services. It is probably a methodological anomaly that educational, technical and farm extension services were not mentioned. Some Central Government's activities were attributed to Local Government activities. This, of course, is not an anomaly in the sense that Central Government delegates or decentralises some of its activities to Local Government. The leading Local Government activities acknowledged by respondents were free inputs, health services and farm extension services. All these could of course be Central Government. Farm extension services are definitely by Central Government and are here not correctly placed but respondents or enumerators confused Central Government with Local Government at times. Free agricultural inputs are given by Central Government and are usually distributed through Local Government structures. So the mix-up could be understandable in those terms.

Church and NGO groups were acknowledged for their social welfare and health activities. Social welfare institutions were basically Central Government

ones as distinct from NGO and Church ones which provided welfare activities. Other groups also provided social welfare services.

There is obviously a fusion of roles as socio-political institutions intervene to provide services and facilities which go beyond their traditional lines of demarcation. However, there are some activities which need to be better supplied and acknowledged than is the situation at the moment. For example, political groups should widen their intervention to include technical advice and educational services (more on this from analysis of focus groups data). Central and Local Government's farm extension services should improve, so should improvement of infrastructure, health and educational services. We noted that illiteracy was still significant, particularly among women, while master farmer training was also low and, worse still, among women. Church groups should not just concentrate on spiritual, welfare and health services. Technical advice and educational services could be offered and improved on as well. Income-generating projects and skills training are some of such activities which both church and NGOs could improve on. The NGOs are doing this as is evidenced by DAPP of the Danish people.

5.9.2 Respondents' Participation In Socio-Political Institutions

First, we consider whether respondents participated in the acknowledged groups and if so, how they did so. Table 38 indicates whether respondents participated or not in the socio-political groups.

From Table 38 we can see that the greatest participation by respondents was in Central Government groups which we saw had social welfare as the leading activity. This shows that people had deficits in their livelihoods which were met by welfare activities in which they participated. Again, the next leading were NGOs which provided welfare and health services. Apart from skills training and health services, welfare activities here are also gap-filling rather than developmental. So, this participation though commendable, is a restrictive one. More than 60% participated in political groups. This could be because political groups were narrow in their activities. The least participation was in social welfare groups. This could be reflecting the top-down structure of the service delivery institutions as surely the 'beneficiaries' were more than the participants. Generally though, levels of participation are reasonably high. The levels of participation are clearly higher than in the farmers' organisation groups which have a direct bearing on productive activities in agriculture. This vindicates our hypothesis number one which postulated that poorer farmers will be more preponderant in political, social and cultural/religious groups that are less directly agri-productive than better-off farmers. Better-off farmers, because of the conditions for entry, are definitely the ones more preponderant in the more agri-productive groups.

Table 38: Respondents' Participation in Groups

Participation	Political Groups		Central Govt.		Local Govt		Church Groups		NGO Groups		Social Welfare		Other	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Yes	79	64	41	93	83	82	15	56	40	87	11	19	4	80
No	27	22	3	7	10	10	8	30	1	2	28	47	1	20
Total	123	100	44	100	101	100	27	100	46	100	59	100	5	100
Missing	17	14	—	—	8	8	4	14	5	11	20	34	—	—

Table 39: Respondents' Mode of Participation in Socio-political Groups

Activities	Political Groups		Central Govt.		Local Govt		Church Groups		NGO Groups		Social Welfare		Other	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Ordinary Member	56	71	—	—	7	8	1	7	—	—	—	—	—	—
Take Part in														
Service	5	6	15	37	7	8	1	7	7	18	—	—	—	—
Give Support	4	5	5	12	4	5	1	7	23	5	—	—	—	—
Recipient Leader/	4	5	21	51	60	72	1	7	3	8	11	100	4	100
Organiser	7	9	2	5	2	2	2	13	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other	4	5	1	2	3	4	2	13	3	8	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	79	100	41	100	83	100	15	100	40	100	11	100	4	100

