Chapter 3: Study Design and Methodology

The literature review furnished information on how sense of community is perceived and enhanced from a scholarly perspective. This chapter presents the research methodology. This section determines a study's acceptability within scholarly circles. It informs the conclusions and giving an overall assessment of whether the study is feasible or utopian. It is in the methodology that the researcher direction, costs and scope is further highlighted. This chapter outlines the research philosophy that the researcher is inclined to. From the epistemological inclination the study's methodology was developed. The section highlights how data was collected and analysed.

Just like the theoretical framework is to the literature review so is the research design to the study. The study perceives the world as one that needs objectivity for one to understand it properly and derive meanings and conclusions. This is so as the lifestyles and designs at the two ancient cities in Zimbabwe need interpretation of meanings from the researcher' perspective. This perception is inclined with a phenomenologist philosophical perspective (Gray, 2007). The study looked at the Great Zimbabwe community and the Ndebele cities and assessed each entity and derived meanings from the pre-colonial cities.

Informed by the research paradigm the study took up a representative case study research design. This entails a focus on a case study that represented the two major ethnical groups in Zimbabwe the Shona and the Ndebele. A research design is a structure that acts as a guidance to the execution of the research method and the analysis of data (Creswell, 2014). The case study research design has been applauded by Bryman (2012) as the best in investigating detailed complexities. This study focused on two cases, the Great Zimbabwe and the Ndebele cities. The data collection methods were qualitative. This involved key informant interviews with the national Museums and Monuments, archaeologists, sociologists' anthropologists, open ended questionnaires, observations and focus group discussions. For secondary data collection an archival method was engaged. To decipher meanings thematic content analysis was engaged. To enhance the validity and reliability the researcher properly designed the research instruments and engaged triangulation approach in data collection. The study ensured that no harm in any way was done to the informants.

The study intended to understand sense of community in the context of two ancient cities of Zimbabwe, the Great Zimbabwe and the Old Bulawayo cities. Such information of the cities is kept at the sites under the curatorship of the

National Museums and Monuments. The study also needed a scholarly opinion of the sites as such targeted Archaeologist, Anthropologists, Historians and Sociologists. The study also intended to understand the current planning practices as such it targeted two groups of professional in urban design in Zimbabwe, the architects and the spatial planners.

To select the respondents, non-probability sampling methods were engaged. Non-probability sampling is a set of all methods that are not guided by probability. To access information from the National Museums and Monuments, the researcher used purposive sampling as there was no other organisation that possessed such information. To get information from the place, the organisation gave the researcher three site professionals, an archaeologist, an anthropologist and sociologist. This was the same case for the two sites. This approach is inclined towards snow bowling (Brymann, 2012).

For other professional with historical data, a more practical approach was used. The researcher went through tonnes of research papers on the two sites. From the papers conveniently (convenience sampling) available to the researcher, the researcher chose progressive names (Names that had consistently published on the matter) and emailed or called the professionals (Purposive Sampling). However, the convenience was based on the response of the professional to the researcher's emails or phone calls. Furthermore, the researcher engaged professionals from the Faculty of Arts at the University of Zimbabwe where the researcher is based. For architects and spatial planners, convenience sampling was used. Being one of the professionals, the researcher was part of the social media groups where the professionals located across Zimbabwe were in.

Having figured out the data sources, the researcher went on to collect the data. Two kinds of data were collected. These included primary and Secondary data. Primary data has been defined as original data collected by the researcher (Miller and Brewer, 2007). On the other hand, secondary data as data that has been collected by other researchers (*ibid*). This part looks at the data collection methods and the related tools.

The researcher was informed by key informant interviews, open ended questions, observations and focus group discussions for primary data collection. During the processes, various data collection instruments were used, these involved, interview guides, open ended questionnaires, observation checklists and focus group guides. To verify and complement existing layouts and settlement patterns of the two sites, Google Earth Imagery was engaged.

Interview guides were used to collect data from the National Museums and Monuments. This was done in a face-to-face setup. The interview guides used were designed in an unstructured way (see appendix 1,3,5 and 6). This made it easy for the researcher to probe extra questions to the respondents in the quest to find relevant and more accurate data. The same interview guides were also used during cell phone interviews. These were done with key informant respondents that were not easy to access for a face-to-face interview like those based in South Africa.

For anthropologists, archaeologists, historians and sociologists that were not accessible for a face-to-face interview and a cell phone interview, open ended questionnaire was sent to their emails. The questionnaires were open-ended questions to permit the respondent to fully exhaust all the information that they had (see Appendix 2, 5). The design of the questionnaire was such that it provided pure qualitative data. For aspects that were not clear, the researcher sent follow up questions via the email to clarify the issues.

To understand aspects of current urban design practices in Zimbabwe, focus group discussions were done. These however were not conventional focus group discussions that are done on a face-to-face setup (Creswell, 2014). These discussions were done in a WhatsApp group. The researcher was guided by a focus group discussion guide (see appendix 8and 9). This began with one question that was followed up by a related question and all questions were developed from one question and the theme of the study. The discussion therefore involved a series of question probing and follow up questions.

