

# **A SOCIOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF URBAN GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY: THE CASE OF BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis seeks to understand the ways in which urban governance and urban-based civic participation interact with each other in contemporary Zimbabwe, with a particular focus on the factors influencing and shaping social accountability and effective citizen involvement in urban governance processes. This main objective is pursued with specific reference to Bulawayo, which is one of two metropolitan centres in Zimbabwe. The focus is specifically on questions around social accountability, citizen participation and centralised urban governance. In this regard, it is important to recognise that social accountability and urban governance need to be understood in the context of their inherent relationship and how these both shape and determine each other. In this respect, there is need to probe the foundations that shape the lived experiences of communities, through social accountability and urban governance, and how these pattern development and social change.

Zimbabwe for over a decade now has gone through a series of economic and political crises which have impacted detrimentally on urban governance. With the economy in free-fall, local authorities have had to pursue a range of strategies to sustain themselves. These socio-economic conditions have forced a change in relations between the state, cities and citizens. Many studies have examined this regarding the politics of contestation between the ruling party (ZANU-PF), the state, and the main opposition party (MDC) in urban governance in Zimbabwe. However, this study zeros in on social accountability and how it is shaped by the prevailing socio-economic and political environment in Zimbabwe. At the same time, the lived experiences of communities vary and this variance influences and affects social accountability interventions and outcomes in cities like Bulawayo. Importantly, the thesis offers a longitudinal study which can map the contextual factors affecting and influencing social accountability in Bulawayo over time. Though recognising the debilitating effects of centralised urban governance on social accountability, the thesis also raises questions about the shifting, and often tenuous, relationship between the city and the central state, on one hand, and the city and its citizens on the other. In doing so, it considers the role of citizens, institutions and actors in responding to the impacts of urban governance and social accountability.

In pursuing this thesis, a range of mainly qualitative research methods were used, including key informant interviews, focus group discussions, observation and use of documents. In the end,

the thesis offers a nuanced analysis of the everyday complexities and challenges for social accountability in urban Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and thereby contributes to theorising social accountability and urban governance in Africa more broadly.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

AG	Attorney General
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
BCC	Bulawayo City Council
BMC	Bulawayo Municipal Council
BPRA	Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association
BSAC	British South Africa Company
BURA	Bulawayo United Residents Association
BWC	Bulawayo Water Company
CDs	Compact Disks
CNC	Chief Native Commissioner
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organisation(s)
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GNU	Government of National Unity
HCCA	High Court Chamber Application
ICU	Industrial Commercial Workers Union
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LAA	Land Apportionment Act
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC-M	Movement for Democratic Change-Mutambara
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai
MLGRUD	Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development
MPOI	Mass Public Opinion Institute
NAB	Native Advisory Boards

NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NYDT	National Youth Development Trust
OSA	Official Secrets Act
OSISA	Open Society Initiative Southern Africa
POSA	Public Order Security Act
PPCLG	Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Local Governance
RAs	Residents Associations
RG	Responsible Government
RGa	Responsible Government Authority
SA	Social Accountability
SMS	Short Message Service
SSB	Salisbury Sanitary Board
TMB(s)	Town Management Board(s)
UCA	Urban Councils Act
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WILD	Women's Institute for Leadership Development
ZACC	Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZCTU	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZINWA	Zimbabwe National Water Authority
ZRP	Zimbabwe Republic Police

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

The colonial period in Zimbabwe, ending in 1980, witnessed the development and intensification of white settler hegemony through policies and institutions which sought to delineate and demarcate urban centres and urban citizenship along deeply racialised lines, with urban governance marked as well by significant control by the central state. Since independence, urban governance has been deracialised as part of the broader de-colonial, liberalisation and democratic project of the post-colonial state. This project has also taken place during what is often referred to as the third wave of democracy sweeping across large swathes of the African continent, which highlighted the significance of initiating state decentralisation and devolution. But, in relation to urban governance in post-independent Zimbabwe (and indeed elsewhere in Africa), an uninterrupted and linear trajectory of de-centralisation and democratisation has not occurred, despite clear signs of the dismantling of the racialised character of national and local governance. Hence, democratisation-cum-de-centralisation are not equivalent to de-racialisation, with the latter not inevitably marked by the former.

In fact, in post-colonial Zimbabwe, there are crucial elements of centralised state control over urban governance as well as significant tensions between local urban authorities and the central state under the hegemony of the ex-liberation movement now ruling party, Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). In this sense, political conflicts and struggles, notably since the year 2000 with the rise of the opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and its control over many urban councils, have been played out on the urban terrain on an ongoing basis. In fact, the year 2000 heralded important changes in Zimbabwe's urban governance landscape, including in the urban centre which forms the case study for this thesis, namely, Bulawayo.

This thesis analyses urban governance in Zimbabwe in the post-independence period, particularly from the year 2000, with specific reference to the metropolitan centre of Bulawayo. In doing so, it focuses more specifically on the emergent and evolving forms of social accountability (SA) – or lack thereof – in urban governance in Bulawayo. This focus on SA raises crucial

questions around the relationship between central state and urban authorities and the interface between urban authorities and urban citizens, as well as decentralisation, citizen-centred approaches to urban democracy and human-rights and good governance discourses, and the ways in which all this shapes service delivery and poverty reduction in urban spaces. Bulawayo becomes an intriguing case study because Bulawayo historically has been considered as a rebel city vis-à-vis the central state. This means that there are specificities in urban governance and SA processes in Bulawayo which are not reducible to broader trends in urban Zimbabwe.

Bulawayo, which is Zimbabwe's second largest city or metropole (after Harare), is a city with significant historical uniqueness when compared to Harare and other urban areas, dating back to the time when it was a Ndebele stronghold prior to British colonialism. Into the colonial and then post-colonial periods, Bulawayo has always been a thorn in the flesh for the central state, with the latter constantly seeking by various means to bring the city within the confines of the dictates of central rule. With the central state lodged in Salisbury (now Harare), a deeply-rooted rivalry existed between the two main metropolises, with Bulawayo constantly seen as an opposition stronghold which sought to pursue its own social and political agendas. At the same time, and beyond tensions between Bulawayo urban authorities and the central state, tensions have prevailed between the urban authority and citizens of Bulawayo. These two sets of tensions, both of which relate to SA processes and mechanisms, and indeed involve struggles around them, have been constantly intertwined and have been often in tension with each other. How SA becomes articulated and practiced can only be understood and examined by considering these multiple and shifting tensions.

Since independence, urban local authorities in Zimbabwe (including in Bulawayo) have been expected to function according to the basic principles of SA and to embed these principles in their institutional arrangements and programmes at local level. The main emphasis in SA is on downward accountability of urban authorities to urban citizens, with the notion of 'social' implying that such accountability is not synonymous with strictly political accountability as manifested in electoral processes – in other words, SA is both wider and deeper comparatively speaking. Enacting SA principles is meant to provide a platform and facilitate pathways for enhancing citizen participation and social inclusion in urban governance and thereby entrench representative and participatory democracy. The form which it takes, and the extent to which it is practiced, is open to considerable temporal and spatial variation. This diversity in part depends

upon variations in upward accountability, that is, the ways in which urban authorities are expected to be accountable to the central state. Because of this, the emergence, development and outcomes of SA are ingrained in urban authority-urban citizen dynamics and urban authority-central state dynamics in complex, contingent and fluid ways. As we shall see, structure, power, agency, institutions and practices are all involved in analysing the shifting trajectories of SA in this study of urban governance in Bulawayo. The central Zimbabwean state and local state in Bulawayo, along with the citizens of Bulawayo, all require attention for any analysis of SA in urban governance, though these three actors are themselves not internally homogeneous.

## **1.2 Background to the Study**

Metropolitan governance in Zimbabwe is based mainly on the Urban Councils Act (UCA) of 1996 which provides key premises for the manner in which urban local government (namely, urban councils) are expected to function (Chikerema 2013). The equivalent overriding legislation for rural areas is the Rural District Councils Act (1996) (Chakaipa 2004). In the case of metropolitan areas, the UCA bestows significant powers on the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MLGRUD) by providing potential avenues for central state domination and intrusion in the affairs of urban local authorities, thereby possibly minimising genuine participation of citizens in local state processes. This is reinforced by the fact that the local government system in Zimbabwe derives primarily from legislative rather than constitutional arrangements such that local government tends to become an appendage of central government (Mushamba 2010), with the latter determining the direction of local development (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010).

The heart of metropolitan governance in Zimbabwe thus remains the MLGRUD. The UCA stipulates that the Minister administers all legislation and statutory instruments with respect to metropolitan governance. Additionally, the Minister retains a substantial controlling role over all local government structures and has the authority to suspend any urban council as well as decisions and resolutions made by councils (Makumbe 1998). Indeed, in practice, the Minister in recent years has increasingly performed an intrusive and directive role in the operations of councils (Mapira 2000). This has occurred in the context of the formidable national opposition political party which emerged in the late 1990s (the MDC), which garnered significant support in urban areas of Zimbabwe and took control of metropolitan local governments (including both Harare and Bulawayo) (Mapuva 2013).



The pertinent Zimbabwean literature highlights that, at least formally, electoral democracy exists in Zimbabwe, including within urban spaces (Makumbe 2006). But citizen participation in local state developmental processes is heavily influenced by the machinations of the central state and ruling party (ZANU-PF) (Mapira 2000). Urban citizens in Zimbabwe often find it difficult to participate meaningfully in local developmental initiatives due to the disabling character of local governance as influenced by the central state through legislative and institutional power (Kyohairwe 2014). This is despite the often-repeated claim that, ideally, metropolitan governance in Zimbabwe (and indeed elsewhere) needs to be embedded in a symbiotic relationship with citizenship participation through democratically-elected and socially-responsive structures (Makumbe 1998; Sivalo 2013; Kyohairwe 2014; Mushamba 2010; Chatiza 2013). First and foremost, then, the Zimbabwean literature (Mapira 2000; Mushamba 2010; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010; Mutema 2014) highlights that top-down and centralised state-led metropolitan governance has sidelined the participation of citizens in governance processes, with elections having their own sets of problems (Scarnecchia 2008). It is important to note that this top-down metropolitan governance in Zimbabwe has marked structural continuities with the colonial Rhodesian state (Chakaipa 2010).

There is considerable literature on urban governance in Zimbabwe, dating back in the main to the 1990s. Makumbe (1998) for example examines citizen participation in local governance through state restructuring – notably decentralisation and devolution of power. In practice, these restructuring processes are meant to facilitate the provision of urban goods and services without the interference of central government. Makumbe concludes however that the changes, at least by the mid-1990s, had not been far-reaching though their intent was laudable. In a similar vein, Mapira (2000) argues that citizen participation of any significance in Zimbabwe has been limited to infrequent electoral processes and not to ongoing governance-related issues, and that state-citizen relationships are reminiscent of a horse-and-rider relationship where citizens are pseudo-equal partners with the state. This is not necessarily atypical when compared to other countries in Africa and indeed globally.

Later studies make similar points, effectively implying an even more authoritarian central state from the year 2000 with the state and ruling party at times becoming indistinguishable (Chitiyo 2009; Ncube 2010). Chatiza (2008) thus shows that, not only is SA and citizen participation curtailed by legislation (through the UCA), but it is increasingly disabled by a

pronounced rule by coercion. This coercive framing of central-local state relations, according to Chitiyo (2009), must be understood in the context of the changing party political terrain. More specifically, the hegemony of the ruling ZANU-PF party has been vigorously challenged in urban spaces in particular by the emergence of the MDC, so that the central state has sought to domesticate and even undermine MDC-controlled urban councils through repressive practices, including dismissing urban councils and replacing them with more compliant central state-driven institutional arrangements.

As a result, citizen participation in – and control over – metropolitan governance and SA processes more broadly becomes hugely problematic. Other writers reinforce these claims about the absence of effective SA in policy formation and implementation processes (Mushamba 2010; Chakaipa 2010). Insofar as accountability exists, it merely involves consultation with citizens and not deeper forms of participatory citizenship (Matyszak 2010), without any binding social contract between urban citizens (and civil society groups) and metropolitan councils (Marongwe et al. 2011). Such consultation simply involves legitimising unilateral, politically-motivated decisions (Alexander and Chitofiri 2011) without any recourse to democratic mechanisms. Hence, metropolitan governance is characterised by the abuse of power, corruption and the absence of SA (Chikerema 2013). In fact, it appears that the central state in Zimbabwe has become increasingly militarised with coercive apparatuses like the army and police being used to act against democratic attempts to re-open democratic space in urban centres (Tendi 2013).

Overall, considerable literature exists analysing urban governance and citizen participation in Zimbabwe broadly, but to a lesser extent in the case of Bulawayo. Literature on urban governance and citizen participation, particularly post-2000, has focused on democratisation and contestation, with urban governance viewed as a site of struggle (Kamete 2009; Chakaipa 2010; Muchadenyika 2014; Muchadenyika and Williams 2015). This literature also considers the tensions between the central state and Zimbabwean citizens from the year 2000 and how this led to a more state-centralised system of urban governance (Jonga 2012; Dorman 2016). Much of this literature on Zimbabwe tends to focus on the broader political economy of the country within which analyses of urban governance is then located. These types of studies are crucial. But it is important to go beyond structural contexts so that governance processes themselves are not treated in part as ‘black boxes’, as if urban governance processes move merely with the ebb and flow of broader societal dynamics. In other words, examining the internal dynamics of governance

processes must be considered as worthy of study in-and-of-themselves and as central to a more in-depth understanding of urban governance processes and the various tensions within these processes. In examining the specificities of urban governance of Bulawayo, this also means going beyond a top-down reading of urban governance processes so that the agency of local government and local citizens (in Bulawayo) is brought to the fore.

It is essential, as well, to note that Zimbabwe adopted a new Constitution, through a referendum process, which among other aspects, redefined the legal status of local governments and the roles of central government in superintending over local authorities. However, at the time of this study, no Act of Parliament had been put in place to ensure Constitutional provisions on local governance are enacted.

The specific focus of this thesis on SA as well becomes crucially important because, outside of donor and civil society organisation reports, there is a serious gap in the academic literature on Zimbabwe on SA and urban governance. The discussions in the prevailing literature on urban governance in Zimbabwe rarely explicitly articulate their understandings in terms of SA as such. By examining Bulawayo in particular, and over time, the thesis is able to ‘localise’ SA processes in the recognition of the contingent character of urban governance processes which are irreducible to wider structural conditions. In this regard, within Zimbabwean studies, there are now some attempts to move in this analytical direction, namely, by framing urban governance within SA. This is evidenced for instance by the work of Muchadenyika (2017). His study thus examines the ways in which civil society coalitions and citizens promote and demand SA in the delivery of public services by urban authorities in Zimbabwe, while placing emphasis on the what and how of SA processes. A significant lacuna though exists in studying urban governance and SA in contemporary Zimbabwe, with focused case studies (such as the one in this thesis on Bulawayo) offering empirical evidence in furthering our analytical understanding of the topic. This should be seen as part of a broader intellectual inquiry into SA in urban Africa (Grandvoinnet 2016).

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

In Africa more broadly, democratic processes and practices of nation-states have taken different historical turns and trajectories (Kelsall et al. 2010). However, while national elections have become common in African democratic practice (initially linked in part to the so-called third wave of democracy on the continent), the quality of urban governance remains a crucial issue. Political fallouts, entrenched in autocratic and repressive political systems, at times continue to mark

African governance (Cammack et al. 2010). As well, high levels of corruption exist and are associated with the absence of SA practices, including budget analysis, public expenditure tracking, citizen score cards, and transparency surrounding public funds, as well as with patronage politics and cronyism (Harvey 1989; Gaventa and Valderrama 1999). In Africa, approaches to local metropolitan governance are still regularly characterised by pronounced central government regulation and top-down state influences (which are sometimes marked by informal practices which go contrary to bureaucratic procedures) on development policies and decisions, along with rigid and distant relationships between state authorities and civic groups. There is often a failure to provide quality public services due to leakages of public funds and the lack of citizen participation and broad consultation in local state processes. This has regularly led to calls for greater SA on the basis of prioritising the rights of citizens (Pratt and Hutton 2012).

In this respect, SA by states to citizens continues to feature in development and democratic discourses amongst civil society groups as well as in the academic literature (Fox 2000; Mulgan 2000; Ackerman 2004; Robertson 2010). Though this is a relatively new discourse in the Zimbabwean context, it implies an obligation on the part of duty bearers and power holders (in this case, state officials and politicians) to take responsibility for their actions (Mulgan 2000). According to Ackerman (2004), SA is an integral component of social empowerment and sequentially economic development and poverty reduction. Good governance, as driven by SA practices, is linked to an enabling environment for public participation in which citizens are involved in policy-making and policy-implementation activities in order to orientate government programmes towards community needs and priorities (Kelsall et al. 2010). It thus entails a combination of social rights and government obligations which link citizens and the state in the deepening of democratic processes at local level (Clarke and Missingham 2009). This implies an active citizenry, using its rights to improve the quality of political and civil life through participating in formal economic, social and political activities, with the state creating enabling platforms for such (Green 2008). In this way, SA contributes to the long-term strategic objectives of local states; to policy coherence; to the embedding of mechanisms of transparency in the institutional arrangements of the state; and to state efficiencies (Kardos 2012; Ye 2014; Berkhout 2005; Kyohairwe 2014; Schoburgh 2014).

SA principles have in practice gained increasing prominence in recent years and are becoming a key cornerstone of citizen-based approaches to good governance at local and national

levels. Given this prominence, SA warrants serious intellectual inquiry (Grandvoinnet 2016). This thesis thus analyses urban governance in Bulawayo within a SA framework. Though it does not directly seek to offer programmatic solutions around enhancing SA, accountability mechanisms (if formulated and implemented properly under specific conditions) have the potential to transform the character of urban governance and at the same time act as a participatory basis for engaging in poverty reduction measures (Joshi and Houtzager 2012). Intellectually, a deep analysis of SA and its dynamic interplay with national and sub-national political economies of particular societies in Africa is lacking to a considerable extent, and this inhibits an understanding of the outcomes and impacts of SA (Hickey and King 2016; Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg 2016). This is certainly the case with Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, a SA framework has gained ground as the development approach of choice among civil society groups, with mixed results though in terms of pursuing this in practice. Limited knowledge regarding SA in urban Zimbabwe indeed has hampered any potential for SA institutions and mechanisms to improve local governance and citizen participation in Bulawayo, with the prevailing frameworks failing to address the specificities of the context in which they are pursued.

#### **1.4 Thesis Objectives**

Clearly, then, a critical study of urban governance in Bulawayo in the context of SA makes a contribution, no matter how limited, to the existing literature on urban governance in Zimbabwe. The main objective of the thesis is as follows: *To provide a critical analysis of urban governance in Bulawayo, particularly from the year 2000, with reference to social accountability.*

This main objective incorporates subsidiary objectives which, in being addressed, contribute to pursuing the main objective. The main secondary objectives are:

- a) Examine the enabling and disabling factors which promote and inhibit SA mechanisms in Bulawayo;
- b) Examine the specific forms which SA takes in urban governance in Bulawayo;
- c) Analyse the relationship between the central state and Bulawayo local authority, including prevailing tensions, and the effects of this relationship on SA mechanisms in urban governance in Bulawayo;
- d) Analyse the relationship between urban authorities in Bulawayo and citizens of Bulawayo, including cooperation and tensions, and the effects of this relationship on SA mechanisms in urban governance in Bulawayo;

- e) Examine internal relations within the Bulawayo local authority, notably between elected councils and state administration, and how these relations affect urban governance and SA in Bulawayo;
- f) Understand urban governance and SA in Bulawayo with reference to national party politics and how these play out within Bulawayo;
- g) Identify and examine temporal changes in SA and urban governance in Bulawayo during the post-2000 period; and
- h) Understand the broader political economy of urban Zimbabwe insofar as it affects urban governance and SA in Bulawayo.

## **1.5 Research Methods**

The research methodology underpinning the thesis entails a purely qualitative approach (Ryan 2006). This involves a case study research design as supported by a number of qualitative research methods, notably key informant interviews, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and the use of primary documentation. The adoption and use of various research methods facilitated the triangulation of empirical evidence and, in the process, enhanced reliability and validity. In this regard, the research was based on a post-positivist epistemology and ontology consistent more specifically with interpretive sociology. Thus, there was no attempt to identify and establish statistically-formulated causal relationships. Rather, the focus was on understanding the social practices of various actors and the ways in which these were informed by subjective meanings as well as conditioned by broader structural conditions. Further, this involved a relational sociology insofar as practices are acted out in and through the socio-political relationships in which actors are embedded.

My interest in questions around urban governance and SA arose in 2012 when I was a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer with the Bulawayo Progressive Residents' Association (BPRA). This work contributed to the very conceptualisation of the PhD thesis and some of the specific themes pertinent to a study of local authorities in Bulawayo. By engaging in (and with) certain communities in Bulawayo, it became quite clear that, though residents in these communities were often politically sophisticated, they experienced exclusion from local government processes and seemed unfamiliar with the basic principles of SA and the mechanisms which enhance local authority accountability. This was despite the fact that significant levels of donor funds and resources were being channelled to projects in Bulawayo which sought to increase

citizen participation for purposes of ensuring good governance and improved service delivery. In the end, it appeared that such projects were having weak outcomes and limited impact in deepening processes of SA. Studying SA in Bulawayo's urban governance from a sociological perspective thus became significant and a worthy analytical pursuit. Working in civil society in Bulawayo facilitated interaction with various actors including council officials, elected councillors and donors funding accountability.

### **1.5.1 Case Study Research Design**

For the thesis, I used a case study research design (focusing on Bulawayo) in order to understand the relationship between urban governance and SA. As indicated by Creswell (1994), case studies do not allow for statistical generalisation but, importantly, they are generalisable to theoretical propositions (King et al. 1994; Gilgun 2001). They are generalisable to theory in the sense that investigating the case study is facilitated and illuminated by a theoretical framing and, additionally, the case study findings may be used in refining prevailing theory about the particular social phenomenon under investigation (such as urban governance and SA). The case study approach entails studying social phenomena through the understanding and analysis of an individual case, which forms part of a broader class (for example, urban governance and SA) of cases of that particular social phenomenon. The unit of study (or case) then becomes the subject of reasonably in-depth examination and investigation. In this way, the case study approach also tends to be inclusive and comprehensive by incorporating into the investigation a diverse array of social relationships, interactions, practices, meanings and ideas which are relevant to unpacking the specificities of the case. The case study design therefore seeks to give a unitary character to the social phenomenon under analysis by weaving together the complex and fluid social facts which structure and animate the case (Punch 2004).

Bulawayo itself, as a case study, was not selected on a random sampling basis. Because of this, the case study of Bulawayo is not representative of urban governance in contemporary Zimbabwe as a whole in any strong statistical sense, though it may provide insights into the social and political processes embodying urban governance more broadly in the country. Bulawayo, compared to Harare, in fact has been the site historically (since 1980) of considerable opposition to ZANU-PF restructuring, including with respect to metropolitan governance, and hence the thesis seeks to identify and analyse the spatial and historical specificities of metropolitan governance in Bulawayo. The Bulawayo case study therefore: makes an empirical contribution to

the understanding of metropolitan governance in Bulawayo; provides insight into the kinds of socio-political processes likely prevalent within urban governance in Zimbabwe more generally; and offers the opportunity to add to and hopefully refine the prevailing theoretical literature (discussed in chapter two) on SA, urban governance and citizen participation.

Within Bulawayo itself, purposive non-random sampling was used to select specific wards for more focused study. These wards are 3, 6, 7, 9, 13, 18 and 26<sup>1</sup>. Purposive sampling is designed to identify particular sub-cases (so to speak) within the overall case under study (with wards being the sub-cases in this respect). Though it is sometimes used because of the researcher's inability to engage in random sampling (due to, for instance, the unavailability of a well-defined universe), at other times it is used because the research focus and objective could be more ably pursued by way of non-random sampling. It thus involves a particular resolve on the part of the researcher to include certain sub-cases (with a particular set of key characteristics) which are specifically relevant to the focus and objective (Punch 2004). This was the key issue with reference to purposive sampling of wards. Five of the wards selected (Wards 7, 9, 13, 18 and 26) have one or more of the following characteristics: high-density areas, low-income households, relatively higher levels of SA participation and comparatively low levels of literacy. The remaining two wards, wards 3 and 6, are situated in low- and middle-density areas of Bulawayo, where household income is higher and citizen participation in SA is known to be comparatively low. The major reason for selecting wards from low, middle and high density suburbs was to have a representative sample of Bulawayo's communities. In addition, the basis of selecting these sets of wards was informed by my work with civil society and the varying levels of SA I discovered through my work with BPRA.

### **1.5.2 Research Techniques**

The research was carried out formally over a period of two years, 2015 to 2017. As indicated, the study was inspired by an interaction with communities from Bulawayo through work conducted on behalf of BPRA and, as such, data was collected informally since 2012. In this respect, focus

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<sup>1</sup> Ward 3 (suburbs, Hume Park, Killarney, Orange Groove, Queens Park East, Romney Park, Sunnyside), Ward 6 (Bellevue, Newton West, Barham Green, Montrose, West-Sommerton, Southwold, Donnington), Ward 7 (Makokoba, Thorngrove Industries, Thorngrove Rented, Thorngrove, Westgate, Steeldale, Westondale), Ward 9 (Mpopoma, Matshobana, Kelvin North 2), Ward 13 (Iminyela, Mabuthweni, Pelandaba, Kelvin North), Ward 18 (Old Magwegwe, New Magwegwe, Portion of Magwegwe West East of Intemba Road) and Ward 26 (Emganwini 1 and 2).



group discussions and semi-structured interviews were done first where data was initially collected for conceptualisation purposes. Additional data was collected for analytical purposes in line with the study's focus and objectives. Sequentially, key informant interviews were conducted, in 2016, to gather rich data from civic experts, duty bearers and council technocrats. The review of primary and secondary data was undertaken throughout the duration of the research. This section details, in summary, the research techniques employed for the purpose of the study.

***Key informant interviews*** (KII) were used as an important research method or technique for the Bulawayo case study. Key informants are people often in positions of authority or with specialised knowledge about a particular social phenomenon (or long-term experience with the social phenomenon under investigation). Key informants, as a result of their knowledge, skills-set or position within society, are able to provide particularly deep and insightful narratives about the relevant social phenomenon (Marshall 1998), although normally from their own particular, subjective perspective. While the positioning of key informants in society often entails their engagement in social issues at multiple spatial levels, their engagement either directly or indirectly has implications at local levels.

Using snowball non-probability sampling, a total of 12 key informants were interviewed, namely, three opinion leaders, four councillors, three council technocrats and two civil society organisation directors with knowledge, experience and positions of responsibility in the governance sectors critical to the thesis. In this respect, key informants included those directly involved in local urban governance and in SA initiatives, both central to the thesis. The interviews ranged between 30 to 45 minutes each. A KII interview schedule was developed and used (see Appendix 1) as a guide when conducting the stated meetings. The KIIs enabled the fieldwork to access and unpack perspectives of diverse political and civic actors within Bulawayo, thereby enhancing the diversity and plurality of interpretations pertaining to urban governance, citizenship participation and SA. These interviews also facilitated the understanding of the tensions and ambiguities in the actual practices of urban governance in Bulawayo. In addition, conversations with key informants were taped and transcribed for verification purposes. Due to the sensitivity of the subject matter, interviewee names were not disclosed in the study as a means of protecting the identity of such sources. The major challenge in interviewing the key informants, particularly the civil servants, was their unwillingness at times to speak about issues which were particularly

sensitive politically, possibly for fear of retribution by their bureaucratic-political superiors. This was the case even though their anonymity would be guaranteed.