Next we consider what the mode of participation of the respondents was. Table 39 gives the mode of participation of those respondents who claimed to participate in the socio-political groups. Percentages given are as a proportion of the total that claimed to participate in each group. The biggest participation was in the political groups. However, the overwhelming majority participated as ordinary members only. Only 9% were leaders or organisers. About 50% of the participants in Central Government institutions were mere recipients of services or material inputs. Fifteen percent took part in the services offered. This included government projects or programmes in the area. A few participated by lending their support. There was very low participation in the church activities. The bulk of the participants in Local Government institutions were recipients of supplies and services. Over half participated by giving their support in NGO activities. It is among NGOs, Social Welfare and other institutions that participants did not take part as leaders or organizers at all. All those who participated in social welfare and other institutions were merely recipients of services or supplies.

All the socio-political institutions need to diversify and democratise the mode of participation of their participants. The participants seem to be in the main, ordinary members, passive recipients and support givers with no leadership, organising and participatory roles at all. This situation definitely needs to improve.

From the Garden Groups focus group interviews, we have noted already that the political party, ZANU-PF, was active in helping clubs execute their income-generating projects. The local MP had sourced sewing machines for the clubs after an approach had been made through "senior women of the party".

During the focus group meeting at the Principe Irrigation Scheme in Sanye Resettlement, the members there who were in serious problems after being refused any more loans by the AFC due to their indebtedness, had appealed to the local MP for assistance. Agritex had prepared the required quotation for financial assistance which for some reason had delayed reaching the MP's office. The MP was prepared to assist the group.

However, there were some negative interventions by the 'political agents' to the detriment of agriculture's development. For example, there were charges that most of the people selected to join the irrigation scheme at Principe were not trained farmers but were selected politically by the 'council' on the agency of some 'political gurus'. Also there were complaints that some top elements of the farmers' organisation colluded against the small farmers. Some of the politicians were said to know very well that the ZFU did not genuinely represent the poor farmer but they pretended all was well. "They fool the poor farmer! *Vamwe varikubhandeja pasina kukuvara* (some put a bandage where there is no injury)" — meaning "they hide the truth", — said a farmer in Chidembo during focus groups. We will hear more about politicians on the evaluation of the impact of ESAP. However, when this researcher put the question in Mutumba Ward

during focus groups as to whether problems mentioned were conveyed to politicians/MPs, one farmer, with the concurrence of almost all the others, declared that:

"We tell these things to you researchers because you are not biased. You will write the truth. MPs want our votes".

Another farmer added:

"We can tell the MP, but if a person feeds well, they feed well, don't they?"

Section Six: Evaluation of ESAP

6.0 INTRODUCTION

In July 1990, the Zimbabwe government announced the inauguration of the economic reform programme known as the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). The respondents were asked to comment on the programme: First, whether they had heard about it, second, where or how they got information about it and third, what new opportunities existed in agriculture with the inauguration of the programme and what its impact was on their livelihoods.

6.1 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ESAP

Eighty-nine percent of the respondents had heard about ESAP. Ten percent had not and 1% had no response. Thus, the existence of the programme was widely known. However, it is a different thing to talk about knowledge of the content of the programme or precisely what it meant. This became a difficult area to investigate as several respondents derogatively referred to it as "the starvation and hunger programme"; others referred to it as the "job-losses programme". "ESAP means starvation", said some respondents. However, whether they were dissatisfied with the programme or not, the vast majority knew about it.

6.2 CHANNELS OF INFORMATION ON ESAP

Next, we analyse how the respondents got information on ESAP.

Table 40: Channels of Information on ESAP

Channel	No. of Respondents Using Channel	
	Freq	%
Newspapers	1	1
Radio	12	6
Television	1	1
Other Farmers	8	4
Political groups	5	3
Other (informal networks)	162	86
Total	188	100

The bulk of the respondents got information on ESAP via the informal media. This is disturbing in view of the obvious distortions and half-truths which go with such channels. In fact, it is quite disturbing that newspapers were not effectively used. Even more so that radio was a channel for only 6% of the respondents who knew about ESAP. Political groups should have been more effective than respondents have cared to reveal. Even knowing about ESAP through other farmers was negligible at only 4%. It is clear that the farmers' organisations, the official media and the socio-political institutions were not formally identified as effective means of communication on the programme. This is very unfortunate. However, a harsh judgement should be reserved in the sense that the "other media" through which respondents got information about ESAP is not clearly specified and could have included these channels as well. Suffice it to say that newspapers, radio and socio-political institutions should improve their operations as media for information dissemination in the rural settings.