In the context of understanding settlements and their patterns relative to the issues of sense of community and design, pertinent observations were made. These were done using an observation checklist (see appendix 7). The researcher moved around the sites, observing existing structures and deriving possible meanings. The researcher was assisted by National Museums and Monuments tour guides who helped in interpreting phenomenon and navigating the sites. The data that was collected from observations was complemented by images that were taken by a high-resolution camera.

Data from maps, images and observations was complemented by Google Earth Imagery extracted data. This helped in understanding the settlement patterns and how the settlements have changed or maintained the patterns.

Secondary data is data that is second hand (Creswell, 2005). This is normally found in the form of written documents, maps, pictures and drawings (Trochim, 2006).

In collecting secondary data, an archival method was engaged. This involved going through archives of the two cities the Ndebele and the Great Zimbabwe settlements that is kept at the National Museums and Monuments. The researcher first visited the National Museum located in Harare where he collected data from texts that are kept at the museums. Informed by that the researcher went on to collect data from site museums in Masvingo and Bulawayo were details about the study areas are kept.

Another source of relevant secondary data was through document review. The researcher went through a series of history, sociology, anthropology and archaeology journals to understand how scholars perceived the Great Zimbabwe and the Old Bulawayo settlements. To help understand the themes that were coming out, the literature review was aided by a software called Atlas Ti. This software helped in grouping statements and quotations within the papers into themes making it easy to understand.

The data that was collected was analysed. Analysis of data is a process of interpreting and developing meanings from the data that is given (Gray, 2007). During the study, thematic content analysis was used. Themes were used to understand how the Great Zimbabwe and the Ndebele cities were organised. In this process quotation were made, vernacular language was kept as it is as supposed to be done during thematic content analysis (Bryman, 2012). Narrative analysis was also done in making sense out of the data that were given by the National Museums and Monuments officials. This involved listening to and understanding more about their opinion of the site. For secondary data analysis the Atlas Ti software was very instrumental. All data coded and grouped into themes was easy to explain and derive meanings from it.

During the data collection and analysis process, the researcher upheld all necessary principles to ensure that the data and conclusions that were made were valid and reliable. Validity can be defined as the acceptability of the data in relationship to its response to research questions and the research's field (Bryman, 2012). Reliability is the extent to which a research can be duplicated if all the constants are held (Creswell, 2014). To ensure validity of data collected, the researcher used well developed research instruments that respond to the research questions. Furthermore, the researcher also used triangulation of questions to ensure consistence in terms of the respondents' responses. No double-barrelled questions were used. To ensure that the conclusions made were valid, the researcher exercised reflexivity. This involved the researcher being objective and avoiding any experience or opinion to influence the conclusions.

For reliability during the research, the data sources were triangulated. The researcher collected data from four different professionals that had an opinion in the same field. As such data that was collected could be relied on. The tools used for different people of the same profession were the same making the tools reliable.

In collecting data, no false promises or incentives were employed to stimulate responses to uphold principles of ethical research (Gray, 2007). Data was collected from willing respondents thus increased data accuracy as the respondents were friendly and opened up to the researcher thereby creating a rapport. During the process of collection and dissemination of data, respondent protection was ensured. No names were used without the consent of the person. Furthermore, no pictures, voice recordings, or video recordings were taken without the consent of the person/persons being interviewed. Aliases were employed when names were needed to protect respondents in every possible way. No information collected from the organisations was used in any form of bad publicity or used to disadvantage the organisation or the persons involved. Any promise that the researcher made to any organisation were honoured. However, there was a case of an ethical dilemma. The research ethics dictates that no money should be paid for responses yet it is a legislative requirement for a researcher to pay a fee of $20 to the National Museums and Monuments for any researcher. The researcher however paid the fee but avoided talking about having paid to reduce the feeling of obligations to respond on the interviewees.

Apart from time and resources that limits the potential of every study, bureaucracy is a potential threat. This was managed by applying to relevant authorities for permission to carry out the study the moment the study is allowed to proceed. The first application attempt was done through email; this was unsuccessful as the officials did not respond to the email. The researcher had to travel to Masvingo and Bulawayo to apply for permission to carry out the research. Other issues that came up was that of language barrier. This was largely because the researcher could not speak Ndebele as such, he travelled with a Ndebele fluent friend who assisted in interpreting some of the concepts. The other issue was through email questionnaires; one archaeologist could not respond to the questionnaire because he was "working on a project to reconstruct Great Zimbabwe as such it could be conflict of interest". Against all the adversities, the study carried on.

The chapter presented the research philosophy that the study is presumed on. It is from the philosophy that the methodology of the study is derived. The chapter identified the sample, sampling methods, data collection methods and data

analysis methods. The chapter also presented the limitations and the ethical considerations. The next chapter will focus on the results and findings of the study.