**Focus group discussions** (FGD) were a second research method used. These discussions, like key informant interviews, are classified under a genre of qualitative research methods designed at attaining an understanding of participants' views, feelings and attitudes (Lindlof and Taylor 2002), and hence are consistent with interpretive sociology. Group discussions produce evidence and insights which would be less accessible without interaction found in a group setting, as listening to the verbalised thoughts and experiences of others tends to stimulate memories, ideas and experiences in group participants (Lindlof and Taylor 2002). Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005) suggest that the groups provide an opportunity for a blend of learning, discovery and education (and even empowerment) deriving from the dynamic interaction between the group participants themselves as well as with the group facilitator. Focus group discussions, as a kind of small social group interaction, can also motivate a diversity of communication (including anecdotes, stories and jokes) which lead to different angles into the social phenomenon being studied. Insights may also be gained from an exploration of what is seemingly censored or not discussed fully within the group process as the participants monitor the thoughts and feelings being circulated. Thus understandings may emerge which remain untapped or underdeveloped in one-on-one interviews (Kitzinger 2004).

In total, seven focus group discussions were held, one in each ward, based on a generalised schedule used for asking questions (see Appendix 2). The groups had twelve participants. All group discussions included a mixture of male and female residents, house owners and lodgers, coupled with a blend of youth participants selected on the basis of their residence in the area for a period spanning between two to five years. In total, 33 of the participants were women and 51 were male, while 27% of the participants were youth between the ages of 18 and 35. Discussions ranged between 45 minutes to an hour depending on the level of participation by participants. In addition, participation by youths and women was relatively subdued possibly due to socio-cultural factors that place women and youth even at the periphery of participatory approaches.

Besides the focus group discussions with residents, **semi-structured interviews** were also carried out with certain members of the focus groups (see Appendix 3 for the interview guideline). These were 15 minute conversations conducted after the group discussions and specifically with women and youth. The reason behind engaging women and youth separately was to allow them to

express themselves more freely without the fear of being stereotyped. These residents were selected on the basis of purposive sampling using gender, age and geographic location as the key criteria. On this basis, 42 women and youth, six from each ward, were interviewed. This meant that there were interviews with residents in the low-, middle- and high-density areas. Discussions related to various issues pertaining to SA, urban governance and citizen participation but also focused more narrowly on the lived experiences of residents from these wards. In this regard, it was critical to understand the social experiences and political practices of ordinary residents in Bulawayo in the context of urban governance and SA.

Additionally, the research collected and utilised *primary documentation* relating to government activities as well as civil society groups involved in governance issues in Bulawayo. These were collected straight from the relevant state or civic body or collected independently from relevant archival sources. As such, the study gathered for instance council minutes, programme and donor reports from CSOs and various government proclamations in order to analyse the content for a better understanding of the distinctions between policy and practice (see Appendix 4 for list of primary documents).

The data-gathering exercise in Bulawayo was not only limited to structured and formal interactions with groups and individuals. *Observation, interaction and informal questioning* (as informal research techniques) were employed, which included: observation of council meetings; attendance at civil society-organised SA meetings and donor-arranged SA conferences and review meetings; interacting with SA implementers on a personal basis; and informal talk with civic actors. Through discussions at events organised by civil society groups, important issues around SA were articulated which civic actors would not be normally comfortable to divulge in formal interviews. With time, certain key or influential actors would sit down and talk about their interests, ambitions, fears and issues affecting their work around SA. This type of interaction allowed me to gather rich and in-depth stories of SA. These stories told a tale of success, failure, pain and strong resilience of civic actors in the face of multiple threats to their work. Overall, there were many unofficial places and chance-events in which meaningful evidence was collected for this research, such as informal conversations with work colleagues on long drives from Bulawayo to Harare, and back.

### **1.5.3 Data Analysis**

The analysis of qualitative research aims to unearth and understand underlying issues and themes that go beyond generalised perceptions and attitudes by using data to describe and interpret the social phenomenon under investigation (Kerlinger 1973). It is imperative to note, distinctly, that both qualitative analysis involves labelling and coding all of the data in order that similarities and differences can be recognised (Johnson and Siskin 1977). Responses from even an unstructured qualitative interview potentially can be entered into a computer in order for it to be coded, counted and analysed. For this thesis, no computer-based programme was used in analysing the qualitative evidence collected. Rather, on a more laborious manual basis, a method of identifying, labelling and coding themes was developed using content analysis. In respect of the fact that the study employed techniques such as interviews, focus groups and documentation, content analysis as a procedure for the categorisation of verbal and behavioural data was thus essential to the study (Goode and Hatt 1952). As such, content analysis was instrumental for purposes of data classification and summarisation, as data was coded and classified, thematically, in order to make sense of collected data and to highlight critical similarities and differences in subjective understandings and practices pertinent to SA (Tandon 1979). The themes eventually established were constantly refined as I moved back and forth between the different qualitative data collected. In the end, the level of content examination of obtained data was driven by the need for an interpretive analysis which would enable an in-depth and nuanced understanding of SA in Bulawayo. The themes identified and developed form the basis for the empirical chapters on SA in Bulawayo later in the thesis.

### **1.5.4 Ethics and Challenges**

Ethical issues were planned for and observed throughout the entire research process, based on the research principles and protocols of Rhodes University. Of particular importance, because of the sensitivity of the thesis topic in Zimbabwe, anonymity and confidentiality were ensured so that no harm came the way of research subjects, notably ordinary residents who feared victimisation. Challenges encountered during the research hinged on the volatility of the political situation in Zimbabwe considering the nature of the subject matter discussed in the research. For example, interviewees were reluctant to meet in focus groups fearing arrest and victimisation by other community members and the police. Key informants, especially appointed officials from the Bulawayo local authority, were reluctant to meet as they assumed that the study was driven by

intentions to expose council inefficiencies; as such, measures were taken to assure informants that the purpose of the study was purely academic. In addition, some residents of Bulawayo tended at times to provide biased information which sought to exaggerate the deprivation of their lived experiences; because of this, such data was triangulated for reliability purposes.

## **1.6 Thesis Outline**

After this first introductory chapter, the thesis is organised into the following chapters. The second chapter theorises the concepts of SA, urban governance and citizen participation in developing countries. The chapter defines what is understood by SA, urban governance and citizen participation. In analysing these concepts, the chapter demonstrates how these relate to power and citizen participation in governance. The chapter offers a conceptual framework that guides the research in terms of understanding state-led urban governance and its interaction with SA and citizen participation as it offers a brief background to general theory about urban governance, SA and citizen participation. It also provides a more specific focus on urban governance and SA, including with respect to Africa.

Chapter three focuses on the historiography of urban governance, SA and citizen participation in Zimbabwe during the colonial and post-colonial periods. It examines the continuities and discontinuities of governance in urban Zimbabwe, including the marked intrusion of the central state's local government ministry in the affairs of local urban authorities from the year 2000. The chapter thus provides the broad historical context for a more specific focus on urban governance in Bulawayo, as well as interrogating some of the scholarly debates around the process of urban governance and citizen participation in Zimbabwe. Chapters four and five then examine urban governance in Bulawayo in particular. The fourth chapter analyses the socio-political character and organisation of urban governance in Bulawayo from early colonial times into the post-colonial period, including up to around the year 2012. This historical and contemporary analysis of urban governance seeks to provide an understanding of the political, social and economic dynamics underpinning governance in Bulawayo. In also bringing social differentiation in Bulawayo to the fore, it provides a vivid description of the relationship between the state and citizens through the lens of Bulawayo. Chapter five provides an analysis of Bulawayo's polity over the past few years, probing the city's current social, economic and political character and socio-political organisation. In doing so, it offers a similar thematic analysis as chapter four, and begins to use some of the evidence collected in the fieldwork for the thesis.

The following three chapters, chapters six to eight, are the main empirical chapters for the thesis and, together, examine urban governance and SA in contemporary Bulawayo in significant detail. With regard to SA, chapter six focuses on state and society relations in the Bulawayo metropole. This chapter is concerned with highlighting the various processes and dynamics pertinent to the formation, taxonomy and structure of state-society relations, and how they interact and ultimately affect SA and service delivery. The chapter further examines agreements and relationships that bind the state to citizens and how these pattern SA. Chapter seven is an analysis of the key contextual drivers that condition and shape local politics, power and the rule of law in Bulawayo, and how these connect with SA through various state and non-state institutions in the city's politics. The chapter shows that these institutions, and particularly political institutions, are involved in a myriad of roles and functions within the SA system in Bulawayo. The eighth chapter examines the influence of normative socio-cultural dynamics on SA and how these interrelate to urban governance in Bulawayo. The chapter explores the discrepancies between the ideal of a functioning SA system and how this system exists in practice in terms of the lived experiences of ordinary Bulawayo citizens. This helps in further understanding the social dynamics and contextual drivers of SA.

Chapter nine summarises the key arguments presented in the thesis and provides the conclusions of the study. It addresses the objectives of the thesis, links the case study of urban governance in Bulawayo to the broader conceptual literature on SA, and provides a way forward for further research on SA and urban governance.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THEORISING URBAN GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Theorising urban/metropolitan governance, SA and citizen participation in developing nationalist countries is an initiative fraught with complexities. The focus of this thesis (urban governance, SA and citizen participation) necessitates that I state what is meant by urban governance, SA and citizen participation. In analysing the nature, form and basis of urban governance, the thesis employs the concept of SA and demonstrates how it relates to power and citizen participation in governance. The basis of metropolitan governance in Zimbabwe is conditioned by the prevailing social, political and economic environment. In this chapter, I offer a conceptual framework that guides my thesis in terms of understanding state led urban/metropolitan governance and its interaction with SA and citizen participation. The chapter will first offer a brief background to a general theory about urban governance, SA and citizen participation. Secondly, I provide a more specific focus on urban governance and SA. Thirdly, I deliver a review of literature on governance (and specifically urban governance) and SA in Africa. The chapter will then outline a conceptualisation of the correlation if not causal relationship between SA, citizen participation and state-led metropolitan governance noting some of the various theoretical strands used in my analysis.

### **2.2 Background to Theoretical Framework**

This study is influenced by the concept of social accountability. In particular, I seek to identify and address the ways in which SA (in its form and extent) shapes state-led metropolitan governance and patterns of citizen participation in the context of Bulawayo's complex urban polity. In this regard, Joshi and Houtzager (2008) provide a reasonably standard definition of SA in conceiving it as a means of bringing together different spheres of power and influence to maximise citizen participation and improve service delivery. They thus describe SA as a process which concentrates on building the cooperative efforts of citizens and civil society organisations in holding public officials, service providers and governments to account with regard to their obligations to serve citizens and residents (Joshi and Houtzager 2008). SA is thus a collective process that grants citizens social responsibility and opportunities to participate in, own and direct

governance processes at local and national levels. In this fashion, SA constitutes and grants platforms for civic actors (as rights-holders) for purposes of citizen participation, citizen oversight and citizen engagement vis-à-vis public duty bearers (Fox 2000; Mulgan 2000; Ackerman 2004; Robertson 2010). The benefits of SA-rooted citizen participation are said to manifest themselves in good governance, improved service delivery, poverty reduction and broad-based socio-economic development (Fox 2015; Grandvoinnet 2016). As Ackerman (2004) notes, accountability is an integral component of social empowerment and sequentially economic development and poverty reduction.

The notion of SA occupies a central position within liberal discourse (Hickey and King 2016) with its focus on the achievement of poverty reduction through good governance, such that states and public institutions not only deliver goods and services as per their mandated duties, but are also responsive to citizens' demands. This entails a broad range of actions and mechanisms beyond voting that citizens can use to hold the state accountable, as well as actions on the part of government, civil society, media and other societal actors that promote or facilitate these efforts (Malena and McNeil 2010). There is general agreement that SA involves both answerability, "making power holders explain and give reasons for their actions", and enforcement, "ensuring that poor or immoral performance is punished in some way" (Hickey and Mohan 2008: 239). Initiatives designed to ensure answerability and enforcement may be demand-side driven (from the 'bottom-up' by non-state actors), or supply-side driven (encompassing legal and fiscal checks and balances on government performance) or, most effectively, a combination of both.

King, Owusu and Braimah (2013) and Lin (2001) highlight that SA is premised on the notion of an investment (in social, political and legislative relationships) which will result in some benefit or profit to citizens through improved efficacy in service delivery. In other words, SA makes it possible to achieve certain aims that cannot be achieved by individuals alone. Investing in SA is however a difficult venture. Thus key actors, both state and non-state, may fail to perceive or act upon mutual obligations contained in SA processes, and any investment may fail to yield any positive result including in relation to service delivery and development (Ackerman 2004; Fox 2007).

My thesis examines processes of social accountability with reference to the Bulawayo metropolitan area and the broader context within which it takes place. In considering the contextual elements pertinent to SA and the interrelations between them, Grandvoinnet (2016) argues at a



general level that SA is not always mutually beneficial, as privilege and disadvantage are at times covertly reproduced as well (Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg 2015). In this light, Kumah and Brazys (2016) claim that, in raising the combined virtues of state and non-state actors to pedestal status, SA approaches have studiously ignored key contextual questions of power, politics, conflict, gender, the ruling elite and the systemic imperatives of (contemporary) capitalism (Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg 2016; Grandvoinnet 2016). Building on such claims, I determine how SA also involves answering key contextual questions around social exclusion, power differentials and inequality in the urban metropolis.

It would seem that few concepts have gained as much widespread usage (and disparagement) over the past ten or so years as SA. Its popularity is increasing despite challenges associated with understanding or measuring what SA actually entails. Concepts such as trust, good governance, democratisation, human rights, inclusion, citizen participation, social networks and service delivery have all become synonymous with, or incorporated under, the process and outcomes of SA. I interrogate conceptualisations of SA, as a concept which holds so much promise for understanding evolving social and political dynamics in urban Africa.

### **2.3 Theorising Social Accountability**

SA continuously features in development and democratic discourse amongst civil society groups as well as in the academic literature (Fox 2000; Mulgan 2000; Ackerman 2004; Robertson 2010; Fox 2013). The past three decades have witnessed a phenomenal rise in support for participatory governance and social accountability programmes through aid support by Western donors to developing democracies in the Global South. However, a close analysis of existing literature on SA indicates a constant shift in design approach and emphasis which has led to the study and discipline of SA being a fluid and contentious one. Nevertheless, as indicated, SA has become embedded in inclusive liberal discourse focused on the achievement of poverty reduction through good governance, a policy agenda that has also come to include a central role for social protection (World Bank, 1999, 2002).

During the Post-Washington Consensus dispensation, demand-side approaches to development and accountability took centre stage. However, more recently, these ‘social’ forms of accountability have come under scrutiny and criticism for being moored in a theory of change that does not acknowledge and consider the (supply-side) socio-political realities of governance and development in most developing countries (Booth 2012; Brett 2003). Thus, while the early

literature focused on demand side actors and their ability to demand better services from public duty bearers from largely a service delivery perspective (Edwards and Hulme 1996; Lindberg 2001; Fox 2007; Booth 2012), more recent work seeks to offer a more nuanced understanding of SA as a tool for poverty reduction, citizen participation and coalescence between citizens and their governments (McGee and Gaventa 2010; McGee and Gaventa 2011; Kim et al 2005; Alves 2014; Fox 2014). Also, writings on SA have been tied to rights-based issues including the right to SA by citizens, as well as to understanding the contextual drivers underpinning SA if positive development outcomes are to be realised (Joshi 2014; Hickey and King 2016; Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg 2015; Grandvoinnet 2016). Overall, though, the evolution of SA as a discipline and discourse has seen the gradual shift in emphasis from demand side actors (citizens and civil society in general) to progressively include supply side actors, namely, state actors and institutions. In doing so, SA has come to imply obligations on the part of duty bearers and power holders (in this case, state officials and politicians) to take responsibility for their actions (Mulgan 2000). The SA literature has also become increasingly sociological in highlighting structure and process.

Two broad and general approaches to SA emerged. Early literature on the subject took largely an instrumentalist approach (Mulgan 2000; Ackerman 2004; Fox 2007) but, as the discourse progressed, scholars began shifting to a structuralist perspective in analysing, applying and understanding SA (McGee and Gaventa 2011; Fox 2015; Grandvoinnet 2016; King and Hickey 2016). There is no clear break temporally between these two approaches, with the latter emerging out of the former and sharing some commonalities with it. The instrumentalist approach to SA placed emphasis on the mechanisms (or tool-kit) used by SA advocates to enhance citizen participation and socio-economic development, such as community scorecards, social audits, perception surveys and service delivery scorecards. It was as if SA could simply be wielded to bring about democratic development without considering and analysing the structural context and the relational dimensions intrinsic to SA institutions and processes. The more structuralist approach is sensitive to these issues of structure and process.

The early instrumentalist initiative and literature on SA sought to understand the relationship between SA (as a tool and approach) and service delivery by exploring possibilities of how SA could improve efficiency in service delivery and better the lived experiences of communities. This tool-kit period in SA discourse depicted SA as an instrument for enhancing service delivery and other developmental and civic goals. At the same time, the emerging

consensus within the international development and academic communities at the time was that development was not reducible to economic objectives (such as Gross Domestic Product or income levels) and that multi-faceted sustainable human development was required. Sen (1999) thus called for an understanding of development as a humanist process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy in which both socio-economic freedoms like food, life and health and political-civic freedoms like free speech, transparency and protective security are equally important. As such, early SA discourse and fundamentals began to be premised on the broad notion of development as freedom involving rights and capabilities (as proposed by Sen) with key development players like the World Bank promoting SA intervention on this basis, but often in an instrumentalist sense.

The rights-based approaches to SA led to the development as freedom/rights based perspective to SA. Development-as-freedom practitioners and scholars, such as Gibson et al. (2005), Moore and Teskey (2006) and Foresti et al. (2007), sought to analyse the relevance of citizen participation in SA and citizen empowerment for purposes of ensuring that positive development outcomes were to be realised. SA continued to be conceptualised instrumentally, almost as an object, but with an emphasis on the centrality of citizen involvement in driving SA initiatives. The major reason behind the emphasis on citizen inclusion in SA was a realisation of the need, through learning and practice, to strengthen the voices of citizens and enable governments to listen and respond effectively by championing the identification, design and strengthening of SA initiatives and thereby facilitating more effective democratic governance and accountability (O’Mealy 2013). The emphasis was on capacitating demand side actors to press for the importance and need for better service delivery on the part of supply side actors. The focus was on capacitating citizens in terms of their ability to demand better services using evidence gathered through SA tools without ensuring necessarily that citizens understood fully their role in governance processes.

The focus on the use of SA tools and citizen empowerment as a means to social change was somewhat romanticised as it tended to focus on capabilities and overlooked the importance of political and social will. Broad assumptions and generalisations were made about the effectiveness of accountability institutions and tools in the quest for improved service delivery and citizen participation. The necessity of examining the origins of SA as a practice also soon became clear, as SA tools and approaches were largely from the developed world where good governance systems and democracy in general are relatively strong in comparison to the developing world

(where most SA interventions are implemented and studied) (Edwards and Hulme 1996; Lindberg 2001; McGee and Gaventa 2010; McGee and Gaventa 2011; Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg 2015; Grandvoinnet 2016). As such, SA interventions were designed on the basis of the assumed existence of strong institutions and democracies, creating concerns about the imposition of one size fits all approaches to SA (Walker 2002). This though, in itself, would simply imply changing or refining the tool-kit.

A major oversight was the failure to address the supply-side or the role of public authorities in SA processes, which began to be rectified. Thus, citizen participation soon involved examining the relations between civil society and citizens on the one hand, and the state, duty bearers and decision makers on the other. But SA was still deployed instrumentally in a state-centric fashion as a (potential and real) force in democratisation (Chabal and Daloz 1999), with a strong focus on the rights of citizens to social accountability mechanisms and on turning (in practice) citizen rights into citizen capabilities (Sen 2005) through pursuing SA. There remained only minimal attention to the capacity of supply side actors to adequately understand and respond to the demands of accountability made by civic actors. Because of this, SA scholars continued to advocate for an analytical balance between supply and demand side actors through emphasising SA as an approach that seeks to bridge the gap between decision makers and communities based on solid state-citizen relations (Kim et al 2005). Literature produced at this time nevertheless made significant contributions in understanding SA and its tools (as a means for increasing citizen participation) in countries specifically where citizen participation and democracy in general was considered to be weak or fragile.

While the SA literature showed a shift from demand side actors to include supply side actors in SA mechanisms, the stress was on identifying the necessary actors (supply and demand side actors) without interrogating properly the actually-existing processes underpinning SA. Ongoing attention was given to reshaping the tool-kit (like gender budgeting, and budget analysis and tracking) without analysing in any detailed and holistic manner the contextual realities within which SA processes are taking place or even the processes themselves. Such an analysis would almost invariably lead to a focus on the power relations which characterise all social processes including SA processes as well as the power and inequality marking the broader social, political and economic context. For instance, while SA tools are said to promote and enhance citizen participation and democratic participation in governance processes, there was a tendency to

overlook how technical approaches (like budget analysis and oversight) can promote exclusion of low literacy citizens, and marginalised communities and groups such as women and youth (Grandvoinnet 2016). This also meant recognising the tensions and contradictions intrinsic to SA processes (Lindberg 2009), including conflicts within communities and in the state. The context-specific and context-dependent character of SA therefore had to be brought to the fore, such that SA mechanisms which might have worked in one place would not necessarily produce the same results elsewhere (Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg 2015; Grandvoinnet 2016; Kumah and Brasz 2016).

In this light, a more structuralist understanding of SA arose, one in which structural context and the relational character of processes internal SA mechanisms are brought to the fore. This entails a focus as well on the SA processes. A main emphasis though is on what are often called the contextual drivers of SA and the ways these shape SA outcomes. The SA process becomes unpacked including the strengths and weaknesses of demand-side institutions/actors and supply-side institutions/actors and the manner in which state-society interactions affect the outcomes of SA interventions with reference to service delivery, governance and citizen empowerment (King and Hickey 2016). There is no longer an overemphasis on demand-side factors vis-a-vis supply-side factors such that the SA process is conceptualised as the complex and fluid interplay of multiple and often conflictual institutions and actors. This also involves greater weight being given to qualitative analysis of SA because of the limitations of quantitative impact evaluations (of often tool-kits) in advancing our understanding of complex social change trajectories (Mulgan 2003).

In this way, social accountability is no longer seen as a thing which is wielded by citizens but as a (structurally) context-dependent process ideally involving collective collaboration between citizens and the state in holding public officials, service providers and governments to account for their obligations with responsive efforts (Houtzager and Joshi, 2008). Foresti et al. (2007) further highlights the relational character of these SA processes. The purpose then analytically is to critically examine the character of specific (place-bound and time-bound) dynamic and fluid SA processes.

Programmatically and ideally, social accountability refers to a relationship between state and citizens which offers grounds for transparency of decision making, answerability and the ability to sanction state instructions for failure to provide adequate explanation for actions or decisions made. I detail this briefly, but reiterate that sociological engagement with SA is of a

critical nature. Briefly, as per the literature, SA is about upholding and operationalising accountability relationships between citizens and the state where SA refers to the broad range of actions, processes and mechanisms beyond voting that citizens can use to hold the state to account (McGee and Gaventa 2011). As such, the notion of SA in action describes the standard of a lively, dynamic, answerable and accountable relationship between states and citizens which benefits the citizenry. At the same time as strengthening civic engagement and amplifying citizen voice, SA interventions are said to increase the transparency and accountability of governance, ranging from local service delivery to national processes of development policy formulation (Moore and Teskey 2006).

SA mechanisms are meant to complement and enhance conventional internal (government) mechanisms of accountability. All governments have internal mechanisms in place to promote or ensure accountability of public servants. These include: (i) political mechanisms such as constitutional constraints, separation of powers, the legislature, and legislative investigative commissions, (ii) fiscal mechanisms including formal systems of auditing and financial accounting, (iii) administrative mechanisms, for example, hierarchical reporting, norms of public sector probity, public service codes of conduct, rules and procedures regarding transparency and public oversight, and (iv) legal mechanisms like corruption control agencies, ombudsmen and the judiciary (Gaventa and Goetz 2001). Internal (government) and external (citizens/civil society) mechanisms of accountability are intended to be reciprocally reinforcing, and this then is the significance of social accountability as practiced. SA as an approach to enhancing transparency and good governance, particularly in metropolitan and national governance, seeks to counteract growing concerns of increasing disillusionment with dominant power processes of vertical accountability, like elections. Such processes, according to Mulgan (2000), do not give ordinary citizens a chance to impact on decisions affecting them after plebiscites.

At the urban or metropolitan level, SA seeks to establish complementary relations between citizens and municipal authorities for the co-creation of development processes. According to Joshi (2014), the role of urban citizens should not be understood narrowly as that of paying their rents and taxes and voting during elections. Rather, their role should be appreciated, from a SA viewpoint, in the context of partnership where relationships are based on dialogue between citizens and decision makers as this assists in the performance and transparency of municipalities. As such, for metropolitan governance to achieve its goals and mandates, there is need for the deliberate

inclusion and engagement of citizens in order to have fully functioning transparency and accountability platforms.

Sociologically, understanding SA (as detailed above) necessarily requires an appreciation of spatial and temporal context, and of the existing power relations and dynamics – involving citizens and the state – underpinning and animating SA as a complex and tension-riddled social process. This is the basis for critically examining social accountability in Bulawayo in this thesis.

## **2.4 Conceptualising Social Accountability in Africa**

SA discourse in Africa is a relatively new and constantly evolving discipline and practice. It has developed against a backdrop of trends focusing on democratisation, decentralisation and devolution, with new SA mechanisms and instruments being formulated and refined in response to dynamic changes (Hyden 2006; Honwana 2007; Boon 2012; Tembo 2013). Many of the recent SA initiatives in the African context have not aimed at increasing service delivery efficiency but at claiming the rights of citizens (Boon 2012) in the face of semi-authoritarian regimes. In liberal democratic states, the principal means by which citizens hold the state to account is elections. While this has also been in the case in much of Africa (Mamdani 2007), elections throughout the continent have proven to have serious shortcomings as they have been weak and blunt instruments in seeking to hold governments accountable (King, Owusu and Braimah 2013). Thus, historically and to date, citizen or civil society-led efforts to hold African governments accountable have included actions such as public demonstrations, protests, advocacy campaigns, investigative journalism, public interest litigation, access to information litigation and citizen petitions (Sebudubudu 2010). In recent years, there also has been an expansion in the use of participatory data and analysis tools combined with opening up space and opportunity for citizen participation and engagement with the state, leading to new developments in SA practice. These include, for example, citizen monitoring and evaluation of public services, public expenditure tracking, participatory public policy-making and budgeting (O'Meally 2013).