6.3 NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN AGRICULTURE AFTER ESAP

Table 41: New Opportunities in Agriculture (Production)

Opportunities	No. of Respondents	
	Freq	%
None	22	12
Credit in cash	50	27
Credit in inputs	10	5
Free inputs	2	1
Irrigation schemes	5	3
Drought resistant crops	9	5
Other	—	—
TOTAL	188	100

Table 42: New Opportunities in Agriculture (Marketing)

Opportunities	No. of Respondents	
	Freq	%
None	2	1
Prices are better	52	28
Transport easier	5	3
Quick cash from private buyers	5	3
Inputs available in advance	4	2
Cheques deposited in Banks	5	3
Other	30	16
TOTAL	188	100

In Tables 41 and 42 it can be seen that very few of the respondents gave opinion on the question of opportunities in agriculture since ESAP. In Table 41, the few who did claimed that there was now greater availability of inputs on credit (27%), and cash on credit (12%) to assist in production. About 12% claimed there were no new opportunities at all. Others claimed there were free inputs, there were more irrigation schemes and seed varieties for drought resistant crops. The only significant opportunities really, were in cash credit and inputs credit.

As regards opportunities for marketing, the single most important opportunity cited was that created by decontrolling of prices. Twenty-eight percent felt the prices paid were now better and were an incentive for production for the market. Other opportunities cited, albeit to a very insignificant extent, were better provision of transport for the produce, quick cash from private buyers, availability of inputs in advance and that some cheques from sales were now deposited in bank accounts rather than farmers having to go and collect them (See Table 42).

6.4 CONCLUSION ON ESAP

Generally, people did not feel ESAP had helped them much except in the way of cash credit and better prices. The biggest complaint was on the issue of the costs of inputs. The State was called upon to re-intervene to control the prices of inputs. ESAP was said to be causing hunger and suffering.

During focus groups, some farmers pointed out that evaluation of the impact of ESAP was difficult for them because they never really knew what the content of the programme was and what they as farmers were expected to gain from it. Nobody explained the content of the programme to farmers, not even the ZFU:

“The only time we heard of ESAP in meetings was when people were just talking about other issues and then made side remarks about ESAP. There was no education of the masses by the ZFU”, said a spokesman for the farmers during a research workshop.

ESAP unfortunately coincided with the most severe drought in the country's history. This made people fail to differentiate between the effects of ESAP and those of drought. During the results confirmation workshop, a councillor declared that:

ESAP coincided with drought. Ask people what ESAP is and they will tell you that it is famine. ESAP means that those who already had something when it was introduced never suffered, while those who were poor have lost the little they had.

The farmers agreed that life had become difficult since the inauguration of the programme. Prices of inputs continued to escalate. Said one farmer: “Prices of inputs are increasing and basic commodity prices increase three to four times a year and yet the producer prices for the farmers remain stagnant”.

Farmers called for the state to retake its role of controlling prices, particularly of inputs. Another councillor said:

We want to send you (the researchers) to tell the people in the offices (the powers that be) how difficult our life is. Farming is not easy. We only get income once a year and we have to budget for everything there. The money is not enough, if only they could increase producer prices or at least decrease the cost of fertilizer, may be life for us would be better. Government should control the prices for there to be order and fairness in the country.

The services of training Master Farmers were derogated by farmers in the sense that those trained would not be able to buy the inputs necessary for them to be good farmers. Said one master farmer and councillor:

Even the Master Farmer training course is training us to live in poverty. They train you to use manure because they do not see you affording the fertilizer. It seems they want to sharpen our poverty. We went for Master Farmer training and there was not a single day when the instructor mentioned ZFC (a fertiliser company). Even Advanced Master Farmer training is training to live in advanced poverty.

