

Perceived causes and consequences of food insecurity in rural Zimbabwe: Using a decolonised methodology

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Abstract

This study investigates perceived causes and associated effects of food insecurity in Kotwa, Mudzi district, Zimbabwe. The study comes at a time when the majority of Zimbabweans are food insecure due to the recent El Niño-induced drought and the situation is worse in rural agro-based communities. We made use of decolonised qualitative methodology through the Ubuntu research approach. We collected data from 11 participants and 3 key informants through dialogue and task approaches. Data were analysed through advanced manual analysis which emphasises the use of native languages in data analysis to ensure that cultural aspects reflected in the data are not lost. In line with the perceived causes of food insecurity, participants highlighted a lack of adequate rainfall, high temperatures, poor soils, laziness and dependence, as well as poverty and unemployment as the causes of food insecurity. The consequences that were reflected include poor physical and mental health, domestic violence, child marriages, crime, and family disintegration. We then recommended, among other recommendations, that there is a need to assist rural agro-based populations with resources and knowledge to produce food despite adverse climatic conditions, and the revival of traditional food insecurity practices like the Zunde raMambo to ensure that communities can rescue households that are food insecure, and not wait for external intervention. Moreover, the government of Zimbabwe should urgently refocus its efforts on addressing food insecurity because it is a threat to national development as it affects well-being and productivity whilst also incubating a host of social problems.

Keywords: Climate change, food insecurity, Ubuntu research approach, rural communities, Zimbabwe