SA discourse in Africa, as indicated, has primarily focused on citizen participation and how citizen participation shapes democratisation in a context where authoritarianism and state-led centralised approaches to governance are the predominant determinant of social, economic and political change. The emphasis in SA discussions has been primarily on the potential of SA as a means for bringing about political change through transparency, accountability and good governance. The literature focuses primarily on relations between civil society and the state with

SA being positioned instrumentally as a possible basis for democratising the often neo-patrimonial African state (Chabal and Daloz 1999). At the same time, and despite their often heavy-handed interventions against civil society and any SA initiatives led by civic groups, African states are depicted as vulnerable (Wild et al 2012), fragile and dependent (Mamdani 2007), and marked by institutional ineffectiveness, administrative apathy and the incapacity to initiate and implement policies (Puplampu and Tettey 2000). As such, African literature on SA perceives the state as inefficient, ineffective and unable to make any meaningful contribution to SA initiatives. Hence available literature on SA in Africa places strong emphasis on civil society and its central role in democratisation through SA. The role of civil society in the context of SA is to dismantle state-driven and sanctioned authoritarianism to build a modernising democratic state. This is undoubtedly the case with reference to Zimbabwe specifically.

SA in Africa, as per the literature, is premised on the notion of good governance and democracy, with the quest for human and citizen rights inherent in this. In this way, recent SA discourse in Africa has flirted with the idea of ‘a right to SA’ (Sen 1999). Proponents of SA as a right argue that every state is obliged to explain and explain its public resource management decisions and ensure that all citizens are able to exercise their right to demand these justifications and explanations from the state. This also entails the proposal that every member of society has the right and entitlement to a minimum standard of living signified by the levels and quality of service delivery, and that this should be pursued through effective consultation and partnership with local authorities (Fox 2014). However, it is recognized that the provision of services should be reflective of available resources (Cleaver 2005).

In the end, rights-based approaches have had a lukewarm reception in Africa’s governance discourse, due to the labelling by states of human rights approaches as a facade for regime change and ‘usurping power’ from a legitimately elected government (Malena et al. 2004). Numerous instances can be referred to in recent African history where issues of rights have been at loggerheads with former liberation movements/post-colonial governments’ hegemony and the coercive apparatus of the state. As such, due to the centralised nature of power in post-independence Africa, including the use of coercion versus consent, corruption, and the impunity of the state and state actors, human rights-based approaches to development have been largely viewed and treated as tools for exposing government. Thus the history SA in Africa is littered with violence, suppression and the muzzling of dissenting citizen voices (Przeworski et al. 1999; Stasavage 2005; Gaventa



and McGee 2013). Because of the authoritarian system of government that has been intact since independence in many countries of Africa, a rights-based approach to SA in even local governance is still struggling to find its feet (Mamdani 1996; Mamdani 2007). In this respect, Salih (2001) purports that authoritarian states deny people the right to livelihood resources by excluding citizens from participation and decision-making in socio-economic and political development processes locally and nationally.

As outlined earlier, SA needs to be understood within the power dynamics of the political context within which it is pursued and implemented. In the case of Africa, the context of semi-authoritarian states and shortfalls in good governance means that SA processes are in effect swimming against the tide (Ramcharan 2008). This is despite the fact that fundamental human rights and freedoms which promote SA are regularly enshrined in constitutions on the African continent (Heyns and Stefiszyn 2006; Fowler and Biekart 2011). Building awareness and understanding of human rights and SA issues, as enshrined constitutionally, is often a first step to fostering active and effective citizenship and encouraging citizens to engage (Gaventa and Barrett 2010). But even this in contemporary Africa is met with challenges of an institutional and political nature. The central state often appears captured by the ruling party (Devarajan et al. 2011) and together they tend to flood the space of civil society and inhibit the prospects for an active citizenry. The absence of platforms for citizen engagement and participation and the deliberate use of often coercive action by the state stifles citizen voices and suppresses the appetite for accountability, consequently leading to partiality and impunity that has led to stalled development.

Hickey (2009) and Harland (2014) thus show that SA and citizen participation is curtailed by legislation inherited through path dependency by the post-colonial African government, but that is also disabled by a pronounced rule by coercion. This involves a coercive framing of central-local state relations, which must be understood in the context of the changing party political terrain in some African countries including South Africa. More specifically, the hegemony of the ruling elites has been vigorously challenged in urban spaces in particular by the emergence of opposition political parties and the prevalence of civil society accountability initiatives clamouring for democratisation and inclusive governance. The central state often seeks to domesticate and even undermine civic actions through repressive practices, including the banning of civil society organisations and replacing them with more compliant central state-driven arrangements (Booth 2012). As a result, citizen participation in – and control over – SA more broadly becomes hugely

difficult. Thus, though central states often deploy the rhetoric of decentralisation and devolution, in practice countervailing tendencies often exist. Insofar as accountability exists, it merely involves consultation with citizens and not deeper forms of participatory citizenship (Evans 1995, Fox 2004), without any binding social contract between urban citizens (and civil society groups) and government, including in the case of local urban councils (Fox 2007). Such consultation simply involves legitimising unilateral, politically-motivated decisions (Goldfrank 2007) without any recourse to democratic mechanisms. In this way, even metropolitan governance is characterised by the abuse of power, corruption and the absence of SA (Hickey 2013).

## **2.5 Theorising Urban/Metropolitan Governance**

Urban governance has been the subject of multiple definitions and interpretations. Some definitions (Bloom and Sachs 1998; Rodrick 1998; Fukuyama 2013) concentrate on technical government functions and how they are administered, focusing largely on effectiveness and efficiency. Other definitions (Ostrom 1990; Rhodes 1996; Russel and Vidler 2000) give weight to democracy and accountability as a form of governance, while simultaneously connecting these political dimensions of governance to the more technocratic elements of public administration and state capacities. I understand governance (and local governance in particular) as a set of specific institutions or entities created by state constitutions or legislative acts at a national level to deliver a range of specified services to a local geographically delineated area (Shah and Shah 2013). Many discussions of urban governance globally, with a focus on both state and civil society, now take place in the context of attempted transitions in urban governance from centralised modes of governance to more decentralised and democratic modes, as part of the liberalisation of not only the economy but of governance and politics as well (Ye 2014; Rumbach 2015; Zhang 2017). This requires an understanding of urban governance and its determinants under conditions of economic social and political change.

Over time, trends in urban governance have been characterised by fluctuations between the centralisation of power and authority (Tsuchiya, Hara and Thaitakoo 2015) and decentralisation of power and authority (Lowery 2000; Brenner 2002; De Paoli 2016), involving contestations as well between different levels or spheres of governance (Klink 2013; Durand and Lamour 2014; Britt 2003; Bradley 2007; Tomory 2014). Certainly, under neo-liberal restructuring, democratic de-centralisation has been prioritised over central-state driven forms of urban governance. Nevertheless, tensions remain with actually-existing forms of urban governance often in flux and

existing as awkward combinations of both centralised and decentralised tendencies. Hence, a close analysis of the urban governance literature points to the fact that central state ruling regimes often shape urban governance in a manner which seeks to advance their own interests (Nelles and Durand 2014). Given that politics continues to shape and inform the institutions, functions and autonomy of urban governance, the latter is sometimes under incessant threat from central government machinations. At the same time, widespread decentralisation has at times encouraged central-level governments to abandon local governments within metropolitan regions, or at least to take a hands-off approach (Broto 2017). All this highlights the politicised character of urban governance.

Urban governance refers to the governing of urban and metropolitan regions of which this can be achieved by a variety of devices, ranging from a complete unified metropolitan government to a variety of forms of cooperation among the numerous jurisdictions in a metropolitan area (Stephens and Wikstrom 2000). Harrigan and Vogel (2003) assert that, over the period of modern metropolitan development, there has been a debate among scholars and practitioners (in government and business) between the respective virtues of a single unitary metropolitan government on the one hand and a multiplicity of independent, autonomous jurisdictions on the other. The unitary form is said to promise efficiencies of scale and greater equity throughout the metropolitan area. The polycentric form, as it has come to be called, is said to promise public choice, which affords area-based residents as well as government and business interests a variety of choices of how to govern themselves and regulate for instance local land use.

Intrinsically, urban governance debates globally have been linked to discussions about where power lies and who has the responsibility and mandate to govern, as well as analyses of political and civil actors' will and motivations for participating in acts of governing (Broto 2017). This has also involved analysing the institutional conditions that enable effective urban governance (Oyono 2004) and the institutional capacity to deliver effective and inclusive urban governance (Atkinson 2002). Often, there has been a focus on the role of ordinary citizens in taking part in public affairs at local urban levels (Mawhood ed. 1993; Davey 1996; Cloete 1978). Analysing citizen activities in urban governance is increasingly complex because the world's metropolises are becoming more diverse and fragmented.

It is noteworthy to highlight that recent literature (Stein and Moser 2014; Broto 2017) on urban governance has focused on the empowerment of citizens through their inclusion in decision

making processes, in the determination of governance priorities and in setting the governance agenda. However, the vulnerability of the urban poor is also recognised. They are regularly exposed to the detrimental implications of specific urban governance policies and processes, but also on the structural conditions that reproduce poverty, such as economic inequality, lack of political representation, deficient access to services, and lack of participation in decision making platforms (Britt 2003). Because of this, there is now a wide consensus among urban governance scholars that contemporary urban governance efforts must be directed towards pro-poor forms of urban governance and planning especially in programmes set for upgrading basic social service delivery (Moser and Satterthwaite 2010; Stein and Moser 2014; Bartlett and Satterthwaite 2016; Baker 2012). Urban governance often leads to, or simply reinforces, uneven urban development which either affects marginalised urban populations directly, through acts of commission, or prioritises the interests of minority urban elites, through omission, at the detriment of actions that address directly the most urgent vulnerabilities affecting marginalised communities (Anguelovski et al. 2016). Such arguments are tempered by the recognition that inclusive urban governance in developing nations is hindered because of the political influence of global trends in politics that act as a determinant of urban governance, which is strongly tied to international aid flows and Western-led democratic urban governance agendas (Broto 2017).

Issues have emerged around local governments' competence and capacity, focusing on social and political will, and how inclusive forms of democratic urban governance can be addressed. However, such discussions are cognisant of persisting backlogs in infrastructural provision and services, particularly in heterogeneous urban locales characterised by informal or sub-serviced settlements in developing nations (Baker 2012; Dodman et al. 2012; Satterthwaite 2007). This raises the importance of examining institutional factors that can maximise effective and inclusive urban governance (Bartlett and Satterthwaite 2016; Leck and Simon 2013), along with the broader contextual realities/drivers which enable or disable local capacities for more inclusive urban governance action (Chowdhury and Aktaruzzaman 2016; Gordon et al 2017). Institutional analysis of experiences of early adopters of inclusive urban planning led to a differentiation between external drivers of action (from exogenous shocks to the agendas of the international urban governance regime) and internal drivers (from actors' motivations to their capacity to take advantage of the context of action) (Anguelovski and Carmin 2011; Carmin, Anguelovski and Roberts 2012). Endogenous factors are essential as they may dilute the

deficiencies of resources and capacity of some local governments and thus foster innovation for urban governance action (Angelovski and Carmin 2011). This requires a deep sensitivity to spatial and temporal context. Thus, scholars argue that different urban governance institutional arrangements and strategies are effective depending on the social, economic and political context of action (Burch 2010; Janjua, Thomas, and McEvoy 2010; Shey and Belis 2013; Sanchez-Rodriguez 2009; Djalante, Holley and Thomalla 2011; Sovacool 2011).

A constant feature of urban governance literature points to the need to understand the multi-level character and sites of urban governance and harness these sites for more inclusive urban governance action (Lindell 2008). Ideas about multi-level governance acknowledge that local governments are not the only urban actors who can lead and deliver inclusive urban governance action (Betsill and Bulkeley 2006; Bulkeley and Betsill, 2005; Bulkeley and Betsill 2013), as various state and non-state actors play key roles in urban governance (Biermann and Pattberg 2012; Okereke et al. 2009). First, state actors at the national level are supposed to provide vital support to local governments and may lead action at the local level (Dodman and Mitlin 2015; Fidelman, Leitch and Nelson 2013; Hughes 2013; Jones 2013; van Stigt, Driessen and Spit 2013). Second, supra-national levels and international organisations play an important role in informing regulation and enabling innovation (Monni and Raes 2008). Finally, a range of non-state actors, including civil society and communities, can play a key role in the governance of urban areas, opening up new areas of intervention and supporting action where there is little capacity (Amundsen, Berglund, and Westskog 2010). As such, strides to look at multi-level governance in a normative way, as a means to order and coordinate different actors' actions, have been common in advanced capitalist societies (Jones 2012; Sperling, Hvelplund and Mathiesen 2011). This quite often entails a messy and complex process in which governing happens, with fluid multi-actor arrangements and ad-hoc measures (Smith 2007). Overall, these processes of organising and reorganising urban governance relate to inevitable conflicts of power and interest (Meadowcroft 2009).

Some scholars (Harpham and Boateng 1997; Cohen 2006; Crawford and Hartman 2008) on urban governance do not focus on understanding how to expand governance or how to do 'good governance', but looks into who, why, and with what consequences urban governance is accomplished. This approach tends to downplay the programmatic side of the urban governance literature to offer an examination of what exists in urban governance within specific locales. This

perspective “starts from the analysis of governing as the orchestration of distinct modes of power” and seeks to explore its operation (Bulkeley 2015: 3). In fact, good governance initiatives are not necessarily good-hearted means to respond to an urgent problem, but complex political predicaments which reveal underlying structures and mechanisms of power in urban spaces. Urban governance, and changes to it, may be a means to control and dominate actors, processes and events (Bulkeley 2015; Bulkeley, Casta n Broto and Edwards 2014). This may involve the manufacture of citizen consent by local governments to prevailing relationships of power (Britt 2003). Governmental technologies may thus be implicated in the creation of self-governing citizens as expressed through their actions and conduct (Bulkeley 2015). This consent-based self-governance however tends to be fragile. In this context, forms of urban governance are open-ended processes characterised by unanticipated events.

Recent research has engaged with the emergence of ‘strategic intermediary organisations’, or simply ‘intermediaries, which play a key role in reconfiguring urban politics and governance (Hodson and Marvin 2009; Hodson, Marvin and Bulkeley 2013). Urban governance in cities requires the formation of actor-coalitions mediating social, institutional, and technological change (Rohracher and Spath 2014). However, intermediaries play a central role in the arrangement of those groups, because they are able to use global discourses of urban governance to shape local processes (Fischer and Guy 2009; Hodson et al. 2013). Intermediaries include a diverse, complex, and interrelated sets of actors such as NGOs, trade unions, private consultancies, civil society organisations and regulating bodies, who arbitrate and work in between other actors, partaking, regulating and, most of all, controlling a varied set of processes involved in urban governance (Guy, Marvin and Medd 2011).

The discussion in this section is based on governmentality-inspired approaches to urban governance, or approaches which focus on the mode of politics. There are other theories, including urban regime theory (Mossberger and Stoker, 2001; Shey and Belis 2013), which tend to offer an analysis based on (economic) modes of production and circulation. This approach explains how urban governance policy is often tied to ideas of economic competitiveness and industrial development (de Oliveira et al. 2013; Herrschel 2013) and to efficiency-oriented spatial and economic planning (Hu 2015; Storbjork and Hjerpe 2014; Taylor, Harman, Heyenga and McAllister 2012). While this approach is of relevance, its emphasis on the city as a site of entrepreneurialism has meant that it has largely abandoned a focus on the nuanced specificities of

urban governance and citizen participation (Jonas, Gibbs and While 2011). In fact, a stress on governance and urban politics does facilitate a recognition of how urban governance organises economic (and social) spaces, but generally questions of economic accumulation and commodification of urban spaces are not the key focus (Bulkeley, Casta'n Broto and Edwards 2014).

In thesis, urban governance is examined with reference to social accountability, as detailed earlier. From this section, it should be clear that urban (metropolitan) governance is multi-dimension and complex, entailing diverse institutions and actors, and that it is caught in processes of contestation and political struggle taking place within dynamic structures (Rutherford and Coutard 2014; Casta'n Broto 2015). Social accountability in urban spaces, if it is to be pursued and implemented, necessarily has to negotiate its way through this complicated and fluid space.

## **2.6 Conceptualising Urban Governance in Africa**

In Africa broadly, urban governance processes and practices have taken different historical turns and trajectories (Kelsall et al. 2010). However, while national elections have become increasingly common in African democratic practice (linked in part to the so-called third wave of democracy on the continent), the quality of urban governance remains a crucial issue. Political fallouts, entrenched in autocratic and repressive political systems, at times continue to mark African urban governance (Cammack et al. 2010). As well, high levels of corruption exist and are associated with the absence of strong accountability and oversight mechanisms; and transparency surrounding public funds, along with patronage politics and cronyism, has been pronounced over time (Gaventa and Valderrama 1999).

In Africa, approaches to local metropolitan governance have been regularly characterised by pronounced central government regulation, top-down state influences (which are sometimes marked by informal practices which go contrary to bureaucratic procedures) on development policies and decisions, all coupled with rigid and distant relationships between public agencies and civic groups (Harvey 1989). There has been, and still is, a failure to provide quality public services due to leakages of public funds, and there is significant evidence of the lack of citizen participation and broad consultation in local state processes (Fox 2015). This has regularly led to calls for greater SA on the basis of prioritising the rights of citizens (Pratt and Hutton 2012). To best understand the key determinants of urban governance in Africa, there is need to locate the discussion in the context of Africa's fluid political environments subject to immense internal and external pressures.

Many discussions on urban governance, the state and citizen participation in contemporary Africa are strongly grounded on two broad categories informed by the historical experiences of the continent. These categories are fixated on, largely, the colonial and post-colonial experiences of Africa and how these impacted the shaping of power, authority, rule and citizen relations within urban governance discourse. Literature focusing on colonial periods (Eisenstadt 1973; Mamdani 1996; Myers 2003; Myers 2011; Njoh 2007) examines the emergence of African urban governance rooted in bureaucratic rule by formal colonial laws and institutions. The major characteristics of urban governance in Africa were separate development, racial discrimination and segregation. The fundamental analysis of urban governance, in this regard, is epitomised by Mamdani's (1996) citizen-subject analogy where urban governance was a preserve for the citizens (white communities) who exerted their rule and dominion over subjects, namely, African communities. This was largely premised on the understanding that urban areas, and bureaucratic rule and life, were primarily for white inhabitants and thus urban areas were 'out of bounds' for Africans. The only way they could live in urban locales was on the condition they subjected themselves to white rule. Typically, white urban governance was itself subject to the centralised rule of the colonial state (Harpham and Boateng 1997).

Post-independence urban governance in Africa needs to be located, historically, within the context of the colonial period. There was a general tendency for newly-independent states in Africa to take over the colonial state by deracialising it without questioning the form of the colonial state itself. In other words, the colonial state was reproduced in a revised form under post-colonial conditions, with its authoritarian and centralised form remaining unchallenged. Using historical institutionalism as a lens for analysis, it is clear that institutions and laws inherited from the colonial establishment were further entrenched and used by post-colonial ruling class elites to suppress and oppress dissenting citizen voices (Akokpari and Zimbler eds. 2008) in an attempt to entrench political hegemony on the part of post-colonial governments, leading to the intensification of political strife in cities due to poor governance, failing service delivery and the lack of citizen participation in governance processes.

Linked to this is notion of a wave of democratization sweeping across large strips of the continent (at least sub-Saharan Africa) from the late 1980s, notably with the rise of multi-party states in the face of seemingly intransigent (post-colonial) authoritarian developmental states (AACC and MWENGO eds. 1993). Literature is replete with references to the role in particular of



urban governance as a stepping-stone for social and political democratisation. As a predominant trend then, and particularly in the early literature on Africa, urban governance was described as an arena of political contestation and struggles over power, authority and control in the post-colonial democratisation process (Shillington 2005). In this sense, through decentralisation, urban locales were seen at times as pursuing and representing the general or universal interest and acting as a catalyst against the central state's partial and particularistic interests (Hyam 1987; Cooper 1996; Shillington 2005).

Studies focusing on urban governance in Africa have incorporated the multiple sites where the practice of governance is executed and contested by a number of civic and political actors. This has entailed examining the multiple layers of interaction/relations and the wide-ranging practices of governance involving different modes of power and spatial scales. In this respect, urban governance is conceptualised as a shifting field of struggle and cooperation (Benjamin 2000); Lindell 2008; Boyd and Folke 2011). Certainly, in Africa, urban governance includes deeply politicised struggles over distribution of resources and quality of the life (UN-Habitat 2011), and these struggles are marked by unresolved conflicts between central government, local authorities and civil society (UN-Habitat 2011).

To highlight the colonial legacy under post-colonial conditions is not to claim continuities only. Existing literature on urban governance in Africa shows continuities and subtle discontinuities in urban governance from colonialism to the post-colonial independent state (Akintoye 1976; Bissell and Radu eds. 1984; Henley 2004). Colonial urban governance drew its authority and power from segregation premised largely on racialism and selective inclusion and exclusion of groups (Kennedy 1987; Mamdani 1996). This implies though an elaborate rule by consent by colonial governments towards European settlers, as minority white populations enjoyed citizen representation, participation and dominance in urban governance processes. Urban colonial governance was used as a tool of oppression and disenfranchisement of African populations, though certainly this subordinated African population contested their disenfranchisement on an ongoing and through various resistance methodologies. Under post-colonialism, race is no longer a signifier for inclusion and exclusion either nationally or within urban spaces. The centralised post-colonial state, in resting on the fundamentals of the colonial state, began to exclude, marginalise and subordinate on other social bases, including class and ethnicity (and, perhaps more

a continuity, gender) (Okuku 2002). This means that the form of rule remains and the mere content changes.

At the same time, the post-colonial state regularly takes on at least the appearance of a liberal democratic constitutional democracy with a universal franchise for both national and local elections. Despite electoral system challenges and shortfalls, this is a critical point of departure for the manner and form of urban governance in post-colonial Africa. In one way or another, post-colonial authorities have – albeit irregularly and haltingly – sought to liberalise and democratise urban governance by making it more inclusive. Without reducing democratic processes to electoral processes, any form of democratisation in urban spaces is significant in opening up possibilities for a deeper transition and consolidation of decentralisation in urban Africa, with all the potential implications this has for instituting social accountability mechanisms and processes.

However, scholars who have researched and written on the subject of urban governance in Africa point to the continuity of authoritarian governance from the colonial to the post-colonial period, in most cases citing the repressive nature of post-colonial governments in dealing with dissenting citizen and civil society voices. This has involved the systemic erosion violation of ‘good governance’ as most post-colonial transitions resulted in the establishment of one-party systems, military regimes and various brands of one-man dictatorships (Shillington 2005). In addition, scholars such as Hanlon (1986), Agamben (1998) and Broch-Due (2005) argue that post-colonial governments have used coercive tactics, developed during the quest for liberation, to prompt civilian compliance reducing urban governance into a subordination, contestation, hegemony and counter-hegemony. The commandist character of liberation movements gave rise to the use of intimidation by post-colonial governments with any opposition viewed as enemies and therefore illegitimate. This created a culture of intolerance and violence, further entrenching rule by coercion as a recurring and constant feature of urban governance in Africa (Moore 2010). Given that rule by coercion in urban African governance has remained an integral part of the post-colonial transition, Africa’s national and urban polity has played a significant role in ensuring ruling-elite hegemony.

The urban governance literature on Africa clearly has a critical edge to it (Shillington 2005; Boyd and Folke 2011). It continues to highlight the contradictory character of the relationship between national and urban governance, as well as the tension-riddled character of the relationship between local urban authorities and urban citizens. In this regard, Ndegwa (1996) highlighted two

decades ago the ‘two fronts of urban governance in Africa’ (one progressive, and one regressive), a point which still resonates today. Thus, urban governance in Africa seems Janus-faced. It is within this fluid urban context that social accountability mechanisms need to be located, with any SA initiatives more than likely open to contestation and conflict.

## **2.7 Understanding Citizen Participation and Social Accountability**

There is general consensus in the academic literature and amongst development practitioners on the value of citizen participation, as part of social accountability processes, in a democratic polity. At the same time, substantial divergence exists over the procedure, strategy, causes, outcomes of, and barriers to, citizen participation, particularly since cultural, social and political contexts contrast widely across nations and over time. A good case in point is the difference between Agarwal (2001) and Skelcher and Torfing (2010) in terms of conceptualisations of citizen participation. Agarwal (2001) acknowledges key issues in citizen participation that are premised on the level of engagement from minimal to collaborative. Drawing upon the South Asian context, Agarwal (2001) identifies a number of systemic factors (such as procedures, customs and opinions) and their influences on citizen participation, or lack thereof, in the areas of specifically gender equity, empowerment and institutional efficiency. Skelcher and Torfing (2010) conceptualise participation as taking place on an informal-formal continuum from low (information-seeking) to high (interactive dialogue through a governance network) (Skelcher and Torfing 2010). Employing a normative stance from a Eurocentric view, Skelcher and Torfing (2010) argue that the challenge of citizen participation in liberal democracies may be overcome through institutionalising and formalising participatory arrangements. However, neither institutional design/rules nor systemic factors do not necessary overcome barriers to citizen participation, given the power dynamics structuring institutions and systems of urban governance (Gordon et al 2017).

Yang and Callahan (2007) highlight that the key actors in citizen participation are state actors (elected officials and government agencies) and non-state actors (citizens, the local media and non-profit organisations). In other words, the forms and prospects for citizenship participation need to be understood with reference to the institutional forms, practices and intentions of urban government itself. Thus, Lerner (2011) established that urban state actors tend to enact measures that they believe are right (based on their sets of interests), or those within their often limited (resource-deficient) capacity, rather than measures which citizens demand (Chowdhury and Aktaruzzaman 2016). Because of this, maximising citizen mobilisation capacity as well urban state

resources is critical to meaningful citizenship participation (Charlick 2001), otherwise the road to participation will remain an arduous one.

Some studies demonstrate that citizen participation has a number of positive impacts on urban governance (Michels and Graaf 2010; Lombard 2013). Others though query the effectiveness of participation (Stewart 2006; Wiseman 2006). Research carried out by Michels and Graaf (2010), using two municipalities from developed countries, showed that citizen participation has a wide range of positive outcomes, including increasing citizens' feelings of responsibility, encouraging people to listen to diverse opinions, and enhancing the legitimacy of decision-making. However, they note that women, the young, poorly educated people and minority groups were under-represented in these processes albeit without identifying why (Karlstrom 1999). Likewise, Lombard (2013) established that a long tradition of local collective action in urban spaces means that even marginalised communities in developing nations have relatively high participatory-focused urban local government systems. Resultantly, in these cases, citizens make their demands and local governments provide services through participatory processes. In contrast, a study of participatory citizen engagement in Australia by Wiseman (2006) concludes that the benefits of this engagement in enhancing accountability and services are exaggerated and that participation has not been successful due to structural inequality, power relations and historical injustices. In this sense, active citizen participation alone does not necessarily bring about or enhance SA processes and outcomes.

Some scholars argue (Fox 2012; Copus 2010; Skelcher and Torfing 2010) that dialogue and engagement between the electorate, using participatory democracy and their elected representatives, using representative democracy, is limited. Studies therefore note a wide range of barriers to effective participation which encompass, but are not restricted to, lack of citizens' time, the absence of trust in government, insufficient relevant information and access to it, lack of capacity and expertise, inadequate government–citizen communication channels and platforms, poorly-defined objectives, and the exclusion of some social groups due to social segmentation by law, class, gender and ethnicity (Chowdhury and Aktaruzzaman 2016). Participation is simply very taxing and is particularly difficult for people who are living with low incomes (Yang and Callahan 2007; Lombard 2013; Agarwal 2001).