Those who were involved in garden clubs saw a gloomy future because of ESAP. Poverty had increased and people had no money to buy their garden output. Said one of the female leaders in answer to a question on the future of the clubs in the context of the impact of ESAP:

No, we don't think they will last long. We cannot ask people to buy material when they do not even have enough money to help their children. People are losing interest as they do not believe the situation will ever change. There is no hope for black people. We are lucky to get something to eat today. Our life is difficult nowadays.

Another added:

"The government is making a mistake. How can it not control the prices of inputs when it dictates the price at which it buys our maize?"

This was referring to the parastatal, the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) which was to a significant extent still controlled by government.

To the question: "Why do you not refuse to sell if you don't like the price?" She answered "We can't refuse because of poverty. If we refuse to sell then how do we live? Better to have little than nothing at all". So, our thesis about the poorer farmer getting a raw deal was being vindicated again. As we shall see later with respect to LSCF farmers, holding on the grain until prices improved was possible for them and they made gains.

During the results confirmation workshop, the researchers asked the participant farmers whether they conveyed the message to the authorities that ESAP was not working for them. A spokesman replied:

“Those who went to the Hotel (i.e. to tell the leaders) have not yet returned”.

This statement is loaded. However, it is clear that the leaders stayed in hotels and did not come down to the people. Those who were sent by the people became co-opted or simply did not bother to come with feedback. ‘Staying in hotels’ reveals the deep class divisions and the increasingly dominant view of “them” and “us”.

The conclusion on this whole thing about ESAP is clearly that when a programme is having negative results it needs to have some of its aspects reviewed or the pace of some processes re-looked at. The government never did this.

Besides, information about the programme needs to flow from the very design to the implementation stages. Participation of those to be affected, expected to benefit and to support the programme is fundamental. In Shamva, all the above were lacking.

Section Seven: The Large-scale Commercial Farmers

7.0 FARMERS’ ORGANISATIONS IN THE LSCFS

Data received from LSCFs in the Shamva District is so weak on the above issue that it is difficult to attempt exhaustive comment based on it. Table 43 shows that above 74% of the responding farmers were members of a farmers’ organisation. On the rest of the questions on farmers’ organisations, their types, their role, the benefits derived and what weaknesses they had, the data is almost non-existent.

The survey discovered that there was a Shamva Farmers’ Association to which belonged 47% of the respondents. This association was an affiliate of the CFU. All the farmers who belonged to this association said its main activity was information dissemination. It was a local private organisation while the CFU operated at the national level.

Eighty-nine percent of those who were members said the benefits they derived from membership was the awareness campaign. The rest mentioned development issues as part of the benefits. No weaknesses of the association were mentioned.

Only one member claimed to belong to the ICFU and that its primary role was advocacy for the future developments in agriculture, particularly, indigenous commercial farming.

Only two or 11% claimed to belong to the ZFU. One of them said the benefits were information dissemination, discounts and sales tax exemptions. The other did not respond. Weaknesses of the ZFU were not mentioned.

It is clear that the Shamva Farmers’ Association was the most dominant and most active. It is clear that in the LSCFs there were farmers who belonged to the

ZFU. However, there is some evidence that black large-scale farmers had multiple membership of farmers' organisations i.e. they belonged to the ZFU, CFU and ICFU at the same time. The political ramifications of this reality are unclear, but it does compromise authenticity of leadership of specific classes where such multiple-membership holders gain leadership positions.

Table 43: Membership of Farmers' Organisations

Membership	Freq.	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Don't know	1	5.3	5.3
Yes	14	73.7	78.9
No	4	21.1	100.0
Total	19	100.0	

The other part of the data which is usable is that on what problems farmers faced apart from the drought. Leading problems were the same as those cited by small farmers and that is high input costs, high interest rates and lack of adequate equipment. These were some of the main problems cited as faced during the ESAP period.

The organisation representing the LSCFs (the CFU) remains the major one with the Indigenous Commercial Farmers' Union (ICFU) representing the black sector also growing. The CFU has nine commodity associations representing farmers who grow cereals, soya beans, horticulture, cotton, milk, cattle, wildlife, pig and ostrich production. Currently, moves are underway to set up another association representing paprika. These commodity associations are serviced by the CFU technical team which gives diagnostic and advisory services and training and education.