Moreover, government staff and public representatives may hinder citizen participation in SA because these actors may fear their irregularities (including mismanagement and corruption)

may come to light (Waheduzzaman 2010). Further, elected positions are captured and manipulated by political elites and power groups, while voters are placed at arms' length who only communicate with them through opinion polls or market research (Chowdhury and Aktaruzzaman 2016). It is alluded to that citizens' influence is mainly through voting, while the outcomes are overseen by public administrators, who often lack local understanding and are usually not accountable for their decisions (Skelcher and Torfing 2010). All these observations suggest that the barriers are context-specific.

The significance of citizen participation is argued by many scholars (Patsias et al. 2013; Thomas 1995; Yang and Pandey 2011; Yang and Callahan 2007). Agarwal (2001) notes two central drivers essential for citizen participation: (i) citizen demand for participation; and (ii) the existence of local leaders, elected officials and public servants who open up political processes to citizens. Hence, if citizen groups are capacitated properly, in conjunction with a well-resourced, responsive and responsible local governance system, then citizen participation can potentially ensure that citizen needs are progressively addressed. In this way, citizen participation becomes a mechanism that guides local development (Lombard 2013). It also becomes central to SA by improving public resource management and reducing corruption, and by making public servants and political leaders accountable to the people. Citizen participation is considered therefore as indispensable to ensuring social accountability and good governance, including improved service delivery/quality, better decision-making and a strong commitment by bureaucrats to responsible government (Chowdhury and Aktaruzzaman 2016). Furthermore, it is thought to stimulate empowerment, legitimacy, transparency and accountability (Schillemans 2008). Nonetheless, whether citizen participation in reality brings these positive outcomes is largely reliant and dependent on context-specific actors and factors (Chowdhury and Aktaruzzaman 2016; Fox 2012; Corbridge et al. 2005).

Scholars (Barber, 1984; Agarwal, 2001; Agarwal and Wicklin 2011; Lombard 2013) thus highlight the complexity of the field of citizen participation and SA, the various forms these take, and the vast array of variables determining them. Not all variables are necessarily relevant, or specifically important, in all space- and time-bound contexts (Blakeley 2010; Michels and Graaf 2010; Cabannes 2014). For instance, it must be recognised that citizen participation has been a constant feature of both democratic and authoritarian politics. Semi-authoritarian regimes require, ensure and consent to certain levels of citizen mobilisation in urban spaces as a basis for – in most

cases – providing some semblance of legitimacy for the regime. This has been a key feature of African countries where citizen participation in democratic processes is encouraged but often limited to mainstream political processes. In such instances, citizen participation has depended solely on periodic elections and referenda yet, of course, citizen participation should be a continuous interplay between urban governments and citizens through more deeply-embedded social processes such as SA mechanisms (Crick 2002)

African literature on urban citizen participation has been regularly understood, wrongly so, in the context of elections (Boon 2012). This is strongly connected to the fact that most liberation movements struggled for deracialised universal suffrage. However, the inheritance of the one-person one-vote principle seemed to, inadvertently, predicate and adversely limit citizen participation to political processes like elections and referenda (Boon 2012). The creation of spaces for citizen participation, through elections, created a façade of citizen involvement and empowerment in development processes in terms of shaping the selection of political leadership (Mamdani 2007). Inevitably, the lack of citizen participation between elections in Africa facilitated the emergence of an environment for the centralisation of power as well as central state intrusion in local governance systems, which has meant that development has taken a political alienating course rather than an inclusive participatory one (Fox 2012). This is despite the fact that (often constitutionally) citizens have the right to engage urban governance processes, usually exhibited through participatory budget processes, though is in effect under the guise of consultation (King et al. 2013). Literature further suggest that, after most consultative processes, very limited space is available for citizens to ‘follow’ their contributions to ensure their views are represented and reflected in policy and priorities made during consultation, and even fewer opportunities are availed by governments to ensure there is citizen oversight for transparency and accountability processes (Khan 2010; Malena and McNeil 2010).

In the end, in most African countries, democratic values and norms are not well established or recognised and participatory democracy in the form of urban citizen participation is no exception (Chowdhury and Aktaruzzaman 2016). Though African local government specific institutions, laws and rules do exist to promote citizen participation, their importance and impact are nominal due to factors such as lack of citizen capacity and state intransigence. In this regard, a plethora of studies in Africa have studied citizen participation from an administrative perspective and find that organisational factors, such as political support, political control, leadership, red tape,

hierarchical authority, mutual trust, citizenship education, technological knowledge, accessibility, infrastructure, training, budget and resource authority, and variables related to participants' competence and representativeness, all have strong impacts on participation outcomes (Yang and Callahan 2007; Yang and Pandey 2011; Aulich 2009; Bherer 2010). The space and possibility of effective outcomes for citizenship participatory and SA thus becomes restricted and inhibited. This has led to the systematic alienation of citizens in governance processes, as local metropolitan governance has become a turf for proving political prowess and gaining political power and ground at the expense of development (Booth 2012). Continued power struggles between political parties has seen the trivialisation of citizen concerns and this has emasculated the power and voice of citizens to hold leaders to account, fueling high levels of corruption and impunity reflective of the state of governance at national level while eroding bargaining space for SA (McNeil and Malena 2010).

Ideally, citizen participation in metropolitan governance and subsequently SA should be all encompassing and inclusive regardless of race, gender, sex, religion and political beliefs (Mulgan 2000). A review of existing literature shows that urban governance is marked by citizen alienation and that citizen participation is supposed to be inclusive. But studies also show that SA mechanisms, if not pursued inclusively, might adversely affect citizen participation. Research (Okome 2003; Duggan 2004) for instance has indicated that corrupt local government processes and poor service delivery affect women more than their male compatriots. One way of understanding this disparity is by interrogating the historical background of governance and citizen participation in general. It is possible to decode that, from the days of colonialism, local governance and citizen participation in general was a preserve for men (Mamdani 1996). Only later was the participation of even white women considered (Ohene-Konadu 2001). After colonialism, the same culture of the exclusion of women in local governance processes was continued as women participation, both black and white, was limited to voting men into positions of authority (Jackson 2010). The plight of African women in all this is further exacerbated by the patriarchal nature of not only local governance but culture as well (Johnson 1997). Patriarchal systems and practices, culturally, have largely stifled the free participation of women in development processes due to traditional stereotypes (Knight and Johnson 1997). Citizen groups engaged in citizen participation and pursuing SA might simply reproduce patriarchal exclusions (Jackson 2010).

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This thesis utilises a case study of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe to examine social accountability and the manner and form in which it is shaped or patterned by citizen participation in urban governance with a keen interest on the implications for SA outcomes. This chapter has thus outlined the conceptual framework which guides the study of SA in Bulawayo pursued in the thesis. The chapter firstly grounded the concept of social accountability and provided the dimensions of SA to be focused upon in this particular study. It went on to outline urban governance in the context of central state involvement in local governance processes and how this relates to understanding citizen participation in urban governance. It highlighted how at times political control can be used by certain actors not only to restrict space for citizen participation and SA but to determine the trajectory of urban development, thereby reducing cities to turfs for political struggle. In this way, decentralisation of power to urban centres can be consistent with the interests of political elites. In examining the relationship between urban governance, politics and citizen participation and power (and how these influence and relate to each other) in processes of SA, it becomes important to be aware of the ways in which privilege and control is reproduced despite claims about the value and existence of SA processes. Thus, a focus on SA in urban governance raises complex questions about deficient accountability mechanisms, central-local conflicts and conflicts at local levels, with the possibility of SA merely reproducing social exclusion, power differentials and inequality



# **CHAPTER THREE: URBAN GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL ZIMBABWE**

## **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the history of urban governance, in relation to citizen participation and SA, in colonial Zimbabwe from the period of occupation, 1891, to the years just before independence and majority rule, tracing urban governance from the establishment of company rule/occupation, to responsible government, Unilateral Declaration of independence (UDI) and subsequently nationalism and independence. The chapter further explores urban governance post-independence Zimbabwe focusing attention on the emerging themes and issues shaping urban governance post-colonialism. It analyses how the impasse on SA and urban governance in Zimbabwe evolved from the strong racial overtones to cosmetic inclusive attempts to ensure meaningful participation by all citizens after independence and then further restrictions post 2000. From this perspective, the chapter interrogates various academic debates over the process of urban governance and SA in Zimbabwe. Urban governance during the first periods of colonisation was virtually negligible and hopelessly racial as it did not significantly address issues of citizen inclusion, poverty alleviation and service delivery. The phase of colonialism in Zimbabwe's urban governance is marked by separate development, exclusion of the African population, racially biased service delivery and social engineering which in many ways set the foundations and tone for post-colonial urban governance.

## **3.2 Background**

The history of urban governance in colonial Zimbabwe can be generalised into four major periods of development, and these periods are marked by developments in the colony's political economy. One of the main periods is linked with the early occupation of the colony by the British South Africa Company (BSAC) and how the occupation of Rhodesia saw the introduction of a formal and bureaucratic system of governance fueled by expropriation of mineral and natural resources (West 2007). During this initial period, 1891 – 1922, the foundations of a racially segregated system of governance were established and this was to become the bedrock of urban governance policies and institutions. The second period in the development of urban governance in Rhodesia

can be understood in the context of the declaration of responsible government, 1923 - 1964, which saw the end of BSAC rule and an expropriatory approach to governance. The period of responsible governance saw the intensification of racial segregation with legislation and systems being put in place to ensure the separate development of urban white and African areas (Musemwa 2006). The period of responsible government sought to intensify and entrench white colonial authority and this entailed the increase in efforts to socially engineer the life of African urban residents; this was achieved through legislation and the institutionalisation of racism and exploitation of Africans. The third phase, 1965 – 1975, saw the intensification of white rule due to the rise in nationalism compounded by the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). The fourth phase, 1976 – 1979, witnessed cosmetic reforms being introduced by the UDI government in order to appease and pacify Africans in an attempt to dilute the pressure posed by the protracted liberation struggle which led to the inevitable emancipation of Zimbabwe in 1980 (Martin and Johnson 1981). Significant shifts in urban governance policy during these periods were meant to protect and protract white hegemony and perpetuate white rule. Another constant feature unique to these periods was racial segregation and the use of exclusion and coercion to entrench white dominion. In instances where legislative reforms were favourable to Africans, it was in an attempt to quell or appease the African population through the use of cosmetic reforms and agents of the colonial master. As such, urban governance in colonial Zimbabwe was imposed and maintained by violence and racism (Ranger 2007).

All this legislation and the practices which flowed from them were rooted in racialised discourses which denigrated African people as inherently inferior to the colonial masters. This, according to Ranger (2007), entailed addressing the ‘Native question’ by ensuring that a small group of white colonisers could effectively control the lives of the large indigenous population while ensuring at the same time that the African rural economy remained subsidiary to European economic sectors by providing a constant supply of cheap labour. Hence, the development of local urban government was intricately linked to land and racial questions as the colonial powers treated Africans as ‘subjects’ and white settlers as ‘citizens’.

Since citizens and subjects were separated along racial lines, this overarching framework would invariably extend to the realm of citizen participation in urban government processes. Africans were viewed and treated as ‘child-like’, such that decision-making processes on issues that affected Africans directly were undertaken and then implemented and instituted without any

contribution by or consultation with ‘Natives’ (Musekiwa 2012). The systemic denial of African participation in local government meant that there were no mechanisms, although urban Africans paid rates, to ensure accountability or oversight of public resources by Africans. Consequently, the racial premise of local government ensured that urban administration in African locations lacked autonomy, legitimacy and resources in comparison to local administration in predominantly white urban spaces. As a result, the interests and concerns of urban Africans were in the main ignored. In this regard, the prevailing situation at the time – in terms of both legislation and institutional practice – was that urban white councils had control over African locations or townships.

With racial segregation as a key feature, each racial group had its own local government, or at least administration, which officially catered for the well-being of its citizens or subjects (Mushamba 2010; Chatiza 2012; Muchadenyika 2014). White settlers had elected councils which represented their interests and voices in local government and Africans had Native Councils which were meant to understand the concerns of urban Africans and provide some form of representation for voices emanating from the subjects (Makumbe 1998). In the end, the residence of Africans was not viewed as a permanent feature in urban white centres as Africans were perceived solely as temporary sojourners with the main status as the labouring class to the white urban economy (Mushamba 2010).

Surmounting pressures from Africans, due to the intensification of rural-urban migration, saw the institution of a ‘fifth wheel’ in governance in the form of a standing commission on Native Affairs that was envisaged to provide alternate advice to that of the Native Department (Van Onselen 1976). As such, temporary dormitory structures were set up to accommodate mainly male labourers in mostly single-sex living quarters and thereby provide temporary shelter for workers during their tenure in white industries (Van Onselen 1976). Because of this, according to Ranger (2007), the white central government felt, and indeed had, no responsibility in terms of ensuring access to housing, health care and other amenities and infrastructure for Africans in white cities and towns. In this way, racial segregation and the racialised system of urban service delivery meant that Africans lived in squalor almost as squatters on white designated land (Chakaipa 2010).

The local state-urban population interface and relations provided fertile ground for possible contestations between local government authorities and African subjects, which were to come to the fore on many occasions. This included discontent, turmoil and demonstrations by Natives against living and working conditions in Bulawayo and Salisbury. In the 1920s, there was in fact

a small emerging Africanist-like movement which sought to rectify the issues of representation of Natives in local governance issues as well as the living conditions of the African worker (Ranger 2007). Demands like the provision of health-care facilities, schools and decent accommodation were top of the grievances table. In particular, hostility between white councilors and black or African subjects was pertinent because of informal houses being demolished and the general inadequacy of urban accommodation (Ranger 2007). Over time, local African leaders increasingly demanded a voice in the management of local authorities.

### **3.3 Urban Governance under Company Rule, 1891 – 1922**

Urban governance in Rhodesia has been the subject of numerous debates and research (Musemwa 2006; West 2007; Ranger 2007). However, there is need to locate and understand the dynamics of urban colonial governance within the confines of significant political developments within Rhodesia as a colony. As such, there is need to fixate the ensuing discussions within such developments in an attempt to understand how such developments impacted and informed the pattern and form of urban governance in Rhodesia. This approach helps shed light on the contextual drivers of urban governance and how these shaped urban governance policies. Given that, there is need to detail the development of colonial urban government and how it shaped the institutional structures of urban governance into a racialised system of governance.

The motivation and incentive behind the occupation of Zimbabwe was driven by the desires of wealth, power and imperialism (Samkange 1968). Buoyed by the possibility of a second Rand, the occupation of Zimbabwe was fixated on expropriation of natural, mineral wealth and the African labour necessary for the exploitation of these resources (West 2007). Given the desire for economic expansion and the need for cheap labour to exploit such resources, regulating and ordering the social, political and economic structures of the new colony was imperative. However, the major motivation of urban governance under company rule was advanced using capitalist approaches to governance that emphasised profit and the accumulation of wealth and assets. This accumulation of wealth was premised on the exploitation of native African populations who were viewed as the defeated and conquered subjects critical to the advancement and development of the colony however as labourers.

The occupation of Mashonaland in 1890 gave rise to the need to set up key institutions and actors that would push the occupation and profiteering agenda of the BSAC. As such the BSAC ruled occupied Salisbury by a signed Charter that gave them the dominion and power to set up

governing authorities that would ensure the efficient governing of Rhodesia. One of the key features of occupation was its emphasis on spoliation and dispossession. In exerting its rule and dominion, the BSAC authorities sought to dispossess native African populations of their land and wealth, cattle and other livestock (Ranger 1967). The establishment of colonial authority and the proliferation of spoliation manifested itself in the demarcation and segregation of land according to racial lines. Occupied areas were turned into budding centres of enterprise and business that doubled as residential areas for the settler population. Given that, urban areas were conceived as business and residential areas partitioned for the white population whose residence and citizenship in those areas was conferred and determined by the colour of one's skin (West 2002).

The period of company rule saw the formative stages of an urban frontier, with local governance taking root through legislation which set the tone for the construction of local and national governance foundations of Rhodesia. One of the first formally established local authorities in colonial Zimbabwe was the Salisbury Sanitary Board (SSB) that was instituted in 1891 (Makumbe 1998). The main function of the SSB was to deal with public health issues around hygiene and a clean environment for white inhabitants. This board constituted of mainly white men, who had interests in the BSAC, whose mandate was to facilitate and institutionalise the bureaucratisation of local governance affairs in respect of social service delivery. The advisory board was not elected as key company men were nominated and appointed to the board and reported to the chartered company and its directors (Ranger 1967). The nature and composition of the board needs to be located in the nature in which the BSAC was run and how that cascaded to the governance of occupied territory. Since the company possessed the charter, it was responsible for the running and administration of the colony without any provisions for accountability to citizens or the crown (Ashton 1959). Given that, the SSB envisaged to administer the provision of sanitary services to Salisbury, however with limited accountability and citizen participation in the day to day running of urban locales. The lack of a systematic way of running the colony led to a number of inefficiencies, like water in Bulawayo for example, which eventually contributed to the demise of company rule.

Of particular interest is the fact that there was no African representation in the SSB largely due to the racialised nature of colonialism where natives were viewed, treated and relegated to third class citizens (West 2007). The segregation of Africans set the tone for a racialised system of local governance which became a key feature of not only race relations in Rhodesia but urban

governance in general. Racial segregation would become a constant and recurrent feature and foundation of colonial urban governance until the demise of colonialism in 1980. Racialism, during company rule, set the foundations of Rhodesia as Africans were dispossessed of their land immediately after occupation with natives being moved to reserves and deemed as squatters. The residence and acceptability of Africans as residents in urban locales was contingent on their provision of labour to white urbanites (Van Onselen 1976). The influx of white settlers post World War 1 saw the increase in the white population which in turn enhanced the demand for prime urban land further pushing the boundary of white dominion; and Africans were additionally pushed out to the margins where the environment was harsh, dry and arid (Ranger 1967).

The SSB paved way for racial segregation, white hegemony and patriarchy which became the pillars of urban governance in the colony of Rhodesia. In addition, the SSB became a stepping stone for legislation to follow, such as the Matabeleland Order in Council (1894) and the Land Apportionment Act (1930) shaping the direction and development of local government in progression. It is important to highlight that the occupation of Zimbabwe heralded the coming in of white settlers and with them new social, economic and political formations. Furthermore, it is essential to underline that urban growth in colonial Zimbabwe encompassed two mutually related and reinforcing developments. One was towards the administrative, bureaucratic and commercial serving centre as a nascent export oriented capitalist economy, engineered on the foundations of the company's aspiration of accumulation. The other direction was towards the urban locale, being a place of habitation where people's daily lives took place. This duplication of the urban local would in itself create numerous complexities for its inhabitants. The conflation of business and residence would create the need for African labour and the introduction of racial laws which would set Africans on a collision course with white urbanites.

Under company rule, the first municipal law was passed in 1897, which converted Salisbury and Bulawayo into municipalities. These municipal councils were patterned on the British tradition, in terms of their functions, institutions and finances. Urban settlements were patterned on racial lines in terms of residential areas with Africans pushed to poor locations/townships with limited services while the whites and coloureds occupied better areas of the urban settlements. Historically, the development of the so-called locations was given very low priority since the occupation of the colony. This was largely due to the political economy of the

country where blacks were viewed as a source of cheap labour hence issues concerning their well-being were neither a priority nor the prerogative of any local government institution.

### **3.4 Urban Governance under Responsible Government, 1923 – 1964**

The period from 1923 saw a shift in the body politic of Rhodesian society as there was a break in the reigns of the BSAC. The inefficiencies of the BSAC led to its failure to run the colony, which consequently ushered in a new dispensation of self-governance or responsible government (RG). The demise of company rule also saw the end of a culture of profiteering and expropriation which had dominated urban governance discourse and settlement in Rhodesia. In 1917, the Responsible Government Association (RGA) was formed. The political formation sought self-government for Southern Rhodesia within the British Empire, just as had been previously done in the colonies of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa as a precursor to full dominion status. The RGA opposed the planned integration of Southern Rhodesia into the Union of South Africa, which had been established in 1910 by the South Africa Act (1909), which overtly provisioned for the accession of territories governed by the BSAC. The company originally opposed Rhodesia's addition, fearing the territory might become dominated by Afrikaners (Musemwa 2006). However, there was a sudden change in tone when the company abruptly changed its stance because, in 1918, the Privy Council in London ruled that un-alienated land in Rhodesia belonged to the British Crown rather than to the company. This ended the longstanding stream of company revenue created by the sale of land. The period of self-governance saw the continuation and intensification of racially biased urban governance laws and institutions which were meant to further entrench white hegemony. The period from 1923 - 1964 saw the introduction of critical urban governance legislation such as the Land Apportionment Act (LAA, 1930), the Municipal Act (1930) and the introduction of advisory boards such as Town Management Boards (TMBs) and Native Advisory Boards (NABs), which would have a significant impact on not only race relations but the nature and form of urban governance going forward.

The loss of a dependable source of income handicapped the company's ability to pay dividends to its shareholders, and caused its development of Rhodesia to slow. The provision of good infrastructure, public health systems, water and other services curtailed the development of the colony such that the vision of turning the country into a settler haven became a pipe-dream. The concept of incorporating the colony into the Rand territory proved to be of significance in the break of ties with the company and the subsequent responsible government. This was largely due

to the fact that most of the settlers wanted self-government rather than rule from Pretoria, and came to vote for the RGA in large numbers. In the 1920 Legislative Council election, the RGA had an overwhelming victory that saw the colony being granted full self-governance in 1923. The discussion and debate around annexation by South Africa or self-rule did not include the African voice either through representation or consultation (Wekwete 1988). The ensuing discourse was determined by those with the privilege of voting and participation in decision making process. This would be a constant recurring feature of colonial urban governance policy.

The LAA of 1930 was a landmark legislation that legalised the segregation of land according to black and white areas. The legislation set aside prime land, including budding urban locales in Bulawayo and Harare, as white designated areas. Dry, arid and low-rainfall areas were set aside for occupation by native Africans. According to the Act, blacks were illegal residents in the city and other white designated areas. This saw the creation of areas that were exclusive to white populations, where blacks were not allowed, unless permitted by colonial authorities to enter into such areas. Such restrictions however were selectively applied to white populations as they had limited freedom to move freely from place to place. In some cases, white people also encountered restrictions when entering and taking up residence in 'African Reserves'. The LAA facilitated the institutionalisation of a policy of separate racial development which was pursued through urban governance and further entrenched white supremacy and black exploitation and suppression. Given that the LAA made urban areas 'out of bounds' for blacks, a dilemma was created by the growing need for African labour in cities' urban residential and industrial areas (Musemwa 2007). This need was abated through the creation of official black township or locations, which were to serve as dormitory areas to house the urban African labour force. The racialisation of urban governance was further protracted and entrenched through separate spatial development that saw the prioritisation of white areas at the expense of African locations. Racialised urban governance during this period amplified the level of exploitation and African under-development, and inflated the levels of violence and urban poverty, characterised by squalid living conditions in locations, which deepened the humiliation amongst the colonised. The condition of the native in urban Rhodesia, during this period, saw the imposition of cruder racist practices which increased the burdens of the African urban population.

The period of RG coincided with a boom in the European population, largely due to the two great wars, which inevitably saw a rise in manufacturing and mining industries (Van Onselen



1976). There was a corresponding need for more African labour which would work in these industries. Consequently, this meant more blacks needed to be accommodated in the urban black townships. Poor conditions in these townships continued to be a major characteristic of urban life for Africans and this acted as a deterrent to most prospective labourers as the city was viewed as a haven for squalor and immorality (Barnes 1999; West 2001). Given that, urban colonial authorities had to improve the general state of black townships through cosmetic reforms that saw improvements in the provision of housing, water and other essential social services (Musemwa 2006). Urban African citizenship was contingent on the provision of labour to the white residential and industrial areas (Dorman 2016). In this regard, the citizen and residence status of the native was determined and defined by his employment status (Dorman 2016). However, his contribution to urban or national governance discourse was not extended nor premised on his employment status; it was determined by the colour of his skin and his position in the socially engineered pecking order (Musemwa 2006).

The poor living conditions, coupled with a growing black labour force, created the need for structural and institutional reforms to be introduced in order to deal with the affairs of the urban whites and Natives. Since the colonial authority pursued a racially biased system of governance, there was need to institute authorities that would handle the separate needs and affairs of black and white urban inhabitants (Ranger 2007). A key legislation was passed, in 1930, which saw the introduction of the Municipal Act which gave municipal status to Harare (Salisbury) and Bulawayo. The Municipal status granted to Harare and Bulawayo ensured the decentralisation of decision making powers to the local level authority, which essentially narrowed power to white urbanites. Through the Municipal Act, local authorities could establish TMBs which were responsible for the running and administration of smaller peripheral towns with the bigger municipalities providing guidance and oversight in the running of such localities. Due to the rise in African urban discontent, coupled with poor living and public health conditions, the colonial government, under the Municipal Act, established NABs which were responsible for looking into and proving advice on how to improve the lived experiences of African urban workers (Ranger 2007). In practice, these boards did not have any African representatives at the top, which ultimately meant key voices in the affairs of the Natives were not heard as issues and decisions were made at the top with little interaction and contribution from the affected black populations (Musemwa 2006). In addition, these boards further divided urban local governance issues along

racial lines as TMBs were primarily occupied with the affairs of white inhabitants and NABs were responsible for the affairs of African urban dwellers, furthering colonial ideals on separate, racially defined urban development (Yoshikuni 2007).

The Native Council Act of 1937 saw the creation of Native Councils to deal with affairs of blacks. The 1957 African Councils Act broadened the powers of the councils and emphasis was laid on decision making on local initiatives. Decision making was largely in the hands of the then District Commissioner who ruled over all councils in his district. The commercial farming areas were for Europeans only and had their own independent administration. Their areas were administered by road committees, which were later transformed into Rural Councils in 1966. Unlike the African Councils, Rural Councils were accorded powers similar to those of the white Urban Councils in the spheres of public services. Clearly, the regulation of urban areas during this period needs to be understood as an essential part of the Rhodesian distinction between citizens and subjects. The African urban setting and its subsequent governance was constructed on political institutions upon which Natives could not have claims due to the lack of a binding social contract tying Natives as citizens to local governance institutions and the nation-state (Dorman 2013).

A key development during this period would see the tightening of colonial rule over the urban Natives. The growth of secondary industries between 1932 and 1938 set the colony on a path to capitalist industrial development and gave rise to modern urban centres. The need for economic growth could not be achieved without a constant and reliable supply of labour and manpower. The increase in the number of urban Natives providing labour to white capital saw the emergence of a new social class among the colonised (Yoshikuni 2007). According to West (2007), this class was unusual, unexpected and not part of the colonial blue-print. This class was a product of many factors that include industrialisation, Christian missionary education and capitalism. It would identify itself as the better sort of Natives and wanted different treatment by the colonial office, and it was viewed with fear and loathing in equal measure by settler government officials and institutions. This urban African elite would clamour for the provision of equal rights for all civilised men through the extension of the voting franchise to qualified blacks, along with better wages and working conditions; improvement of living conditions in the locations and provision of adequate recreational and health facilities for Natives (Ranger 2007; Yoshikuni 2007). This group of African elites, however, favoured cooperation as a mode of engagement, rather than confrontation with the authorities and wished to pursue this struggle within parameters

acceptable to the colonial state. Furthermore, these elites were not interested in forming an all-African alliance but were merely interested in the pursuit of their own interests as a separate breed of Native clamouring to be treated like Europeans. In this regard, the African elite sought to redefine citizenship to mean level of education and lifestyle and not race or phenotype (West 2007). It was therefore a demand for racial integration of African urban elites into white settler society. The tensions between the African elite and colonial authorities would set the two on a collision course, with urban locales and governance becoming sites of struggle which would see the modern settler state apparatus reach its full repressive maturity in periods leading to UDI and independence (Dorman 2003).

The African councils were vested with statutory powers to impose rates, collect taxes and enact locally binding by-laws. The African Councils were further empowered, especially as African nationalism took root in the 1970s, to counterbalance the emerging threat of nationalism. Chiefs were encouraged and enticed to have Native Councils in their areas and such councils were named after the chief of a given area (Weinrich 1971). The colonial government though generally treated the Natives as “children” and imposed centrally defined programmes on African and Native Councils. Any pretense of promoting African self-government was overrun by white supremacist policies (De Valk and Wekwete 1990). Evidence was seen in the denial of participation of urban governance, linking of local government to traditional authorities and the use of chiefs to subdue and contradict nationalist aspirations. In this way, national contests for political power between Africans and the white settlers soon began to shape the discourse and practice of local government.

### **3.5 Urban Governance under UDI and the Rise of African Nationalism, 1965 – 1975**

The period from 1953 to 1958, the colonial government, under Sir Garfield Todd, attempted to introduce liberal reforms that sought to increase the rights for the black majority and to provide better representation for blacks in urban governance affairs (Tekere 2006). Interestingly, the Todd government was removed from power when efforts to expand the number of Natives eligible to vote, from 2% to 16%, were initiated. The Todd period also witnessed the birth of early nationalist movements such as the Rhodesia African National Congress, the British African Voice Association, led by Benjamin Burombo; and the Reformed Industrial and Commercial Workers Union, led by Charles Mzingeli (Ranger 2007). These socio-political movements were largely formed to oppose racial discrimination within the colonial system; as such, this period saw the formative years of nationalist politics which would find its roots in the urban locales around the

colony. The demise of liberal colonial politics under the Todd administration gave a rise to a more conservative and non-conformist form of rule in the colony. The governments that followed Todd's, especially the Rhodesia Front led by Ian Smith, became increasingly repressive by formulating and implementing legislation such as the Law and Order Maintenance Act (1960) and the Emergency Powers Act which would limit and restrict the rights of not only urban Africans, but the black majority at large. Particularly under UDI, this involved increasing repression, curtailing freedom of speech and participation, which radicalised subsequent African political formations. Systems inherited from company rule, responsible government and UDI paved the way for a centralised system of government premised on rule by one party/centre of power which would be inherited by the post-colonial government.

According to Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni (1999), the increased racial tensions in Rhodesia during the period leading to and preceding UDI were the contributing factors to increased black repression and subsequent rise in nationalism. Tekere (2006) purports that, in the early days of nationalism, African urban movements were centred on an elitist view of suffrage premised on the recognition of civilised blacks as equals with whites based on the equal rights for all civilised men narrative. West (2007) alludes to the fact that this changed with the corresponding increase in repression by subsequent UDI governments where nationalism grew and the narrative changed to one man one vote. In this regard, nationalism and its relationship with urban locales can be traced back to attempts by the Rhodesian authorities to control the urbanisation of black populations (Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni 1999; Dorman 2013). The relationship between nationalism and urban governance can be attributed to the existence of secondary manufacturing industry, the rise of the urban elite and the prominence of African trade unions which led to the establishment of nationalist parties, though the relationship between the nationalist parties and trade unions was not always straightforward (Nkomo 1984).

The economic boom of the federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (the 1953 to 1963 period) saw an influx of rural blacks into the urban areas of Bulawayo and Harare in search of better employment and income opportunities. The increase in black populations in white designated areas meant a raft of regulatory and restrictive laws and acts had to be introduced or strengthened. Coupled with mass urban industrial action, for instance the 1945 general strike, railway strike of 1948 and the Salisbury bus boycott of 1956, which found their roots in urban locales, there was a pressing need to devise restrictive measures in which to control and regulate black lives in the

urban areas. For example, the increased influx of blacks exerted pressure on the already weak African housing situation which led to urban squatters. The squatter situation compelled government to relax its racial segregatory laws in order to tap into the excess labour market; however, this did not mean blacks were now acceptable in white areas as the government continued its policy of separate racial development. The policy of separate development meant Africans were still unrecognised as citizens and their participation in urban governance was still curtailed. However, Chipembere (2005) contends that the UDI government was compelled to deal with urban African migration by ensuring the construction of low-cost housing and legalising lodgers in high density townships but, again, this did not mean the recognition of blacks as citizens in the city. In addition, the UDI regime, faced with numerous internal and external challenges, may have viewed and treated African urban residents as less of a threat than rural ones who were largely linked with providing support to the guerilla-based liberation struggle (Dorman 2013).

The rise of nationalism would ensure the city was reduced to a site of struggle as confrontations between the state and African citizens in particular was played out in urban locales. This was largely due to the tensions present in areas which were ideally designed for habitation by whites. The existing situation meant that minority rule and urban governance could not be sustained without the use of the coercive apparatus of the state, signaling rule by force and the entrenchment of white hegemony. One of the powerful legal instruments used by the UDI government was the Emergency Powers Act, 1968, which was used to ban strikes, trade unions and nationalist movements, setting the pace and tone for urban governance and rule by class and race distinctions. To further complicate the urban governance matrix under UDI, there was no consensus between more liberal urban councilors and the Rhodesia Front as there were marked tensions in the ruling white class. When the UDI government adopted even more extreme urban governance measures, the tensions became deeper (Rakodi 1993).

In tracing the continuities of urban governance into post-colonial Zimbabwe, one needs to appreciate the role of the liberation struggle and its impact on the perception of urban locales in the struggle and contest for power and authority. During the apex of the war for liberation, more people fled from rural areas to the cities. Coupled with the increasingly rural focus of the liberation struggle, this meant that city dwellers were often viewed as sell-outs suspected of being sympathetic to the Rhodesian regime, and this would be re-constituted and re-configured in the post-colonial period.

### **3.6 Urban Governance at the height of African Nationalism and the Struggle for Independence, 1976-1979**

As the nationalist movements gained momentum and the war effort intensified, cities became subject to attacks of sabotage and espionage by the liberation armies, further reducing the cities to sites of struggle and contestation. Urban governance represented the heart of oppression and racism, and they symbolised and embodied what the liberation struggle frowned upon (Dorman 2014). From the period 1975-1979, local governance in the colony was under pressure from the nationalist movement which sought to inculcate a culture of democracy, equality, universal suffrage, citizen participation and justice (Moyo 1992). This meant there was an unprecedented amount of pressure exerted on the then colonial government to carve a permanent bargaining space for Africans and progressively realise their potential as a major component of local governance processes in urban centres.

White supremacy was seemingly under threat and local governance reforms had to be initiated to ‘quell the political storm’ (Muchadenyika 2014). As such, local black councilors could now be elected into office but on certain conditions. These conditions included level of education, ownership of property, and a stable income amounting or surpassing a certain threshold (Mlambo, Pangeti and Phimister 2000). These requirements were set as a deliberate strategy to disenfranchise blacks from being elected into public office. Sequentially, this reduced the number of blacks that could contest for public office meaning that the ‘black voice’ had minimum space to be represented or heard. Regardless of the cosmetic political reforms precipitated by the continued clamor for suffrage and representation, citizen participation in local governance was still largely a preserve for the whites. In addition, as the war of liberation intensified, the political and democratic space of both urban and rural Africans continued to shrink as curfews and other punitive measures were introduced by the colonial government to further alienate and restrict the African from participating in political and governance processes.

### **3.7 Urban Government in Post-Independent Zimbabwe**

After independence in 1980, the newly elected post-colonial government was faced with momentous challenges. Independent Zimbabwe inherited, from the colonial government, a highly centralised system of government, founded and established on white/racial supremacy which viewed the Africans as subject to be ruled over (Helmsing et al. 1991). The new nation of

Zimbabwe thus inherited a local government system comprised of urban white councils and rural councils which were fragmented along racial lines (Masundu-Nyamayaro 2008). Having inherited a racially-based and racially-biased system of local government, the new central government had to institute reforms to level the playing field and to make governance and citizen participation non-racial and more inclusive (Chikate 1992). Given the values and principles which founded and animated the war for liberation in the 1970s, the government of Zimbabwe had to formulate policies and enact legislation which sought to repeal colonial epithets (De Valke and Wekwete 1990). In this respect, local government changes were made through legislation, directives and policy pronouncements.

The major motivation for changes made to local governance, in both urban and rural spaces, was premised on the desire and need for sound socio-economic development and the reduction of colonial disparities (Wekwete 1988). Local government reforms of the 1980s and beyond were hence intended to achieve several objectives focused on rural, urban, and regional development but in a manner which addressed colonially-constructed racial injustices (Mutizwa-Mangiza 1991). One of the initial steps taken by government was to introduce the 1988 Rural District Councils Act which sought to eliminate fragmentation in rural local government through the amalgamation of rural councils and rural local authorities into rural district councils (Makumbe 1992). In the case of specifically urban governance in Zimbabwe, five phases can be identified and delineated. These are as follows: decentralisation period (1980–1990), urban governance reform period (1990–2000), change and contestation period (2000–2008), deepening contestation and confusion period (2008–2012) and the rise of citizen dissenting voices in local governance 2013 to current (Chatiza and Mlalazi 2009; Chatiza 2010; Muchadenyika 2014; Muchadenyika and Williams 2015). These periods are discussed below.

### **3.7.1 The Pursuit of a Decentralised System of Local Government, 1980 – 1990**

Urban development post-1980 in Zimbabwe pursued a one-city concept aimed at deracialising cities and towns (Makumbe 1998) and breaking down the sharp division between white suburbs and African townships. Despite this attempt, starting from 1980, Wekwete (1994) argues that the income-based and physical fabric of the built urban environment in the country continued to show segregation tendencies after the first decade of independence (as, admittedly, it continues to do even today). Initial attempts at local governance reforms were imbued in a discourse of decentralisation. In large part, though, decentralisation in Zimbabwe seemed to remain at the level

of rhetoric, as the government grappled with the many acute practical challenges facing a newly-independent nation, including inheriting a colonial state which was historically mired in centralising tendencies. Romanticism rather than realism seemed to be the order of the day (Muchadenyika and Williams 2015). Further, the government of Zimbabwe and in particular the ruling party pursued a political agenda when it came to the decentralisation programme, rather than focusing on the benefits of development planning and implementation arising from processes of decentralisation. This could also be attributed to the fact that the ruling party (as an ex-liberation movement) was more attuned to the rhetoric of change and had minimal practical experiences in administration and the necessary formal rules and procedures following from this (Martin and Johnson 1981).

The Prime Minister's Directive of 1984 and 1985 outlined new local government structures and introduced development committees at village, ward, district, provincial, and national levels with the aim of fostering bottom-up planning; and a similar structure was adopted in the urban locales (Makumbe 1998). These structures mirrored ZANU-PF political structures on the ground, creating conflation between the party and state. The mandated duties of these committees included policy making and review, delegated and independent planning, policy implementation and the supply of requisite information for these multiple processes (Gasper 1991). In addition, the right to vote and stand for elections was extended to everyone beyond the age of 18 regardless of education or lifestyle, to level the political playing field and ensure more inclusive representation at local level through the democratisation and deracialisation of representative democracy (Dorman 2016). Development priorities were to be identified and formulated at village level, and channeled through the ward, district, and provincial levels to the national level. The basic premise was that the contents of the national development plan, which the government sought to formulate post-1980, should entail development programmes discussed and prioritised at the village and ward levels. In practice, these various state development-planning agencies suffered time and budgetary constraints, lack of skilled personnel, and central government interference in local decision-making. In the end, these planning agencies became insignificant in challenging centralisation.

In some ways, the nature and form of urban governance, in terms of policy and application, remained somewhat unchanged in the years immediately after independence, as colonial era by-laws, statutes and plans remained intact (Dorman 2003). Nonetheless, as we will see, there was a



clear distinction between what policy said and what practice was undertaken by the post-colonial government. Immediately after independence, former white residential areas were renamed as low-density neighbourhoods and affluent black and Asian families had an opportunity to move into these areas. Black townships in the main were renamed as high-density areas. The renaming of these areas was an attempt to deracialise urban governance and redefine the concept of a citizen in a new Zimbabwe (Wekwete 1988; Musemwa 2006). Urban governance at the time took on a new meaning and included the inclusion of previously marginalised groups so that they could play a critical role in representative and participatory democracy processes. While there seemed on the surface to be a clear urban governance transition plan, the post-colonial government – in the light of ongoing rural migration into urban centres – continued with the banning of urban squatters and farming on public lands albeit enforcement of such laws was intermittent. In this regard, attempts were made to keep the urban locale as modern and clean as possible, a continuation of colonial practices. In continuity with colonial discourses, only those with legitimate business interests were to be found in the city, further promoting classism at the expense of poor urban informal economic actors (Dorman 2013).

While urban governance policy post-independence sought to level the playing field by extending universal suffrage to all those above 18 years of age, its policy of inclusion inadvertently continued certain cultural and social prejudices created by the colonial predecessors. For example in 1983, the government initiated ‘Operation Clean-up’ where the police rounded up more than 6,000 women in urban areas under the guise of ridding cities of prostitutes, further perpetuating colonial stereotypes that suggested women in urban areas were undesirable illicit beer brewers, *skokiaan* queens, or prostitutes/*pendekes* (West 2001). The operation indiscriminately targeted elderly women, school-girls, and women with babies, whom upon release were told to return to their rural homes. The same would occur in 1986 when Operation *Chinyavada* was introduced to rid the cities of loitering women ahead of the Non-Aligned Movement summit. The argument raised here suggests that the post-colonial government continued the marginalisation of women and youth in urban governance as such groups were not recognised as part of the urban body politic, though their voices were essential in trying to direct urban development and governance (Barnes 1999).

One of the key themes in urban governance, coupled with deracialisation, was ensuring urban expansion in terms of the provision of living space for the growing urban black population

and, more importantly, broadening the base for citizen participation in governance by ensuring citizens had the power and authority to elect their preferred leaders into power (Potts 2000). To ensure this, part of government's drive after independence was to provide 115,000 housing units across the country in order to expand and grow the urban centres. However, government only managed to provide 13,500 units by 1985 and this fueled the rise of self-help initiatives where those with resources could build houses to a particular standard; but the cost of building material alienated and excluded those who lived in poverty (Mutizwa-Mangisa 1991). This situation further defined citizenship and participation in local government processes along class lines, inadvertently reproducing colonial standards of urban presence and governance.

Post-independence, Zimbabwe in many ways maintained an urban governance system that remained relatively similar to that of the colonial government in respect of the structure and form. The technical side and the day to day running of the local authority was the responsibility of appointed technocrats with the town clerk at the helm of council administration. On the representative, advisory and oversight side of urban governance were elected councilors, chosen to represent citizen interests in the running of the local authority with the mayor being the figurehead. In this respect, NABs and TMBs were immediately dissolved as these were in conflict with the spirit of reconciliation and integration which were major foundations of the post-colonial state (Ranger 2007). In addition, there was a drive by government, during this period, to have local authorities that were autonomous and independent. Hence the involvement of central government and line ministries was very limited, as urban councils were provided with much needed support and resources to pursue development priorities. However, the move by government to expand urban governance was ultimately an attempt, by ZANU-PF, to ensure strong grassroots support as this was essential in safeguarding political hegemony through the control and support of local level followings (Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni 1999).

During this period, the MLGRUD had a critical role in facilitating the decentralisation and deracialisation process. In addition, though, the MLGRUD inherited and enjoyed meaningful powers that were characteristic of the colonial government with the only difference being the colour of the Minister's skin. In terms of the possible overbearing nature of the MLGRUD, one can argue that during the period immediately after independence, the ministry did not use its powers to pattern and shape citizen participation or to consolidate and contest party hegemony but powers were used constructively to enhance development and integration (Muchadenyika 2015).

Indications from legislation instituted immediately after independence were reflective of the euphoria that the country was in. In addition, there existed little threat to ZANU-PF hegemony in the urban centres and thus there was limited interest by the post-colonial government to close space for citizen participation in general. Thus, with reference specifically to urban governance, the 1980 Urban Councils Act introduced universal adult suffrage by repealing the 1973 Urban Councils Act and earlier legislation which was premised on a colonial property franchise steeped in racial oppression (Chikate 1992). Oppressive rural-to-urban migration laws were also rescinded and significant levels of rural to urban migration ensued; but, as noted, the ZANU-PF sought to address this, and sometimes through repression. As well, as with the touted decentralisation process more broadly, the first decade of independence did not yield anticipated reforms of fostering more solid urban governance systems, prompting post-1990 reforms targeted at consolidating urban governance.

The situation in Bulawayo was somewhat different. Changes in urban governance there were to become stringent during the period of the political disturbances in Matabeleland, from 1981 - 1986, which saw curfews, restriction of citizen movement and the use of violence and the coercive apparatus of the state. The reason behind the strong approach by government was due to the threat to power and hegemony by the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) which had won all the parliamentary seats in Bulawayo and Matabeleland North and South combined. The use of the Emergency Powers Act allowed the ZANU-PF government to restrict the movement of urban dwellers in Bulawayo and ensured the coercion of citizens, through the use of manufactured consent, to conform to ZANU-PF hegemony. Experiences from the Matabeleland disturbances would play a central role in fostering a kind of separate development approach, a key feature of colonial urban governance, where Bulawayo and Matabeleland in general were placed at the bottom, between 1980 and 1990, of government's list of development priorities. In addition, the disturbances would play a key role in shaping the attitudes and perception of Bulawayo residents towards ZANU-PF, the state and its institutions.

By the end of the first decade of supposed decentralisation and deracialisation, it was clear that the process had failed to yield anticipated results. In fact, Brand (1991) likened the process to centrally-created decentralisation. Central government was not committed to the letter and spirit of making local government a distinct sphere involving a significant devolution of power and this would set the tone for future urban governance narratives and approaches.

### **3.7.2 Towards Local Governance Reform, 1990 – 2000**

In the 1990s, the government's decentralisation programme continued but it shifted to promoting democracy and the focus of attention turned to elected local authorities (Conyers 2003). Given that national government should play a pivotal role in the promotion of local participation and local level democracy (Faguet 2014), it became imperative to more vigorously democratise local government in Zimbabwe, with the post-1990 period seeking to do this. This was particularly important given the lack of participation, particularly for Africans, in democratic processes of any kind during the entire colonial period. Interventions by government during this period were thus aimed at enhancing representative democracy to ensure that urban residents had the right and duty to elect political and administrative heads of urban councils.

An important vehicle used in the post-1990 democratisation process was the electoral process (Laakso 1999). The opening up of local government elections, to include Africans above 18 years, to contest and participate in elections, was a breakthrough development as Africans, now recognised as citizens, became active agents in electing and deciding who represented their needs at local authority level. Thus, by 1995, legislation had been passed permitting all eligible residents to vote in national elections and to vote in urban government elections. This was previously a preserve of rate-payers and those who owned property, who were primarily salaried males and not domestic workers, women or lodgers. Legislation also brought about the introduction of elected executive mayors in 1995 and this marked a major shift in local urban governance. However, Muchema (2005) argues that the Executive Mayor system, for all cities in Zimbabwe, adopted at the time was an awkward mixture of the traditional British-style Mayor and the American Strong Mayor. American mayors are executives with appointing and dismissing powers and veto powers, but the Zimbabwe Executive Mayor was accountable to the full council as the Executive Mayor had no unbridled executive authority.

The period 1980 to 1990 saw government on a drive to deracialise and decentralise centres of national and urban local governance. One step towards this was by relaxing racial laws that inhibited the influx of Africans into urban areas; as such, government did not regulate or stem the flow of citizens into urban areas creating a need for proper housing and accommodation in the city. By the mid-1990s, it was becoming quite clear that government's so-called socialist approach of providing affordable housing would neither be feasible nor be met due to a number of factors. For example, in 1993 it was projected that there was a deficit of 70,000 and 389,000 housing units in

Harare and Bulawayo respectively (Dorman 2016). Interestingly, one can underline the stark disparities in the housing crisis between Harare and Bulawayo as being attributable to the post-colonial government's policy of separate development and continued underdevelopment of Bulawayo. Part of the reason for the urban housing bulge was linked to the rising cost of land and building materials. As such, service delivery and the provision of adequate housing to an increasing urban populace placed a strain on urban governance policy which relaxed its laws on urban squatting and lodgers which would prove to be a source of socio-political challenges for the state and ruling party (Muchadenyika and Williams 2015).

The Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) adopted by Zimbabwe in the early 1990s would also negatively affect urban governance policy as it would see the continued liberalisation of local governance with adverse effects on service delivery. ESAP sought to introduce economic reforms that would liberalise the economy and promote free-trade and market fundamentalism (Mlambo 2008). Part of the changes included the reduction in social spending, which affected government's housing projects for example, the removal of subsidies and the reduction of government expenditure which meant parastatals would be privatised, and food and other subsidies withdrawn to allow the market to determine the pricing of goods and services (Mlambo 2008). For a democracy and government in its infancy, the proposed changes would have an adverse effect on the fabric of Zimbabwe. Unemployment soared due to market liberalisation as local goods competed with imports and the labour market became saturated with unemployed citizens. Those out of work opted for informal trading in order to cope with the harsh economic realities brought in by ESAP.

Urban authorities' ability to mobilise resources, through rates and bills was curtailed by the inability of residents to pay their dues because of unemployment. The lack of economic resources on the part of both residents and local authorities would see a decline in service delivery due to resource constraints. Tolerance of the informal economy seemed to increase largely due to the fact that government wanted to appease discontented citizens after the failed promise of a prosperous Zimbabwe after independence (Dorman 2016). Urban governance seemed to permit access to informal sources of social goods as government had limited resources to prevent a decline in living standards (Muchadenyika 2013). For example, in Harare, during the 1991-92 drought, the local authority relaxed controls on urban agriculture with the slashing of maize stalks gradually declining, and completely ceasing in 1993, albeit concerns existed around environmental

degradation (Muchadenyika 2015). In addition, during the same period, regulations on informal trade were relaxed as the number of hawkers and vendors gradually increased (Dorman 2016). Scholars like Kamete (1999) and Dorman (2013) contend that the motives behind such soft approaches by government were largely politically designed to empower the economically vulnerable so as to lull the potential for citizen despondence (Kamete 2003).

The ongoing centralised nature of urban governance at this stage seemed to create challenges for local authorities around the country. As the state occupied a central role in directing development efforts at local and national levels, its inability to mobilise and allocate resources to urban locales meant reduced budgets for local authorities, which consequently meant such institutions could not adequately carry-out their duties and mandates. The failure of government to provide adequate financing to local authorities compelled such bodies to explore alternative sources of revenue generation and collection blurring the line between those accountable, those who should account and to whom they are accountable. At this point the government seemed less concerned with local authorities as the bigger challenges were of an economic and not political nature. However, the seeds of insubordination amongst local authorities had been sown and in the future, would germinate into contestation and conflict between the state and urban governance.

To further complicate issues, continued economic challenges were exacerbated by government's involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) war and the payment of \$50,000 Zimbabwean dollars as compensation for liberation war veterans. Both decisions were made without citizen consultation and did not have the fiscal resources to support them, and the effects were detrimental to the country's economy. The subsequent economic pressures, coupled with urban poverty, lack of citizen consultation, poor service delivery and other bureaucratic inefficiencies, provided fertile ground for government opposition. Kamete (2008) asserts that the urban areas were ruling party strongholds during this period, but this position was beginning to wane. The end of the 1990s saw the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), coupled with food riots and increased strikes by workers and trade unions, which were instrumental in challenging government and would influence the nature of urban governance in policy and practice. Given that, one can opine that urban discontent, prevalent in the period under review, was being channeled into political manifestations (Dorman 2005). In addition, it is important to highlight that this period witnessed the formation and rise of Residents Associations (RAs) at the expense of existing ratepayers'

associations (Dorman 2016). These formations would be instrumental in sustaining pressure against urban local authorities which themselves were beset with various crises, reconfiguring the nature of urban governance in Zimbabwe for many years to come.

Overall, the period 1990 to 2000 coincided with the demise of the Zimbabwean economy, recurring droughts and a rise in corruption levels which led to rapid informalisation, unemployment, urban poverty and poor service delivery which would lead to political tensions at the local and national levels (Kamete 2006). Dorman (2016) argues that at this juncture tensions and contradictions between policy and implementation were becoming more apparent and strained. Coupled with rapid economic decline and informalisation, a strong state presence in urban governance would sow the seeds of political change and give rise to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and other non-state actor confrontations with urban and national governance institutions

### **3.7.3 Confrontation and Contestation, 2000 – 2008**

During this period, politics became a central destabilising factor with reference to urban governance. The autonomy and functioning of urban government institutions became even more contested in comparison to previous decades (Muchadenyika and Williams 2015). The ascendance of MDC in urban local government resulted in clashes between the state and local-level governing authorities. ZANU-PF had lost control of most urban local authorities in elections, dating from 2000 onwards, and attempted to regain lost urban governance institutions (Chapfika 2012). Throughout, central government frustrated, and seized control of MDC controlled local authorities, setting in motion a deepening sour relationship between central and local government (Muchadenyika 2015). These contested power relations between central government (as controlled by the ruling party) and opposition-run town councils consequently affected service delivery. Marongwe et al. (2012) thus examine the deterioration of service delivery in the context of political contestations as robust institutions of local government, especially in the urban centres, had no sustained access to national treasury resources to initiate local level development. Within a limited space of time, many of the reasonably well-managed local urban authorities were struggling to maintain service delivery, as a result of the national power struggles between the main contending political parties.

As indicated earlier, in the 1990s, under increasingly challenging conditions, urban areas became fertile grounds for political opposition, contestation and mobilisation, a scenario which would continue into the decade beginning in 2000. The untenable political situation in the 2000s

further complicated the management of urban areas which in turn brought forward a number of embedded contradictions (Muchadenyika 2015). The year 2000 was a landmark year as it set the tempo for urban governance policy going forward; in addition, the year witnessed the watershed parliamentary elections and a referendum. According to Dorman (2005), urban populations willingly articulated their discontent even in matters that were politically sensitive in the past. This would be expressed during the February 2000 referendum process where polls made it clear that citizens, urbanites in particular, had become discontent with the national state of affairs. Coupled with that, the June 2000 parliamentary elections saw a huge turn-out by urban voters and an indication of growing strong and consistent support for the MDC in urban locales. In 2002 the outcome of council elections further buttressed the ascendance of the MDC when opposition won 42 of the 43 seats available for councilors in Harare and all 29 seats in Bulawayo. The outcome of the council and parliamentary elections heralded the existence of a formidable political opponent, in the form of the MDC, which would pose a threat to, and end, ZANU-PF urban hegemony.

One can argue that the continued failure of urban councils to provide basic services was attributed in part to economic decline prevalent to the post-2000 era. But the electoral outcome would see the legislation of two Acts that would heavily impact urban governance and citizen participation. The enactment of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), both enacted in 2002, would mark the seriousness of government in dealing with citizen participation and freedom of expression. POSA sought to restrict the movement and coalescence of citizens without notification or clearance from the police. The Act further made illegal mass industrial action, citizen protests or any form of gathering without police clearance. Any meeting or gathering not approved by the police was deemed illegal and was punishable by law, curtailing freedom of assembly.