The technical team carries out farm visits, engages in group discussions and coordinates research, but its most important role is in monitoring and advising on the control of flocks and migratory pests such as locusts and armyworms.

With the liberalisation of the marketing of grain, the LSCFs established the private Zimbabwe Agricultural Commodities Exchange (ZIMACE) which they have used to the full and which effectively competes with the parastatal, the Grain Marketing Board. On October 4 1997, it was announced that the maize prices at ZIMACE had risen to unanticipated levels of \$1 700 to \$1 720 per tonne from \$1 610 per tonne the previous week (*The Herald* 4/10/97). The CFU Chairman of the Commercial Grain Producers' Association (CGPA) had declared earlier that:

Marketing problems are affecting pricing of grain. We have seen that the local price is higher than that being offered by the GMB (Mr. Ian Gibson, *The Herald*, 4/10/97).

The LSCFs, as mentioned by the smallholder farmers, are able to hold on to their grain until the prices improve, and they can do so for months. The press reported that:

A couple of months ago farmers had been withholding their crops after being advised of a possibility of price increases as from early October to early next year (*The Herald* 4/10/97).

The LSCF sector is obviously more able to take advantage of the liberalised economic regime than the smallholder sector.

PART FOUR: CONCLUSION

Section Eight: Conclusion

8.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The countryside is strongly differentiated in the Shamva district with smallholder communal and resettlement farmers existing side by side large-scale commercial farms. Organisations representing these two main sectors are the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU) for the former and the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) which represents mainly white farmers. In the LSCFs is also the Indigenous Commercial Farmers' Union (ICFU) which represents black large-scale commercial farmers. The CFU operates with regional farmers' associations and commodity associations while the ZFU operates with clubs and associations at the local level and District and Provincial structures up to the national level. It also operates commodity associations but these are fairly recent sub-structures.

The CFU has been quite effective in the representation of and delivery of service to its members due to its being better organised and monolithic in its orientation. The ZFU has loose links with its base, has diverse social interests and has not built up fully its capacity to be strong enough to effectively represent its members. This has led to limited achievements and gloomy assessments of its future by some of its members.

On the whole, farmers have cast doubt as to the ability of small farmers' groups to effectively champion the interests of their members and the assessment is that this ability has been weakened even more by the structural adjustment programme and withdrawal of the state. All services, from credit for inputs to training, transport and marketing have been seen not to boost the productive intervention of the small farmer, so much so that the state was being called upon to re-intervene on aspects such as input prices, credit facilities, infrastructure and training in order to protect and develop the small farmer. ESAP was said to have benefitted the rich farmers while impoverishing the small farmer. The small farmers' organisations which some doubted whether they existed, were said to have been powerless to help their members.

No effective communication had been mounted regarding ESAP either during the design or implementation stages. No involvement of the people was

attempted either. All organisations from state to civil, including the farmer organisations, were blamed for this. For the success of any future programme, it is necessary for this anomaly to be corrected.

The point that emerges strongly from this study is that any policy whether of reform or not, be it policy of the state or private organisation, should take account of social differentiation in the countryside and not impose a blanket solution which leads to widening of the gap between rich and poor. All the hypotheses we advanced in this study have been vindicated. The final thesis therefore should be that, under conditions of differentiation, under-development and backwardness of agriculture, an economic reform programme cannot, in a wholesale fashion, demand the withdrawal of a strong public sector role in the building of the capacity of the poorer farmers. This process would lead to further impoverishment and destruction of the poorer smallholder farmer. Agriculture will not take-off under such conditions. A stronger but different public sector role is an imperative for the development of agriculture, a sector in which the smallholder farmer still holds the key to success. The precise role to be played by the public sector should be negotiated openly and agreed among all the stakeholders. This is the challenge for the development of Agriculture. Emergence of a more representative organisation for the smallholder farmers could be the best supportive development for the negotiation of such a public sector role to be meaningful.

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