Given that, the space for citizen participation in any governance process was subject to clearance by the police. In most cases, the police arbitrarily targeted opposition supporters' meetings and gatherings as a way of curtailing their support, through the use of force and fear, on the ground. AIPPA sought to control and muzzle freedom of the press, expression and access to critical information central to informed decision making at urban governance level. AIPPA provided a legal framework for the access and conduct of requesting information from public bodies and privacy as well as for the regulation of mass media. Overall, the two laws combined



were enacted to curb the growing opposition party and to ensure more restrictive laws on independent and government media.

Ranger (2007) notes that from 2000 the national government completely intervened in urban local government. The dismissal of opposition executive mayors and the sacking of whole municipal councils, and their subsequent replacement with commissions appointed by and loyal to ZANU-PF, served as one of the many ploys used by the state to frustrate local governance processes. In accordance with the Urban Councils Act, the local government minister arbitrarily appointed commissioners to run city affairs. The state sought to manage urban affairs in a more intrusive manner. During this period, then, a series of 'new state authorities,' including governors for both Harare and Bulawayo as well as district administrators for the former townships (now high-density areas) were introduced to oversee the running of cities.

Central government interference in local authorities was also witnessed through the instigation of Operation *Murambatsvina*/Restore Order in 2005. The government of Zimbabwe, through the MLGRUD, embarked on an operation to supposedly rid cities and towns of filth. This exercise began on May 19, 2005 and contravened basic human and fundamental rights. A demolition and eviction campaign led by the military and police affected an estimated 700,000 people in cities across the country, who lost homes and sources of livelihood (Tibaijuka 2005) as both informal housing and informal economy structures were destroyed. The Minister of Local Government was neither held accountable nor liable for the unconstitutional damage caused as urban centres became characterised by chaos, contestation and confusion, involving rule by coercion rather than consent. However, as this was a directive, enforced by the army and police, local authorities and residents alike did not object strongly to the operation as the coercive apparatus of the state was responsible for ensuring compliance by citizens. In some cases, residents voluntarily demolished their own so called illegal structures. Operation Restore Order exerted significant pressure on local authorities as the number of homeless people increased, further burdening the need for adequate housing and the provision of temporary shelter for affected households. This was all in a context where local authorities could hardly provide clean water to communities in some areas (Muchadenyika 2015).

At this time, local government legislation, that is, the amended Urban Councils Act gave unlimited powers to the local government minister who often (ab)used the office for political expediency particularly in the case of the suspension of elected councilors. Local authorities turned

into political battlegrounds at the expense of service delivery in key human development services such as water and sanitation, housing, education, energy, and transport in urban areas (Ranger 2007). The battle to control urban areas also saw the government of Zimbabwe institute the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA), a parastatal mandated to govern water resources. In June 2006, the government issued an instruction insisting that all local authorities transfer water and sewer services to ZINWA. As a result, local authorities did not have access to and control over the provision of water reducing both their powers and revenue with regards the provision of water. The contestation and confusion deepened further after the landmark 2008 elections with increased contestation and wrestling for power between the state and opposition run councils. Consequently, the contestation for power had a negative direct impact on service delivery as there was an increase in water shortages, burst sewer pipes and instances of uncollected refuse attributed to the inability of local authorities to mobilise adequate resources for the provision of such activities.

#### **3.7.4 Continued Contestation and Disarray, 2008 – 2012**

Due to the ongoing rise in opposition power and the diminishing influence of the local government Minister and national government over local authorities, characterised by the over ruling of government directives like ZINWA in Bulawayo, the executive mayoral system was abolished in 2008 and replaced with the ceremonial mayoral system (Chirisa and Jonga 2009). The Urban Councils Act was amended, in 2009 to allow for this, with the MLGRUD appointing ceremonial mayors who had to be elected councilors. The same amendment also permitted the appointment of ‘special interests’ councilors (Muchadenyika 2015). The ceremonial mayoral system, it can be argued, was a further attempt by the ruling party to disrupt and derail MDC-controlled urban councils. Section 114 of the Urban Councils Act as well gave the local government minister unrestricted powers to suspend and dismiss elected councilors. Musekiwa (2012) argues that the political party in control of central government can abuse section 114 to frustrate citizen choices at local authority level. Such ministerial power can thus dwarf the will of citizens, subverting the functions of representative and participatory democracy.

Such legislation became a vibrant tool for ZANU-PF to neutralise MDC-controlled councils. The unfettered powers of the local government minister, such as directly appointing ‘special interests’ councilors and senior city management staff, further increased contestations in local governance. In principle, ‘special interests’ councilors are hypothetically meant to cater for the special needs of specific groups such as the disabled, business, civil society groups among

others. This provides local government accountability to such groups, which otherwise might not be fully represented based on the system involving exclusively elected councilors. Certainly, the idea of ‘special interests’ councilors is a principled and inclusive one worthy of consideration. In this respect, through Statutory Instrument 94 of 2010, the Minister of Local Government appointed 86 ‘special interests’ councilors to complement the 389 elected councilors. Unexpectedly, though, most appointed councilors in urban councils turned out to be ZANU-PF candidates who had lost elections in running as councilors (Musekiwa 2012). Musekiwa (2012) thus further argues that ‘special interests’ councilors were brought about to, in effect, protect ZANU-PF interests and make MDC-controlled urban councils ungovernable. Though they had no voting powers, ‘special interests’ councilors provided cover for the ruling party since it had lost a number of urban government elections. However, some ‘special interests’ councilors were professionals who played a central role in assisting elected officials, the majority of whom were party activists who had limited or no prior experience in public governance.

The 2008 local elections saw the intensification of opposition control of the governance of urban councils as urban councils remained MDC strongholds, with the MDC winning the majority of ward seats (EISA 2008). The MDC in fact won 30 and ZANU-PF none out of the 30 urban councils (Chakaipa 2010), and hence the ministerial action as mentioned above. Presidential elections in the same year were inconclusive and deeply contested, eventually heralding the inauguration of the Inclusive Government in January 2009 which comprised of two MDC formations, MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai and MDC-M led by Professor Arthur Mutambara, and ZANU-PF. Though the Inclusive Government was meant to downplay the immense inter-party struggles characterising contemporary Zimbabwean politics, it involved a difficult, tortuous and protracted transition such that urban governance continued to be destabilised (Masunungure and Shumba 2012).

The period of the inclusive government brought relative calm and order in the fight for urban control. In addition, the Government of National Unity (GNU) period witnessed a level of cooperation and partnership between ZANU-PF and the opposition which seemed to stabilise urban governance and improve service delivery. The adoption of the multi-currency system steadied the economy and this enhanced the ability of local authorities to mobilise and allocate resources for service delivery in a better fashion. As contestation lessened, improvements in service delivery were realised. More importantly, due to the reduced tension and contestation

between the ruling party and opposition, significant changes to urban governance were lessened and the over-bearing position of the state in urban governance was reduced significantly. The GNU period witnessed the only phase in urban governance history where the Urban Councils Act was not amended. However, for strategic reasons, the MLGRUD still remained in the hands of ZANU-PF with the MDC-T controlling treasury, responsible for financing urban governance issues, with subtle tensions manifesting themselves in the two government departments blaming each other for incompetency.

The period of the GNU witnessed a critical phase in urban governance discourse in as far as the role of civil society in citizen participation and oversight are concerned. CSOs in Zimbabwe, over the years, have been accused of being partisan; in the period of the GNU, CSOs would somewhat display the extent of their deep-rooted relationship with opposition political formations. The period from 2000 to 2009 had witnessed an increase in advocacy for transparency and accountability in public processes and urban governance (Muchadenyika 2017). In addition, most of the interventions around such advocacy were initiated and sustained through Western donor funding (Muchadenyika 2017). These donor-funded actions saw the rise of residents' associations which would spear-head dialogue and engagement activities between citizens and solution holders at urban governance level, as a way of carving space for citizens to have their voices heard in the running of local affairs. During the GNU period, activities and advocacy around transparency, accountability and citizen participation seemed to stall leading scholars like Masunungure (2013) to conclude that CSOs in Zimbabwe were pursued a partisan agenda. The lack of advocacy and strong oversight by CSOs allowed corruption and collusion to seep in to local governance as the GNU period witnessed an increase in local government corruption and collusion which would cut short the period of stability brought in by the inclusive government.

### **3.7.5 Urban Governance post GNU Period, 2013 – 2015**

The period after GNU can best be understood in the context of the electoral outcome of the June 2013 elections where ZANU-PF dominated the elections and established a two thirds majority in parliament, an occurrence that had not happened since the 2000 elections. ZANU-PF won 159 of the 210 seats in parliament with former opposition strongholds, urban areas, being infiltrated by the ruling party. Only in Bulawayo did the ruling party not win a single seat in both council and constituency elections. The post GNU period re-ignited the contestation between the state and urban locales, rejuvenated CSO interest in transparency and accountability advocacy, witnessed

an increase in economic hardships, saw continued informalisation of the economy due to company closures and job losses, as well as continued confrontation between the state and opposition on the political front. The outcome was a clear indication of the level of polarisation in the country which would inadvertently have an effect on urban governance policy and practice (Muchadenyika 2017).

Tensions between the ruling party and opposition were redefined as the GNU had ended and contesting political parties went back to their original adversarial trenches (Masunungure 2013). The election period had seen serious contestation between ZANU-PF and MDC-T where elections and candidate selection were informed by partisanship and not quality of leadership. In 1995, in a bid to broaden and democratise elections, government extended voting rights to all residents from a certain locality, expanding suffrage to previously marginalised communities as previous rights were a preserve for ratepayers and property owners. This also meant that ordinary residents, outside their level(s) of education, wealth and property, could stand and contest for election. The partisan nature of elections, to some extent, compromised the quality of elected leaders as merit was not used as a basis to elect, in particular, leaders with the capacity to govern. For example, in Bulawayo, from the 29 elected MDC-T councilors, only four had completed tertiary education with the rest having ordinary and advanced level as their highest level of academic qualification (Dorman 2016). This would weaken the oversight function of urban councilors causing weak urban governance structures and institutions (Masunungure 2013). As such, the partisan nature of urban governance would compromise the quality of servant leadership at council level which would create fertile grounds for increased corruption, poor oversight and a decline in citizen consultation and participation in critical decision-making processes. In addition, the period witnessed an even further increase in corruption and collusion between council technocrats and elected councilors forging a new partnership that would be instrumental in reconfiguring urban governance in Zimbabwe.

Weak oversight mechanisms, partly due to the lack of capacity in councilors, hence created fertile ground for corruption and collusion. The most commonly reported form of corruption in Zimbabwean local authorities, in this period, was abuse of office for wealth-accumulation through rent-taking (Muchadenyika and Williams 2015). For the purpose of this study, rent seeking refers to use of official positions to accrue benefits without putting in any work or making any payment. Across the country, council bureaucrats and councilors used their positions to accumulate wealth. For instance, in September 2016, an investigation by the MLGRUD found that Bulawayo

councilors had corruptly amassed commercial and residential stands, leading to suspension of five MDC-T councilors, including the Deputy Mayor. According to the ministerial report, Bulawayo councilors had not only awarded themselves prime commercial and residential stands, but had also not paid for them and owed the Bulawayo City Council US\$650,000. One of the suspended councilors, Reuben Matengu had bought a stand at a discount and sold it for a profit on the open market. However, one could view the move by the ministry as political expediency as Bulawayo is MDC-T controlled. In Chitungwiza, the local authority was prejudiced of around US\$13 million dollars through irregular parceling of stands (*Herald*, 26 July 2017). According to an audit, between 2013 and 2017, Chitungwiza council parceled out stands worth US\$14,382,541 and only US\$1,686,194 was received. Meanwhile, the Minister of Local Government was quoted in Parliament arguing that up to \$54 million had been lost in Harare to what was termed “land barons” who participate in this kind of corruption (*Chronicle*, 6 May 2017). This handicapped the ability of urban governance institutions to mobilise resources essential for service delivery and poverty reduction.

The period after GNU coincided with economic decline, and this led to the increased use of land as a fundraising tool by local authorities and government in order to entrench state hegemony. The state would parcel out land to party loyalists in undesignated areas without any remittance to local authorities. This created tension between the state, urban authorities and citizens. On instances where undesignated land was parceled out to home seekers, local authorities would quickly move in to demolish such structures as, according to urban governance laws, these structures were illegal and did not follow council procedure creating tensions between the law, the state and local authorities. The allocation of land by the state, on a partisan and political basis, would see the state progressively exert itself more for political control of cities. In addition, the tensions between the state and urban locales would fuel the predatory nature of local governance authorities as there were increased moves to overburden citizens with taxes. Because the government, at local and national levels, was cash strapped, the next best source of revenue collection was citizens. As a result, local authorities in the urban centres would tighten the screws on ratepayers in order to finance service delivery.

### **3.8 Citizen Participation in Urban Local Governance Post-Independence**

Citizens are understood to be represented by government which is supposed to serve their interests. Citizens act as individuals or organise themselves into associations and groups, such as

community-based groups, women's groups, indigenous peoples' groups and so forth. Citizen participation in local government processes is expected to encompass citizens assessing their needs and participating in local development processes to ensure those needs are progressively addressed. Citizen participation in processes and practices of SA is in this sense important for improving public resource management and reducing corruption, in particular by making public servants and political leaders accountable to people (Symms 2013). SA largely depends then on vibrant citizen participation and a substantial degree of government responsiveness to the concerns of citizens. In this context, this section briefly and broadly considers SA in the case of local government in Zimbabwe, based on the preceding discussion.

### **3.8.1 Citizen Participation (Illusion) versus Citizen Disempowerment (Reality)**

Zimbabwe's history of citizen participation in democratic processes has been understood primarily in relation to the electoral process and elections, but this is a narrow definition of democratic accountability (Sachikonye 2011). Undoubtedly, the liberation war in the 1970s and earlier nationalist struggles were largely waged in order to bring about universal suffrage grounded on the one man one vote principle. However, the inheritance of the one man one vote principle seemed to inadvertently, and adversely, limit citizen participation to formal political processes like elections and referenda (Ranger 2007). The focus on the creation of spaces for citizen participation through elections at times created a façade of citizen participation and empowerment in processes of democratic development as citizens were overtly involved in the selection of political leadership at national level (Masunungure 2013). The same situation is reproduced in contemporary urban governance in Zimbabwe where citizens are regularly encouraged to engage in elections and plebiscites and thereby hold local government structures accountable to the urban citizenry. In reality, though, as the historical overview in this chapter shows, urban government in Zimbabwe post-1980 has not entailed a pronounced tendency to engage with urban Zimbabweans, in part because it has become deeply politicised.

In fact, the past, or at least a particular interpretation of the Zimbabwean past, including of the struggles against colonialism, has been brazenly and aggressively deployed as a political resource used by the state to include and exclude certain sections of society from participating in governance and other political processes. Seen in this light, the state as represented by ZANU-PF largely operationalises the liberation war and its historical roots as a legitimating discourse to inform and shape patterns of citizen participation in governance, sidelining social groups (many

of which are aligned now to the MDC) which contest the narrow liberation war history of the ruling party (Muwati, Mheta and Gambahaya 2010). In the ruling party's version of history, urban-based struggles and their significance for liberation are downplayed and treated as unworthy of being foregrounded in liberation history. The fact that the main opposition to the ruling party now emanates from urban centres only serves to further justify the disdain for urban citizens and their politics and this no doubt in some way feeds into the drive to retain a firm grip over urban local governments.

The powers possessed by the MLGRUD through the UCA, coupled with repressive laws like the POSA and AIPPA, have posed serious challenges to the effective participation of citizens in claiming their right to SA in urban areas. The ongoing centralisation of power and the state's partisan influence over issues of local governance means that development has taken a politically-alienating course rather than an inclusive participatory one (Kamete 2009). Local authorities, according to the UCA, do have though a mandate of self-governance. These decentralised powers are supposed to be exhibited through participatory budgetary processes where engagements with citizens are carried out and views collected from general citizens. However, this is under the mere guise of consultation. Additionally, after the consultative period and after budgets are formulated, very limited space is available for citizens to 'follow' their contributions to ensure their views are represented in the budget and that public expenditure is reflective of priorities made during consultation. There are few opportunities to ensure there is citizen oversight for transparency and accountability purposes, including within urban government.

The lack of meaningful citizen participatory platforms in urban governance in Zimbabwe can be attributed to the centralisation of processes and power in the relations between citizens and local authorities (Masunungure and Shumba 2012). The inability of urban authorities to deliberately create space for citizens to inform development priorities and processes, coupled with the absence of strong oversight mechanisms which ensure SA, disempowers citizens. At the same time, the overbearing character of the central state including through repressive legislation creates an affront to citizen participation in SA processes due to the over-emphasis on political interest at the expense of fundamental development issues. Since 2000 with the ascendancy of the MDC and the tension-riddled relationships and power struggles between the MDC and ruling party, urban government has been deeply politicised (Muchadenyika 2015). These struggles have seen the systematic alienation of citizens in governance processes as local metropolitan governance (and



urban governance more broadly) has become a ‘turf’ for proving political prowess and gaining political power and ground at the expense of democratic development (Musemwa 2010). Urban governance has literally been marked by struggles for turf and political ascendancy. Continued power struggles between the rival political parties has seen to some extent the trivialisation of citizens’ concerns, and this has emasculated the power and voice of citizens to hold leaders to account. This has simultaneously fueled high levels of corruption and impunity reflective of the state of governance at national level, while eroding bargaining space for SA in local urban spaces.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

The foregoing chapter has provided a historical and contemporary overview of urban governance in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe. This important foundation helps us understand the historical roots of urban local governance in Zimbabwe which is essential, in setting the context, for the following empirical chapters. The chapter highlighted how urban governance unfolded from colonialism to post-independence, with a clear emphasis of how events sowed the seeds for the centralisation of urban governance in 2000. It discussed various competing arguments around urban governance in Zimbabwe and provided a vivid discussion of how various historical periods contributed to a demise in urban governance, thus setting the tone for understanding contemporary initiatives around SA and citizen participation.

The colonial government delineated urban governance on racial grounds through oppressive racial legislation like the LAA and institutions like the NABs and TMBs. Post-independence policy and institutions sought to address injustices inherited from the colonial past by providing forms of redress for the victims of this historical injustice by way of a more inclusive and deracialised urban governance framework. However, the same legal framework that had been used to oppress blacks was now used to protect state hegemony, thus leading to an ongoing conflation of party and state under post-colonial conditions. The institutions and policies pursued by the post-colonial government became problematic for SA processes because the government saw the need to centralise power and control especially in times where there was a direct threat to its power. In this regard, the chapter also offered an in-depth look into key socio-political permeations and themes characterising urban governance. It showed how continuities with the past exist with regard to state responses to urban spaces, including selective exclusion of certain sections of the population from urban governance and the use of force and coercion in order to restore and maintain hegemony. Overall, there are continuities and discontinuities in terms of

institutional forms, policies and practices around urban governance between the pre and post-colonial governments in Zimbabwe. In the following chapter, these matters are pursued more specifically with reference to Bulawayo.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: URBAN GOVERNANCE IN BULAWAYO UNDER COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL REGIMES**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The chapter seeks to give a nuanced understanding of urban governance in Bulawayo by tracing the historical foundations of colonial urban governance institutions and sketching some of the continuities and discontinuities of urban rule from the colonial to the post-colonial periods. The chapter explores the fundamental pillars of urban governance and how they manifested themselves in the lived experiences of the general population of Bulawayo. It also considers SA and citizen participation by examining the interplay and interaction between the state (colonial and post-colonial), power, authority and how these facets patterned urban governance, citizen participation and SA. The first part of the chapter focus on the history of urban governance in Bulawayo under colonialism and the second part traces the development of urban governance post-independence. The chapter also explores some of the underlying social constructs, such as gender, ethnicity and class, and how these socially defined concepts influenced urban participation and governance. It is envisaged that the discussions will shed light on the importance of Bulawayo's historical experiences and the struggle for political power, real and perceived, and how these struggles determine the trajectory of urban governance to date. The next chapter will examine urban governance in Bulawayo, at a broad level, over the past few years in the context of developments in the decade of the 2000s.

### **4.2 Background to Bulawayo**

Bulawayo is located in the south-west of Zimbabwe. It is Zimbabwe's second largest city and has a population in 2012 of 676,650 citizens (ZIMSTAT 2012). Bulawayo is strategically located and consequently forms the axis of road and rail network links to the majority of countries in the Southern African region, providing vital trade links to countries like Botswana, Zambia and South Africa. For a greater period of Zimbabwe's development, the city was the manufacturing and industrial centre with the presence of heavy industries. But this has been adversely affected by de-industrialisation in recent years. The city is a multi-cultural city occupied by people of various ethnic and social groups such as the Ndebele, who are arguably the majority, along with Shona,

Tonga, Kalanga, Venda and Sotho. The present location of the city has been populated since pre-historic times with the San people cited as one of the first inhabitants of the area.

Bulawayo has been an administrative capital since the period of the late 1800s (Cobbing 1976). It was thus the capital of the Ndebele state when King Lobhengula, one of King Mzilikazi's sons, ascended to the throne. After the defeat of the Ndebele in 1893 by the BSAC forces, which resulted in the burning down of the town, modern Bulawayo as a city was re-founded in 1893, (where it is presently situated); it acquired municipal status in 1897 with city status being achieved in 1943.

Politically, the city has been a hub of political activity since the pre-independence period and beyond. Bulawayo has the reputation of being a political melting pot with the existence of political formations which were counter-hegemonic against the central state (both colonial and post-colonial) often finding a solid following and traction in the city. According to Ranger (2011), Bulawayo has therefore remained an opposition stronghold against the presidency of Robert Mugabe and the ruling ZANU-PF party. Such opposition also manifested itself amongst the white settlers in colonial Zimbabwe. During the colonial period, when white settlers from Bulawayo politically dominated the city, they opposed many national directives coming from Salisbury, the country's capital. At the same time, Africans in colonial Bulawayo constantly grumbled and rebelled against the city's white-run local government.

The racially-based socio-economic discrimination in pre-1980 Zimbabwe provided fertile ground for political activities which sought to undo prevailing injustices to improve the condition of the African worker and ultimately African residents of Bulawayo. This was for example expressed in the formation of labour movements such as the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU) in the 1920s. The deepening pressure from the ICU and other formations saw political unrest in the form of the African strike at the Rhodesian railways in 1945, giving further rise to Bulawayo as a hive of political activity. These movements were deemed as 'becoming a potential danger' to the white establishment, as raised by the Chief Native Commission (CNC) to the Prime Minister in December 1929 (Ranger 2007). With the end of Rhodesian colonialism in 1980, politics in Bulawayo was marked by the counter-hegemonic Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU) and its opposition to ZANU-PF. Though ZANU-PF won a resounding majority in parliament in the 1980 independence elections, all seats in Matabeleland went to ZAPU. The

massive support for ZAPU in Bulawayo was seen by ZANU-PF as a challenge to its national power and indeed as an act of defiance.

As such, the relationship between the central state and the city of Bulawayo became tension-riddled, contested and controversial along politically-charged ethnic lines. This was further exacerbated by the *Gukurahundi* massacres of the 1980s, in which the central state's military forces (notably, the Fifth Brigade) were sent into Matabeleland and the Midlands Provinces apparently to act against actions of violence perpetuated by dissidents. In reality, this involved pervasive attacks against ZAPU loyalists (and the local citizenry) who happened to be of Ndebele origin and dominated the Matabeleland region and Bulawayo in particular. As such, historically, state and city relations (and even before independence) between the central government and the city of Bulawayo have, to a large extent, been marked by animosity. This was to re-intensify subsequent to the year 2000 with the emergence and rise of the MDC and its political dominance in Bulawayo. In this context, Bulawayo has normally been labelled as a rebel city.

#### **4.3 Understanding Bulawayo's Political History through Local Governance**

As alluded to in the background, to trace and understand the political overtones unique to Bulawayo there is the need to retrace counter-hegemonic narratives to the colonial period and their link with contemporary urban governance and citizen participation in Bulawayo. The current political developments in Zimbabwe and Bulawayo in particular are strikingly reminiscent of the urban crisis experienced in the 1940s during the Rhodesian period (Ranger 2007). As Ranger (2007) further indicates, the relationship between the city and the state at the time was characterised by contestation around citizen participation, with Africans being supposedly represented by illegitimate institutions and intrusions of white urban governance. The entire period stretching until 1979 was characterised by racially segregationist local government institutions and policies.

Contestation, in the general sense, has been embedded in the history of Bulawayo since during the colonial period. Power and hegemony have provided a strong basis for confrontations between the city and the state, and in some cases within the city itself. During the colonial period, confrontation between the governors and the governed was at two levels. First, there was confrontation between white Bulawayo and white Rhodesia represented by the capital Salisbury. Secondly there was contestation between the Africans and white settlers within Bulawayo itself.

The colonial period saw the premise of local governance being racially informed by policies that sought to entrench the white settler's stronghold on the African population. As such, local governance, citizen participation and SA were based on the disaggregation of the population into three racialised groups, White, Coloured/Asian and Black. This stratification of the populace informed access to employment and service delivery (including housing) such that whites were invariably at the top of the human and social ladder, followed by Coloureds/Asians and then, at the bottom, Africans as subjects not citizens. This hierarchal arrangement provided fertile ground for contestation to brew.

#### **4.3.1 Bulawayo under the Ndebele, 1840 - 1892**

Bulawayo was established as the major capital of the Ndebele nation as early as 1840 when King Mzilikazi migrated north, from Zululand, with a small group of Ndebele kinsmen. This group would separate into two groups with one group taking a north-east and the other taking a north-west direction into modern-day Zimbabwe and Botswana respectively (Msindo 2007). When King Mzilikazi finally united with the other group, the general Matabele region was chosen as a suitable settlement with Bulawayo being established as the political and administrative capital of the Matabele Kingdom, whose reign and rule spanned over parts of Botswana, Mashonaland, Midlands and the Zambezi valley (Cobbing 1973).

According to Mahlangu (1957), Cobbing (1976) and Nyathi (1996), the Ndebele system was constructed around the person of the King, who had religious, political, judicial and administrative powers and duties among others. The wide-ranging powers of the King have in some cases attracted views pointing towards despotism and autocracy. However, there is need to understand other mechanisms and platforms available in the Ndebele governance system which invariantly informed the governance of pre-colonial Bulawayo (Bhebhe 1973). The governance of Bulawayo specifically needs to be understood in the context of the broader Ndebele power structure where at the top was *Inkosi* (King), followed by *Indunankulu Yesizwe* (Prime Minister), then *Umphakathi* (Inner Advisory Council/Upper Council), followed by *Izikhulu* (Outer Advisory Council/Council of Prominent Men), then *Izinduna Zezigaba* (Provincial Chiefs) who were followed by *Abalisa* (Headmen), with *Abamnumzana* (Homestead Heads) and lastly *Uquqaba/Amahlabezulu* (ordinary men and women) as well (Cobbing 1976; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009). As such, Bulawayo as the capital of the Ndebele nation had the same stratification and representation of power when it came to local governance. The communal system of ownership of

the means of production, like land and cattle, laid with the king; and the *indunas* were proprietors of such resources within the capital.

As the capital, Bulawayo was not only the economic capital (being the centre of trade and tribute for the Ndebele), but it was the social, political and military capital of the Ndebele Kingdom (Cobbing 1973; Keppel-Jones 1983). This made the city very strategic in terms of its influence and control of the Kingdom and its subjects and tributaries, with governance of the Kingdom informed by decisions made in Bulawayo. This ensured that power, in all forms, resided in Bulawayo (Beach 1970). However, while power was centred in Bulawayo, devolution processes did exist with regard to systems of governance, with some bottom-up and inclusive decision-making mechanisms apparent (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2005). Power was devolved to community and village levels and this meant that local voices were integrated into nation/state processes. This inclusiveness ensured a unified state as Ndebele citizens felt valued in the political and social set-up. Hence, the king was the head of state, head of government, religious chief, commander-in-chief of the armed forces and supreme judge but, in practice, the king was essentially a ceremonial (rather than executive) figure and a source of unity in the state (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2005, 2009).

Generally, the Ndebele Kingdom was stratified socially, including the *Abezansi* (those of Nguni origin who left Zululand with Mzilikazi), *Abenhla* (those assimilated through conquest or voluntarily joined the Ndebele as they trekked north) and *Amahole* (these were indigenous tribes native to Zimbabwe) (Ranger 1967, 1966, 1999). Despite differences in social class and status, Bulawayo belonged to all that lived in it and called it home as long as they submitted to the King (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2005, 2009). This helped to establish a unity of purpose through belonging and enhanced social ties between the King and his subjects with Ndebele, the language, being a unifying factor. For instance, Alexander et al. (2005) rightly point out that Bulawayo, and the Ndebele Kingdom in general, was built on multiple origins that were ordered in a hierarchy of belonging.

As the capital, Bulawayo was the place for national festivities that included for example the regimental displays at the annual Great Dance, *Inxwala* festival and *ukuchinsa* ceremonies (Clarke and Nyathi 2005). This meant Bulawayo was also a cultural hub and this informed the character of governance where culture and tradition informed citizen participation, and who could or could not participate in decision-making processes. Due to patriarchy, decision-making in governance tended to be a preserve for men; however, this did not mean women and youth were

sidelined from decision-making processes as they had avenues and platforms to influence decisions on governance (Cobbing 1976; Clarke and Nyathi 2005) as the King was accountable to his people.

Under the rule of Ndebele Kings, Bulawayo was a symbol of power, unity and trade. The wealth of the Ndebele Kingdom and its vast cattle reserves were kept in Bulawayo (Cobbing (1976). Through the *ukusisa* (lending of cattle to less privileged) and *isiphala seNkosi* (the King's silos), the state ensured no one went hungry in times of need as local governance policies ensured that those without cattle or food received these through government aid (during drought and famine, families were fed from the King's silos) (Clarke and Nyathi 2005). This intricate system of government established Bulawayo as the central supply point of community and citizen needs making it central to the existence of the Ndebele Kingdom. The central state, through local government so to speak, ensured that the needs of citizens were met. This entailed the progressive realisation of citizens' rights to access land, food and natural resources as the state was responsible for the well-being of its people (Clarke and Nyathi 2005), making local governance in Bulawayo accessible and beneficial to all that called Bulawayo home.

The coming of white explorers, traders, game hunters and concession seekers sheds light on how the governance of Bulawayo was for the benefit of the Kingdom. The manner in which governance policies were set up in Bulawayo and the Ndebele nation were in contrast to the 'privatisation' and 'commercialism' informing Eurocentric governance processes. The fact that the Ndebele King was the leader did not mean he owned or controlled resources; in fact, he was the custodian of such and not sole proprietor (Nyathi 1996). The governance policies of Bulawayo and Matabeleland in general, whose premise was collective land tenure, collective property rights and collective responsibility, created challenges for Eurocentric values rooted in individual property rights (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2005). Matabeleland was endowed with natural resources, and the hunger for individual wealth on the part of white settlers would become a major driving force for land expropriation and the conquest of Matabeleland and Bulawayo, the capital, in 1893.

In this regard, Bulawayo was initially viewed and treated as an independent country-nation even after the occupation of Mashonaland in 1890. Until conquest in 1893, Bulawayo was outside the rule of the British South African Company (BSAC) and this created room for contestation, in policy and practice, between the settler government (represented by Salisbury) and Matabeleland represented by Bulawayo (Keppel-Jones 1960).



#### **4.3.2 Bulawayo under Company Rule, 1893 - 1922**

There are many reasons which led to the conquest of Bulawayo and Matabeleland. However, the subject matter that is of interest to this study is not the reasons for conquest but how Bulawayo was governed under the rule of the BSAC. This rule ended in 1923 when Southern Rhodesia opted for responsible government. The year 1893 marked the defeat of the Ndebele, the abdication of King Lobhengula, the destruction of Ndebele hegemony and the ascendancy of company rule. The conquest of Matabeleland saw the extension of settler power from Salisbury to Matabeleland and its capital Bulawayo. Ndebele rule, which focused on collective responsibility and communalism, was replaced by an alien system of individualism, profiteering and capitalism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2005). Tensions created by this form of local governance would fuel discontentment that would incite confrontation and contestation in what became known as the War of the Red Axe in 1896.

The defeat of the Ndebele in the Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893 paved the way for company rule. Despite many attempts to avoid war with the BSAC, the Ndebele found themselves having no choice but to resort to militarism when company men attacked Matabele warriors sent on a quest to collect tribute from their Shona subjects in Fort Victoria, now Masvingo (Keppel-Jones 1960). This act of aggression was seen as a betrayal of Matabele trust and confidence in cordial relations that existed between the company and the King (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009). Column men were subsequently sent to march on Matabeleland which resulted in war that led to Matabele defeat and consequently the abdication of King Lobhengula and the burning of the capital Bulawayo (Clarke and Nyathi 2005). Sequentially the seizure of Bulawayo meant the vast resource endowments in the city were distributed among the victors and these included cattle, prime-land, gold claims and other resources (Beach 1986). Coupled with that, the second defeat of the Ndebele in the *Imfazo* in 1896 would see the white minority government tighten the screws on governance in order to crush the possibility of any future attacks by the Ndebele (Beach 1986). What conquest meant however for the Ndebele was, above all, the end of a local people-centred system of governance and the beginning of a racialised system that displaced, alienated, exploited and segregated Africans (Musemwa 2008). In this regard, Ndebele sovereignty had been broken up and replaced by a 'new, better system' as defined by the Matabeleland Order-in-Council of 1894 (Cobbing 1976).

One of the first steps taken by the BSAC was to deal with the core of Ndebele hegemony which was represented by Bulawayo and its system of governance. Central to the Ndebele polity

was state harmony premised on a stratified system of unity and belonging (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009). Once that was destroyed, through the divide and conquer rule, there would be no Matabeleland, Bulawayo or Ndebele state of which to speak. With the absence of a king, or an equivalent, the company government made sure all hopes for the restoration of a monarchy were not available. Disempowering the Ndebele occurred by for example stripping them of their valued cattle. For this purpose, the Company set up what was called a looting committee responsible for coordinating the looting of Matabele cattle (which were in excess of thousands) (Ranger 1979). By economically dis-enfranchising the Matabele, through stripping them of their cattle wealth (the city's main economic asset), the population of Bulawayo would become dependent on the white settlers and their means of production for income by way of the exchange of labour (Van Onselen 1976). The demise of the traditional Ndebele cattle economy and the rise of industrial labour contributed to the formation of an African proletariat. The nuclear family, which was the basis of unity and coalescence in Ndebele society, was replaced by individualism which consequently fragmented the institution of family (Mamdani 2001).

While dealing with the Ndebele economy ensured the progressive demise of the Ndebele state, destabilising the governance and political systems would lead to a divided state (Mamdani 2001). The abdication of King Lobhengula from the throne created a power vacuum which the BSAC made sure was left vacant. By occupying Bulawayo, company rule was inadvertently asserted given that Bulawayo was the stronghold of the Ndebele state. For instance, once company rule was established, all powerful royal families and paramount chiefs were removed from Bulawayo and relocated to the dry and arid Gwayi and Tshangane reserves (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009). The internal displacement of the Ndebele meant paramount Chiefs were dispersed across Matabeleland and could not act as unifying factor. Despite colonisation, the Ndebele still viewed Bulawayo as their city, and the settler government was aware of this (Ranger 2011).

The Matabeleland Order-in-Council was one of the first forms of legislation that classified and propagated White minority rule along racial lines, with the victorious BSAC as rulers and the conquered Ndebele as subjects. Consequently, citizen participation in Bulawayo was set aside for whites only and Africans were ruled as (non-citizen) subjects. The former chief-civilian relationship became a principal-agent relationship along the lines of colonial-style representative democracy. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009), the once powerful chiefs and their houses were turned into colonial civil servants to not only neutralise their power but to make sure they served

the interests of company rule. While the colonial government demanded loyalty from Matabele chiefs, the introduction of white-run Native Departments and Native Commissioners in 1894 was designed to transform pre-colonial governance in Bulawayo into a 'superior' form of governance informed and based on Eurocentric values and beliefs (Mamdani 2006; Keppel-Jones 1983). A new political dispensation was established in Bulawayo where power and governance processes were dictated by a white minority. In fact, rule by coercion under white colonial domination would become a key factor in the governance of Bulawayo.

#### **4.3.3 The Period of Self-Governance, 1923 - 1942**

While the white settlers defeated and colonised Bulawayo, they had the difficult task of not only governing it as a city but understanding the imperatives of running an entire colony in Africa where no formal, in a Eurocentric sense, governance structures had existed before. According to Mamdani (2001) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009), though conquest was relatively simple, governing a colony was difficult as it involved a minority group, settlers, and the majority, Africans, engaging in a contest for power that was never convincingly/completely won by the colonial regime, at least in an unchallenged manner. This relation, characterised by ongoing confrontation and contestation, was to inform local governance in Bulawayo during the historical period between 1923 and 1942, just a year before Bulawayo was granted city status.

Rhodesia was granted responsible government by the British crown, through a referendum, in 1923. The transition from company rule to self-determination came at a time when there was increased discontentment with the inability of the BSAC to run the colony to meet the standards set by settlers. Responsible government included fiscal autonomy and effective control of Native affairs, the setting up of local government authorities and a parliament that was independent and autonomous. This entailed the entrenchment and establishment of racialised white minority rule that was in turn institutionalised through the passing of repressive and oppressive legislation. For instance, the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 sought to divide the country's land along racial lines. As such, through the Act, places previously occupied by Natives, like Bulawayo, were turned into urban white areas. Within urban areas, land was allocated to Africans and whites for separate residential purposes, leading to African locations. Like other urban centres, Bulawayo was deemed illegal for Africans to reside in, unless it was for the purpose of providing labour to settlers. The segregation of land according to colour would inform the manner and form of local governance.

Overall, responsible government enabled settlers to rule by coercion without consultation and accountability

The racialised system of governance in Bulawayo during this period would be a significant contributor to a number of historical events. Because Africans in Bulawayo were not regarded as citizens, it meant they did not have rights to vote, be consulted in local government processes or have any civil and political liberties at all (Musemwa 2008). As a response, the 1920s saw the beginning of an African consciousness and resistance as African subjects called for unity against discriminatory policies, and expressed discontentment with the inability of colonial local governance in Bulawayo to meet the expected needs of a growing African urban population (Ranger 2011). This included the formation of the Bantu Voters' Association, in 1923, which found support and traction in Bulawayo in part because of the racialised service delivery by the local authority. The association sought, amongst other things, to break down 'tribal' barriers to create a sense of nationality amongst Africans largely because of the segregationist, along ethnic lines, policies pursued by local authorities at the time, as the colonial office tended to treat Blacks from different tribes in a dissimilar manner so as to divide the Natives, quashing any chance for African insurrection (Ranger 2007).

#### **4.3.4 Final Periods of Minority Rule in Bulawayo, 1943 - 1979**

Urban local governance in Rhodesia was premised on racial lines where whites were engaged as citizens and Africans as almost squatters (or at best, temporary sojourners) on white-designated urban land, as Bulawayo effectively fell within a white Rhodesian space (Wekwete 1994; Ranger 2007; Muchadenyika 2014; Chirisa and Jonga 2013). These racial attitudes and practices shaped and informed the engagement/participation (or lack thereof) of Africans in local urban governance. Other salient issues relating to urban governance in Bulawayo during the ongoing colonial period included racial inequalities in terms of access to water (Musemwa 2008) and housing (Ranger 2007), as well as public infrastructure and service delivery more broadly (Nkomo 1984). With Bulawayo being granted city status, from town status granted in 1897, in 1943 and representative democracy (such as the election of councilors) finding more traction and grounding in a racially-exclusionary manner, the alienation of the African majority from local political processes led to further contestation focusing on the hegemonic rule by whites. The city council was responsible for the social ordering and stratification of Natives residing in Bulawayo. This was done through the establishment of NABs that were responsible for the well-being of natives in the city. The role

of the NAB was to monitor and address the affairs of blacks in the location. Conversely, while the granting of city status to Bulawayo meant more potential for economic growth, this also meant the further entrenchment of white racial hegemony. Coupled with that, while whites could democratically elect representatives into the local council, blacks had no representative bodies, outside the NABs, where their grievances could be heard and addressed. Given the absence of any form of a recognised elected body representing African interests in Bulawayo, a need for such a body would soon arise. This counter-hegemony, premised on the alienation of Africans (or blacks) from political participation, would continue to pose a serious threat to white dominance as local African dissenting voices grew louder in the quest for recognition and ultimately national suffrage (Ranger 2011). Thus, local African leaders like Masotsha Ndlovu and Benjamin Burombo spearheaded campaigns targeted at white local government institutions to improve the dire plight of Natives residing in Bulawayo (Musemwa 2006; Ranger 2007, 2011).

The racial imbalances with regard to African residence on white-designated land, access to water, sanitation and water (and so forth) and racialised city by-laws would come increasingly to the fore as dissenting voices became a clarion call for change (Ranger 2011). While Bulawayo witnessed an economic boom, from 1923 to 1953, due to a sophisticated industrial economy and a strong railway network, the economic returns experienced by the city were the preserve for whites (Kamete 2009). Africans were attracted by prospects of a better life in Rhodesian cities and towns which was coupled with the demise of their agrarian economy (in the Native Reserves), with overcrowding, infertile soils and problematic state interventions in the Reserves (including destocking) being the order of the day (Clarke with Nyathi 2010). The influx of Africans (traditionally, male) from Reserves was reinforced by the need for cheap black labour in white mines and factories.

Migration from the Reserves to urban spaces saw the birth of a new crisis in the form of African accommodation in urban white Bulawayo (Van Onselen 1976). The crisis of accommodation was intertwined with a crisis in service delivery in the Native locations (or townships), though the locations were introduced as a form of labour and residential control over the urban African population (Muchemwa 2012). Essentially, these locations were urban dormitory areas which were built solely to house the African labourer offering (his, sometimes her) services to the white economy. Squalid and depressing living conditions characterised the locations in Bulawayo, particularly the Makokoba location (Ranger 2007).

Ranger (2007) further indicates that cultural undertones added further complications to modes of habitation in the Bulawayo locations. For instance, Ndebele culture prohibited the interaction, social and otherwise, between in-laws, father and daughter-in-laws. The accommodation crisis in Bulawayo locations meant that, for family accommodation, each family only occupied and shared one and at times two rooms. Besides the matter of simple overcrowding, this arrangement made African families uneasy because of cultural prohibitions, leading to tension and strife among them. The so-called dignity and pride of the Ndebele (Clarke with Nyathi 2010) was eroded by living conditions provided by the colonial government. At the same time, Ranger (2007, 2011) and Musemwa (2006, 2008) note that the Rhodesian central government had no direct authority over urban Africans and thus it had no responsibility for their housing. The non-committal attitude from national government left the onus squarely on the municipality of Bulawayo. As well, the city council of Bulawayo did not have full obligation to provide housing as local companies in most cases provided mostly single sex compounds for their own labour force (Van Onselen 1980). This meant that the local authority was mandated only to provide living quarters for the rest of the African population, through locations. The deep concern about African housing was further enhanced by the fact that local African urban dwellers, in Makokoba location for example, were paying tax towards the provision of services. While tax was remitted to the local authority, there was little or no representation of Africans at local let alone national government level, thereby alienating the 'subjects' (to use Mamdani's notion) from the nation and state.

The central state, represented by the local white government structure, sought to serve the interests of white urban citizens at the expense of service delivery in the locations, which ultimately manifested itself in the form of a housing and service delivery crisis. Thus, what happened in the Bulawayo locations had a feedback effect on the Rhodesian government. For instance, at the end of the 1920s, the Rhodesian Premier for the first time found himself facing a small emergent 'Africanist' proto-nationalist movement, with many of these embryonic Africanists living in Bulawayo and protesting inordinately about conditions there (Ranger 2007). This was largely because of the state of neglect in living conditions and lack of respect for Africans in local government processes. Throughout 1929, ICU focused its attention on white Bulawayo in general and the council in particular, rather than on white companies. Masotsha Ndlovu, the organising secretary of the ICU, who lived in the Bulawayo location, castigated white councilors as well as national parliamentarians for disregarding the well-being of Africans residing in locations,

although they remitted money to council (Ranger 2007). Ndlovu's sentiments were directed at the racial nature of service delivery and council by-laws, characterised by arbitrary raids and detention by the police (Ranger 2011).

The issue of water, which was deeply racialised in its provision and supply, would become a particular cause for concern which would shape relations between the state, the city and its subjects. For Musemwa (2008), the close relationship between urban water infrastructure and the development of urban governance appears to be a key determining factor in the emergence and development of a modern metropole. As such, white Bulawayo – through local government institutions – sought to exploit the power inherent in water to entrench their hegemony in the city by ensuring that water access was racially uneven. As a key urban resource, water was racialised, segregated and consequently contested, not only by the city and the state but within the city as well (Musemwa 2008). For example, the Bulawayo City Council (BCC) was in contestation with the Bulawayo Waterworks Company (BWC), a private company which purchased rights from the BSAC to provide water to the growing city in 1895.

While other cities and towns around the colony began their existence in full control of utilities, Bulawayo was the only town which had to fight the central state to own, control and regulate two essential utilities – water and electricity. Other towns and cities were allotted state financial assistance to tap and generate water and electricity (Musemwa 2008). Supported by Bulawayo's white ratepayers, the local authority was fruitful in taking over the city's water supply in 1924. This represented contestation between the city and the state but, within the city, there was conflict between whites (along with the BCC) and Africans on the issue of access to water. Whites had the advantage of accessing tapped water from the comfort of their homes; in the locations, Natives were accessing water from communal taps which posed a health threat, thus creating a crisis of public health amid a crisis of accommodation (Van Onselen 1976). Musemwa (2008) utilises Mamdani's distinction between 'citizen' and 'subject' to highlight that 'white' residents of Bulawayo were the 'citizens' for whose benefit most of the colonial municipality's water policies and services were designed. The African residents of the townships (the 'subjects') were left to their own devices and to make do with what little water they had. This was part of, and consistent with, the overall colonial design and discourse in which Africans in urban centres like Bulawayo were labelled as temporary residents in the city and could stay for an extended period only if it was unequivocally necessary (Musemwa 2006).

Racial segregation with regard to citizen participation, representation and service delivery created an enabling environment for African trade unions and civic leaders, which in turn morphed into political bodies to become problematic for the Rhodesian government and local government authorities. The political movements necessitated by racial segregation in urban governance would become a key factor in structuring and informing the ideals of the liberation movement that led to independence in 1980 (Martin and Johnson 1981; Nkomo 1984; Musemwa 2008; Ranger 2007, 2011). As such, Bulawayo became a hub of political activism (Ranger 2007). Bulawayo as a city was thus a significant site of opposition to central government during colonial times, but this also became the case in the post-independence period. This seems to entail some sort of path-dependency when it comes to the development of Bulawayo over an extended period.

#### **4.4 Ethnicity in Racially-Segregated Bulawayo**

While a general analysis and understanding of Bulawayo's historical experiences during the colonial period shows how these experiences have been shaped and informed by the discourse and practice of racialism, it is necessary to go beyond race to consider ethnicity and its impact on urban government and citizen participation. Ethnicity as constructed by the colonial state, alongside race, indeed continues to shape and influence the economic, social and political life of contemporary Zimbabwe (Msindo 2005) and, certainly in the case of the history of Bulawayo, has been a central challenge when it comes to local government and processes of government accountability. Ongoing ethnic polarisation is representative of a larger failure by the post-colonial government in relation to state-craft and nation-building (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya 2013).

The origins of ethnic tensions and divisions that symbolise Zimbabwe's polity cannot be understood outside the context of the politics of the colonial state as well as African nationalist politics in fermenting and deepening divisions within the African population. Pre-colonial social African formations, especially the history of interaction among the various groups scattered across the Zimbabwean plateau, were utilised to provide the ideological basis for the formation of a colony whose major emphasis was social segregation and further stratification of Africans using ethnic divides (Phimister and Van Onselen 1979). To better understand how and why ethnicity was politicised and perpetuated during this period, there is a need to interrogate the intersections of racial segregation and ethnic animosity among Africans.

Colonialism did not invent ethnic groups or divisions in Zimbabwe, though it certainly did reconstruct these groups. The land area currently known as Zimbabwe, in pre-colonial times, was



marked by a shifting array of multiple ethnicities including by the time of British colonialism both Ndebele and Shona-speaking groups. What became known as the Shona ethnic identity under the influence of colonialism included several sub-ethnic/linguistic groups: the Karanga inhabiting the southern parts of the plateau; the Zezuru and Korekore in the northern and central parts of the plateau, now constituting the administrative provinces of Mashonaland West, Mashonaland East and Mashonaland Central; and the Manyika and Ndaou in the east, the area now known as Manicaland (Beach 1994; Ranger 1989). The socio-political and economic relations among the various groups inhabiting the plateau were always fluid. Their complex and changing relations were characterised by both conflict and cooperation, and both incorporation and fragmentation – as facilitated through marriages, political alliances and constant population movement. Their sense of identity was also more of a social identity rather than a political one (Beach 1984; Ranger 1989).

However, Rhodesian colonialism, like colonialism in many other parts of Africa, set in motion the politicisation of African ethnic identities by constructing and reconstructing people's identities and by classifying them in ethnic, cultural and geographic terms. The colonial establishment in Rhodesia thus made attempts at polarising and reinforcing ethnic divisions among Africans, deliberately averting them from establishing nationally-integrated identities (Phimister and Van Onselen 1979; Ranger 1985; Msindo 2005; Ranger 2006). This was achieved through the systematic differentiation of Africans and ensuring that certain groups were favoured and elevated over others and, in doing so, creating divisions and tensions along ethnic lines (Ranger 1985; Chimhundu 1992; Ranger 2006).

The Rhodesian colonial state crafted laws and institutions which defined and classified the general population into racial groups; European, Asian, Coloured and Native (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya 2013; Ranger 1985; Msindo 2005; Phimister and Pilosof 2017). Africans though were further classified into different sub-sections, according to colonial ideas of origin and geographical location (Msindo 2005). The world of the Natives was made up of a variety of natives: 'aboriginal natives' and 'colonial natives', the 'Mashona natives' and the 'Matabele natives' (Musemwa 2006). As such, ethnicity defined social, economic and political relations between members of these different categories and determined at times access to resources and positions in society.

Coupled with ethnic categorisation, the colonial government of Rhodesia divided the country into ethnicised administrative units: Mashonaland for Zezuru-speakers; Matabeleland for

Ndebele-speaking groups; Fort Victoria (Masvingo) for Karanga-speaking groups; and Manicaland for Manyikas (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya 2013). However, in this broad quest for racial and ethnic lumping, a number of minority groups such as the Tsonga were clustered into the state's established ethnicised administrative units and their specific cultural identities obscured and ignored. In the urban areas the colonial government politicised African ethnic identities by according differential rights and privileges.

This grand ethnic scheme led to the ethnicisation of the labour force, including in the industrial hub of Bulawayo. The colonial state reserved specific jobs for certain subject groups, and settler typecasts produced a hierarchy of wage disparities based on ethnic or racial classifications. On the mines, for example, Shangaans were stereotyped as 'the best workers above and below ground', Zulus as the 'best drillers', Ndebeles as the 'best foremen' and Manyikas and 'northern boys' (Malawian and Zambian immigrants) as the 'best house servants' (Yoshikuni 1989:68; Van Onselen 1976:81, 93; Ranger 1985). Given this, Mombeshora (1990) is correct in asserting that "the seeds of the ethnic factor were derived from the pre-colonial past, [but] the colonial era provided fertile soil in which the ideology of tribalism germinated, blossomed and was further propagated" (Mombeshora 1990:431).

Clearly, at the national level, these ethnic constructs were primarily for political reasons as the Rhodesian state pursued and applied a classic divide and rule tactic. At the same time, the interplay between colonial politics and ethnic tensions had far-reaching effects on relationships between Africans which in turn affected, detrimentally, African unity of purpose against colonial rule and promoted ethnic particularism. As a result, ethnicity promoted selfish pursuits by such different African groups. In the case of Bulawayo, ethnicity affected the sense of belonging on the part of non-Ndebele Africans who were constantly reminded of their foreign origins. As such, relations between Matabeles and non-Matabeles were tenuous as the former felt that the latter were invading their urban space (Ranger 2006). These ethnic tensions had numerous dimensions but particularly important is the fact that the non-Matabeles experienced alienation in Bulawayo and this meant that they did not push or clamour for space in urban politics, which served to entrench colonial hegemony. The lack of a sense of permanent urban belonging by in particular non-Bulawayo Natives inadvertently limited the bargaining power of a united African force to influence local governance and accountability processes in Bulawayo. Interestingly, there was no

homogeneity even among the Ndebele themselves, as there were fractures between those who advocated for the use of Zulu and those who preferred IsiNdebele (Msindo 2005).

A case in point which speaks to the deep-rooted ethnic tensions in Bulawayo relates to the disturbances in 1929 and 1960 where running battles between Matabele and Shona groups almost destabilised Rhodesia's political economy (Ranger 2006). These are the 'faction fights' of 1929 and the *Zhii* riots of 1960. Although there are contesting arguments (Phimister and Van Onselen 1979; Msindo 2005; Ranger 2006; Phimister and Pilosof 2017) as to the cause of the disturbances, there are clear indications that the enemy was Shona, not any new poor immigrant and, to the Ndebele fighters, Shona was a tribe. In their collectivity, whatever the case might be, they fought 'Mushona'. Second, the evidence suggests that the fight did not necessarily target newly arrived Shona alone, but any Shona, old or new (Msindo 2005). The aftermath of 1929 in Bulawayo saw the increase in ethnic politics which, together with other alternative urban identities, shaped Bulawayo's social and political economy. Alternative urban identities were influenced by employment and access to better income, with some non-native Ndebele speakers having to assume Ndebele totems and surnames in order to fit into the social and economic structures at the behest of Ndebele Natives (Dorman 2013). These episodes of overt ethnic tension greatly complicated the prospects for a unitary urban African nationalism in Bulawayo, such that African-combined participation in local government protests and unified labour action was greatly curtailed. A good example of the deep-seated character of ethnicity in Bulawayo is embodied in Charlton Ngcebetshe, a long-term supporter of the Matabeleland Home Movement, who demanded that every new township be given a Ndebele name based on the view that Bulawayo was naturally and historically the home of the Ndebele; thus, its urban culture should be Ndebele, just as Shona interests naturally prevailed in Salisbury (Ranger 2006).

In Bulawayo in particular, ethnic contestation was not confined to the largely Shona and Ndebele speaking groups. The fact that Bulawayo was the hub of industrialisation in colonial Zimbabwe, whose labour force constituted of Natives from neighbouring colonies, meant that contested issues of nationhood and belonging were ongoing. The heterogeneous nature of Native or African relations based on ethnicity and belonging, and the notion that Bulawayo was for Ndebele-speakers, tended to alienate 'foreign' Natives from identifying with local issues as there were deliberate steps by locals to separate their experiences from those of alien Natives (West 2001). Because of this, the voice of Africans in Bulawayo was not only fragmented on ethnic/tribal

lines but was further fissured along territorial lines. Hence, there was reference to Nyasa boys (those from colonial Malawi), Zambesi boys (from colonial Zambia) and Zansi boys (from colonial South Africa) as distinguishing terms to separate locals from foreign Natives (Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondodya 2013; West 2001).

For the colonial powers, ethnic rivalries were not a pressing matter as long as they were confined to Native locations or townships and did not jeopardise economic production. Even when the ethnic disturbances were on a scale large enough to threaten a substantial number of lives and property, sustained state interest and action was always conspicuously lacking. For example, during the ethnic troubles in Bulawayo, the colonial government's intervention was selectively applied only when the violence which engulfed the Bulawayo location (and railway compounds) promised to be uncontrollable, at the very least to seriously inconvenience the town's white residents and disrupt the pattern of labour mobilisation and control throughout Matabeleland. It seems though that the form of rule (entailing ethnic rule) shaped the form of protest against it.

#### **4.5 Class, the African Elite and Racialised Local Government in Bulawayo**

The period after the Second World War saw the proliferation of a black middle-class marked by better education, income and employment opportunities (West 1992; Ranger 2006; West 2007). The industrial boom of the 1940s came with renewed hopes for better wages and accommodation for Africans in Bulawayo. Better incomes meant a rise in the standard of living for Africans, especially in Bulawayo where the city boasted of high industrialisation due to the demand for locally-produced (Rhodesian) goods and the colonial government's strategy to embark on an Import Substitution Industrialisation drive. This period of economic buoyancy though came with a number of contradictions. While industrialisation brought about economic growth, it also led to the emergence of a more sophisticated African elite class which was soon to become crucial to the development of African nationalism. At the same time, given the already-existing ethnic divisions in Bulawayo's African population, the emergence of a petty bourgeoisie class would further fragment African life along class lines as well (Ranger 2006; West 2001; Phimister and Pilosof 2017). As such, class struggles impacted and shaped intra-African relations and attitudes towards civic participation in Bulawayo's local government processes.

The emergence of an African middle class in the 1940s came with a number of changes to the socio-political and economic spaces of Bulawayo, characterised by the influx of labourers from outside Bulawayo in search of better opportunities and a relative dearth of Ndebele particularism

due to the cross-pollination of foreign cultures and practices. Coupled with an increase in the colonial government's expenditure on African education, there was a gradual opening up of employment opportunities for elite Africans in Bulawayo. This all had a knock-on effect in terms of significant civic activism buoyed by the formation of labour and political bodies which sought to demand and carve a permanent bargaining space for Africans (Phimister and Raftopoulos 2000). But the emergence of the African elite would contort the configuration of the social, economic and political strata in Bulawayo, segregating African activism and organisation on class lines (West 2001; Ranger 2006; Mamdani 1996).

From the colonial government's perspective on urban governance, Africans in general remained as subjects regardless of their level of education, religion or class (Ranger 2006). The general classification and lumping of Africans into one subordinate group meant however that there was agitation among the educated and better-off Africans whose call was for separate/special treatment (Msindo 2005) based on liberal principles of assimilation. Part of the argument raised by the elite was premised on Cecil Rhodes' ideology of 'equal rights for all civilized men' which asserted that as long as a person (or in effect a male) was civilised, regardless of colour, he had a claim to the rights of citizenship (West 1992). Hence, based on their relatively higher levels of education and income, Bulawayo's African elites saw the need for the social and economic differentiation of Africans citing education, income and class as indices for differentiation (Phimister and Raftopoulos 2000). Due to, or despite, the segregationist approach adopted by the colonial government, local African elites in Bulawayo wanted to be segregated into their own space separate from the 'uncivilised folk' (West 1992; Msindo 2005; Ranger 2006). There was by no means a total separation of poor space and rich space in Bulawayo's townships and the prevalence of this called for the segregation of African living space between the civilised and uncivilised folk (West 2001).

The separation agenda pushed by the African elite in Bulawayo was a clear indication of a refusal by the middle class to be lumped with the black masses. In this context, for example, there was a drive by elite groups to advocate for the exemption of educated Africans from the existing liquor ban. Again, basing their claim on the notion that there should be 'equal rights for all civilized men', elite Africans contended that they had achieved a cultural level equivalent to that of the dominant European settlers and should therefore be exempt from the liquor ban (West 1997). Under the quest for equal treatment with whites by the African elite, this period of advocacy in the

1950s would prove critical as it helped the elite to hone their political skills. But the response from the colonial state also showed the African elite that white Rhodesia would not accept such a process of assimilation such that a number of the elites later became important African nationalist leaders (Ranger 2006).

These elites engaged with the colonial authorities notably through petitions, deputations, resolutions and letters to newspaper editors, which typified the modes of struggle often employed by Africans in redressing grievances in the past (Phimister and Pilosof 2007), though there were episodes of mass action previously in the form of, for instance, worker action. The modes of engagement used by the African elite though were a clear indication of the distinction between the educated middle-class and the working-class Africans who were now more inclined to mass action. Potentially, at least, the elites' forms of engagement began to alienate them from other Bulawayo Africans, inhibiting the formation of a collective in confronting the injustices of colonial rule (Msindo 2005). The political consciousness of elite Africans, especially their desire to disconnect themselves socially and culturally from African commonalities, entailed making common cause with Europeans by forging a class alliance based on a 'culture', as opposed to organising on a racial basis (Msindo 2005).

#### **4.6 Gender, Citizen Participation and Local Government in Colonial Bulawayo**

The analysis of colonial Zimbabwe contains relatively few studies which make the issue of gender and patriarchy in local government a central focus. As such, the social and political position of women in the colonial period remains underexplored with existing analysis not fully interrogating the role of women and their participation in local governance processes in Bulawayo. However, the social and historical experiences of women in Bulawayo have been subjected to numerous changes largely due to the broader socio-political dynamics shaping gender-based relationships in Zimbabwe's polity.

An examination of existing literature points to the instrumentalisation of women during, and even before, colonialism (Schmidt 1991; West 1997; Barnes 2001; Mujere 2014; Kanengoni 2017). During the pre-colonial period, patriarchal control over women's sexuality and reproduction was embodied in marriage and bride-wealth arrangements and this was further entrenched during the colonial period where the commodification of women took centre-stage as a result of the cash economy introduced by colonial settlers (West 1997). Schmidt (1991) posits that women could often possess 'influence' but more rarely did they exercise 'power'. This

scenario is best understood historically in terms of patriarchy, whereby both pre-colonial and colonial modes of governance were marked by the power and privilege of men over women (Kanengoni 2017). European structures of patriarchy and control reinforced and transformed pre-colonial patriarchal arrangements (Mujere 2014), perhaps even exaggerating the extent of patriarchy in pre-colonial times via the reinvention of tradition.

Overall, the colonial government in Bulawayo specifically perpetuated an already-existing culture of discrimination against women in systems of urban government. As with the white population, patriarchs at household level were seen as heads in African households and the ones who were expected to enter the public sphere, certainly in relation to the economy but also in terms of participation in the political sphere (insofar as Africans were granted permission by the colonial state to engage in authorised forms of politics). Ultimately, the divide between men and women in local government participation is inherent in any patriarchal system especially if contextualised in a colonial authority whose understanding of power was premised on race, class and gender (Schmidt 1991). The strong androcentric approach to local governance by white settlers had a direct relationship to forms of urban civic participation in Bulawayo and elsewhere, and within both the white and African urban population (West 1997; Chiroro 2005; Kanengoni; 2017).

Restrictive colonial legislation and institutions made the presence of women, in urban settings, difficult. These difficulties manifested themselves, in the first place, through racial domination and separation which classified urban spaces as white designated places. But, in the second instance, patriarchy structured white urban areas. If African men found their existence in such an urban set-up cumbersome then the experience of women was more problematic (Barnes 2001). The colonial government in fact reduced African women to perpetual minors. Such an approach ensured that African women remained in rural spaces or, if in urban areas, they were seen as being under the care and custody of their male counterparts (and neither seen nor heard) (Kanengoni 2017). This sidelining of women in multiple ways meant that opportunities for visibility related to women in urban Rhodesia were restricted such that their political presence and participation were likely to be rendered inconsequential.

This was coupled with African male anxieties fueled by the emergence of immoral affairs between single men in Bulawayo hostels and women in the city, which created an impression of women out of control in Bulawayo (Wells 2003). Given this, women dwelling in Bulawayo were viewed as immoral, loose and perverted. This was reinforced by the colonial government which

tended to label African women as indolent, lazy, slothful, frivolous and uncouth (West 1997). Existing tensions between African women and their male counterparts, which was premised on sexuality and masculinity, saw the vilification and stereotyping of women as almost third class ‘citizens’ with no moral grounds to clamor for inclusion in local governance processes (Kanengoni 2017).

In any case, women were not permitted to seek gainful employment in urban centres of colonial Zimbabwe as this was constructed as a space and preserve for men (Schmidt 1991). But the allure of the city acted as a pull factor for women who flocked to Bulawayo from rural areas. Women from rural areas found difficulty in attaining accommodation (as did of course African males) and employment in the formal economy was perhaps even more problematic. Because of this, women had to eke out a living through unconventional methods such as beer-brewing and prostitution, further leading to the classification of urban African women as malcontents and philanderers (Schmidt 1991; West 1997). At the same time, national legislation sought to control the movement of women into Bulawayo and other urban centres as well as their political, social and economic activities in Bulawayo. African women were sidelined and pushed to the margins of civil and political activism. Those women who sought to go against the grain and become actively involved were castigated as entering the public sphere of men and were thereby discouraged from further participation in urban public life (West 1997).

#### **4.7 The Post-Colonial Foundations of Urban Governance in Bulawayo**

The experiences of Bulawayo post 1980 played a critical role in establishing the foundations of the city in independent Zimbabwe. These socio-political experiences would play a critical part in shaping the patterns of not only local governance but state-citizen relations, and attitudes and perceptions towards urban governance in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The years immediately after independence would see the formative foundations of a policy of separate development being pursued by the post-colonial government and this would set the stage for political, social and cultural contestation between the city and the state, particularly the ruling party’s lack of political support in the city, leading to the city being termed and viewed as a dissident city. As such there is need to trace the continuities and discontinuities in the development of Bulawayo post-independence, paying particular attention to urban governance policy and practice in relation to its interface with citizen participation and SA.



#### **4.7.1 The early years, 1980-87**

The decade between the period 1980 and 1990 witnessed the inception of wide-ranging political and institutional reforms in many African countries which signaled the so-called third wave of democracy in Africa. In terms of local governance discourse, such reform sought to increase political decentralisation (and devolution) and to introduce democratic local government. The major reason for introducing local democracy was to ensure that local governments would become more responsive to the needs the general citizenry (Smith 1985; Sharpe 1984).

Local government development in post-1980 Zimbabwe, including in Bulawayo, pursued a one-city concept aimed at deracialising urban settlement and local government (Makumbe 1998), while simultaneously also engaging in decentralisation. However, it is disputable as to whether the government of Zimbabwe and in particular the ruling party was sincerely interested in pursuing the restructuring of urban spaces (including governance in these spaces) for merely democratic development purposes. Instead, it seems that such restructuring in the 1980s had a significant political character, as the ruling party sought to use its control over the state to ensure its ongoing hegemony within the post-colony (Martin and Johnson 1981). For example, as noted earlier, at the national level, the 1984 and 1985 Prime Minister's Directives charted new local government arrangements and announced development boards at village, ward, district, provincial, and national levels with the aim of promoting bottom-up planning (Makumbe 1998). The issue here is that these new institutions also enabled the ruling party to extend its political reach into the deepest of rural areas for purposes of entrenching its hegemonic power. In the case of urban areas specifically, the decentralisation of urban governance would allow the ruling party to use local administrative bodies (ultimately under the control of the central state) to exercise control over urban spaces, and even mutate them into bodies totally subordinate to the dictates of the party. Officially, though, urban governance was supposed to become more 'liberal' as the post-colonial government sought to de-racialise and decentralise local government by giving more power and autonomy to local authorities.

While the national experience in general was to be informed by statutes indicated in the Prime Minister's directives, Bulawayo's local government experience in the years after independence would be different. After a protracted war of liberation focused on emancipating the colonised from a brutally racial regime, independence was attained but it had not brought about unity (Nkomo 1984). During the 1979 Lancaster House negotiations and subsequent Lancaster

agreement, the two dominant liberation movements (ZAPU and ZANU) entered into talks as a united Patriotic Front (PF). However, on the eve of elections, after the agreement and ceasefire, ZANU under the leadership of Robert Mugabe fought the election as a separate party (Martin and Johnson 1981; Nkomo 1984; Tekere 2006). According to Nkomo (1984), differences in ideology provided a breaking point between ZANU and ZAPU. These differences were to be one of the fundamental reasons as to why the incumbent ZANU government sought to establish a one-party state through the 'destruction' of ZAPU (Stiff 2000). The confrontation with, and subsequent destruction of, ZAPU was achieved in the first instance through atrocities committed by the North Korean-trained Fifth Brigade regiment which waged a war of terror in Matabeleland in general and Bulawayo in particular during the early 1980s. The deployment of the Fifth Brigade was designed to crush and annihilate ZAPU dissidents, including their supporters and leadership (Nkomo 1984).

Coupled with this, the post-colonial government became increasingly authoritarian and autocratic, which was exhibited through a dynamic campaign for a one-party state. It was ZANU's anticipation and desire that this would lead to the total demise of ZAPU as a political party and would undermine any future attempts to form an opposition party (Raftopoulos 2004). In this respect, Bulawayo was viewed as a city responsible for harbouring dissidents given that it was historically a critical social base for ZAPU (Musemwa 2008). These emerging post-1980 conflicts, between the city of Bulawayo and the central state, were embedded in a larger set of ethnic and regional tensions which pre-dated the post-colonial period and were hence intensified by the ongoing ZANU–ZAPU political divide (Musemwa 2006, 2008; Ranger 2007, 2008; Chirisa and Jonga 2010). The social and political bases of this conflict would structure the relationship between the city and state for many years to come.

The so-called dissident or rebel city, in terms of local governance and infrastructural development, was kept at arm's length from (and by) ZANU-PF government and its resources, as the central state prioritised regions outside and beyond Matabeleland. This precarious position and subsequent relationship between the state and the city, to some extent, allowed the city to remain outside of the grip of the ruling party although, in another light, the use and control of local administrative and development bodies allowed government to maintain a foothold in the running of local affairs (Kamete 2008). In contrast, urban areas like Harare, Mutare, Marondera, Kwekwe and Kadoma were benefitting from post-independence development largesse (Ndlovu-Gatsheni

2009). In this sense, any experiences of euphoria in the 1980s about urban local governance reform and urban infrastructural development in Zimbabwe was a period of disappointment in Bulawayo. While many cities and towns received special local government grants during the period in question, Bulawayo received very little, if any, assistance from the national government (Moyo 1992). According to Alexander (2010), the ubiquitous impact of the city-state conflict on Bulawayo and Matabeleland was that all development projects were suspended because of national security and political considerations on the part of government, and this adversely affected local governance, service delivery and the socio-economic development of Bulawayo.

The political relationship between the city and the state would continue to alienate the city from national development processes going forth, resulting in the city driving towards 'self-sufficiency' and becoming contemptuously circumspect of government interventions (Musemwa 2006; Musemwa 2008; Musemwa 2010; Stiff 2010, Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010; Sivalo 2013). Various historical experiences support this claim. For instance, between 1982 and 1987, Matabeleland and Bulawayo specifically experienced two severe droughts and this created a humanitarian crisis in the region but, due to the dissident situation in Bulawayo, no relief in food aid or alternative supplies of water were forthcoming (Musemwa 2006).

As political turmoil escalated and became protracted, hostile relations resonating with those existing between the colonial state and the municipalities before 1980, particularly over the provision of housing and other social amenities, persisted between the post-colonial independent government and the Bulawayo urban authority. While the colonial state's relationship with the city was premised on a racial and spatial segregationist discourse, the post-colonial government's stance was informed by politics, tribalism and the struggle for absolute power (Musemwa 2006). Bulawayo was a 'victim' of national politics and state-led urban governance.<sup>2</sup> While other cities had benefitted from ZANU's local government policies immediately after independence, Bulawayo was experiencing under-development, to use the term of Andre Gunder Frank (1996).

#### **4.7.2 Bulawayo during the Period of Unity and ESAP, 1988 - 1998**

The signing of the Unity Accord in 1987 brought about an internal settlement between ZAPU and ZANU. This accord resulted in the unification of the two parties to form ZANU-PF, with peace

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<sup>2</sup> Bulawayo City Council Minutes. Located at the Bulawayo City Hall. Letter from Bulawayo Mayor, Enoch Mdlongwa, to Enos Chikowore, Minister of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development, 'Relations between Government and the City Council of Bulawayo', 13 August 1985.

providing presumably the much-needed environment for socio-economic development to take place in Bulawayo and Matabeleland. As Kaulemu (2010) notes, peace and democracy are indispensable in providing and guaranteeing meaningful local government development. As such, the peace achieved in 1987 was seen as pivotal to Bulawayo's progress and 'catching up' with the rest of the country.

However, soon after the 1987 peace accord was achieved, an economic recession (from the early 1990s) began to come into effect. This further rendered Bulawayo ill-equipped to deal with mounting socio-economic challenges such as rising poverty levels and increased demand for social services like water (due as well to a prolonged drought) (Musemwa 2006). Any harmonious political relationships which arose between the city and state were undermined by the emerging and deepening economic crisis of the 1990s. Political tensions never quelled though, so that economic and political factors combined tended to ensure the ongoing vulnerability of Bulawayo's development.

The socio-economic crisis was heightened by ESAP introduced in the early 1990s. For Mlambo (1997) and indeed other scholars, ESAP was a platform designed by the Bretton Wood institutions (the International Monetary Fund and World Bank) to provide financial assistance for government which had balance of payment issues and declining economies. However, to receive this assistance, governments (including the Zimbabwean government) had to structurally adjust their respective economies to boost exports and productivity as well as bring about certain political reforms. These economic reforms (based on neo-liberalisation and de-regulation) ended up deepening urban poverty, decreasing the country's capability to develop a strong diversified domestic economy, and led to deindustrialisation, closure of companies and loss of urban employment (Kawewe and Dibie 2000). Furthermore, this neo-liberalisation involved levels of privatisation of state institutions and cost-recovery measures vis-à-vis government services.

At the same time, ESAP occurred alongside other events which had an additive as well as interactive effect with ESAP. In Bulawayo, for example, the initial years of ESAP's implementation overlapped with the onset of a major drought in 1991-92 in the area, such that the city experienced ESAP in a manner different than other parts of the country. The drought situation in Bulawayo at the time affected the city's ability to provide adequate social services, like water, sanitation, refuse collection and housing, to its population. Given that Bulawayo had a long history of an inadequate water supply, the drought crippled Bulawayo's water reserves. Yet, as one of

ESAP's conditions included cutting back on government-provided social services, state intervention in the problem became complicated. Additionally, the local authority in Bulawayo simply had no resources or alternative sources available to curb the looming humanitarian crisis, further stalling the development of the city

Central to the economic reforms of ESAP was the liberalisation of markets to promote free-trade, as well as reduction of public expenditure on social services, infrastructural works, government subsidies and other policies (Mlambo 1997). This adversely affected the development of Bulawayo as the lack of access to public resources due to the eroding of state expenditure meant that local development in the city was hindered, with the city authorities unable to intervene to counter the negative effects. Given that Bulawayo, historically, was an industrial hub, downsizing of the economy because of ESAP was to have significant implications for the city (more so than Harare) during the 1990s. The closure of many manufacturing industries, which were concentrated in Bulawayo, saw a sharp rise in unemployment and this exerted financial pressure on the delivery of services as communities became unable to service their bills, handicapping the ability of council to provide adequate services due to the lack of resources. Bulawayo dwellers who had been employed in industry spiraled into poverty and did not have the disposable income to remit, for rates and water for example, to council. The Bulawayo council's revenue base, from the state and rate-payers, was consequently dwindling simultaneously, and this severely handicapped the local authority's ability to provide development.

The past political disturbances (between ZANU and ZAPU), ESAP and drought also affected the social and political views of the people in Bulawayo. Meaningful urban governance requires a confident, engaged and active citizenry, but experiences from the 1980s and into the 1990s dampened the appetite for citizens to participate in local governance processes. For example, during the political turmoil of the 1980s, the then Prime Minister (Robert Mugabe) had cautioned citizens of Matabeleland about the perils of voting for PF-ZAPU and had given them a 'final opportunity' to vote 'right'. Given the atrocities of the Fifth Brigade, there was unsurprisingly a level of fear and distrust with reference to participating in local level development processes, especially those led by government. This meant that Bulawayo tended to be deprived of a local government working alongside an engaged citizenry, with this leading to urban governance in the hands of local political elites.

Though central government was expected to abide by ESAP, it showed clear signs of rejecting it when it gave unbudgeted bonuses to ex-guerillas (war veterans) in 1997 (Holland 2008), which was followed by Zimbabwe's unexpected involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo war in 1998 and massive state expenditure on this. Such actions, as indicated previously, crippled the state fiscus so that, even if the state did not need to abide by neo-liberal regulations, public resources for urban service delivery would simply not be available for Bulawayo and elsewhere. Thus, urban local authorities were crippled financially at a time of economic decline and rising poverty levels, further inhibiting Bulawayo residents from servicing their accounts (which inadvertently meant that local governance suffered). For example, during the period between 1990 and 1999, the Bulawayo city council did not receive any resources from national government to construct dams to increase the city's water supply nor could it finance itself to build these due to the scarcity of resources (Musemwa 2008).

#### **4.7.3 Bulawayo at the Turn of the Millennium, 1999 and Beyond**

To understand the unique experiences of Bulawayo during this short period, it is important to consider the macro-socio-political developments at the time and how these affected the polity of Bulawayo. The period between 1999 and 2000 was a period of significant change in Bulawayo's political economy and in the city's social relations with the state and ZANU-PF in particular. While the Unity Accord of 1987 meant there was no formidable opposition to contest ZANU-PF for power, developments in the late 1990s meant that Bulawayo would soon re-assert itself as a 'rebel' city in the view of the post-colonial government.

In Bulawayo, trade unionism has a long history because of its industrial base. Initially, in the 1980s, the main national trade union movement (Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, or ZCTU) was a subservient wing of the ruling party. In the context of the rejection of the one-party state discourse and the emergence of ESAP (which was implemented by ZANU-PF), ZCTU sought to assert its autonomy from the ruling party and state in the mid-1990s (Tsvangirai 2011). By 1999, ZCTU had a vibrant presence in Bulawayo (Phimister 2000), as the everyday lives of workers and their families were increasingly difficult and informal economic activities were on the rise. In Bulawayo (as well as in Harare), ZCTU started to form alliances with the burgeoning urban civic movement around state authoritarianism, human rights abuses, and mismanagement of the economy. This led to a number of work stay-aways, food protests and service delivery protests (as well as riots and looting) across the country in the late 1990s (Tsvangirai 2011). For example, in

1999, residents from Bulawayo engaged the city council around the deplorable state of water provision and refuse collection. All this economic and political action also included a focus on constitutional reform. In 1999, the trade union and civic movements formed the MDC which had a huge following in Bulawayo due to the unpopularity of ZANU-PF since independence.

In response to the popular movement to bring about constitutional reform, the ruling party initiated its own constitutional change agenda. Its draft constitution, which involved increasing the powers of the executive president (i.e. of Mugabe), was put to a referendum vote in February 2000. This raised the ire of Bulawayo residents and the city voted a resounding NO to the constitutional change (Dorman 2003). The constitutional rejection saw government become even more authoritarian, a move which manifested itself in its legitimisation of the rural land occupations which began soon after the rejection, and the subsequent expropriation of white commercial land without compensation through the fast track land reform programme. In the meantime, in June 2000, ZANU-PF narrowly won the parliamentary elections with the MDC (to the shock of ZANU-PF) obtaining nearly fifty percent of the seats contested, even though there were legitimate claims by the opposition about election-related fraud and violence (Sachikonye 2011).

The land occupations along with fast track had implications not only for agriculture but for the entire agro-industrial complex in the country, including industries both upstream and downstream from agricultural production. In Bulawayo, for instance, agricultural restructuring increased vulnerability as the city's many agro-processing industries relied on cattle ranches and other surrounding farms for productivity and employment. Bearing in mind the dryness and aridness of the climate in Matabeleland, land expropriation led to a massive decline in agricultural productivity and agro-processing activities in the area (Makumbe 2008). Given this, and the deeply-contested historical relationship between Bulawayo city and the ZANU-PF state, it is not surprising that, in Bulawayo, all the local authority/local government election and parliamentary seats went to MDC. The resounding defeat of ZANU-PF at the hands of the MDC in Bulawayo confirmed the existence, support and prevalence of organisations and ideas outside state/ZANU-PF hegemony (Sachikonye 2011). The victory of MDC also demonstrated the insincerity of the Unity Accord of 1987 as Bulawayo citizens showed that, given an alternative, they did not identify with ZANU-PF or its ideals. During this period, Mugabe and the ruling party took on a siege mentality exerting unnecessary force on the governance of Bulawayo as a city as there were constant interferences by the MLGRUD. For example, during this period, the state made moves to

nationalise water through ZINWA in order to reduce the fiscal base of urban governments. However, the local authority in Bulawayo resisted the move with the city council remaining control of the city's water resources. In addition, the victory of MDC in 2000 saw a stark shift in relations between the state, civic groups, urban local authorities and elected councilors. What came next after this period, over the next decade in Bulawayo, were a series of confrontation, contestation and collusion between the state and the city. The pertinent developments around urban governance in Bulawayo in the decade of the 2000s are discussed more fully in the next chapter, as they provide historical background for the specific focus on Bulawayo urban governance and SA during the past few years.

#### **4.8 Citizen Participation and Social Accountability**

The period 1893-1999, as the main temporal focus of this chapter, was characterised by two dominant approaches. During the colonial period, citizen participation in local governance was segregated along racial lines. White ratepayers were considered citizens and African urban dwellers were viewed as subjects who were temporarily in the city to offer their labour. While African residents remitted tax to the revenue collector, the basic social services they received in the locations or townships were comparatively much less than the value of what White and Asian/Coloured citizens received as services. This period then was symbolised by the exclusion and segregation of African participation in local governance processes. One of the first achievements brought by independence in 1980 was universal suffrage on the principle of one person-one vote. Resultantly, the new dispensation brought about by independence paved the way, at least potentially, for all citizens to play a meaningful role in participation in local development and political democratic processes. This transition from colonialism to independence enabled citizens to move from political, developmental and democratic exclusion to inclusion.

##### **4.8.1 Exclusion and Social Accountability in Colonial Bulawayo**

During this period, local governance was based on a racialised state and racial policies, with service delivery hence having a deeply racialised dimension to it. Questions of citizen participation and SA likewise flowed from the pronounced racialised character of the Rhodesian colony. At local level in urban areas like Bulawayo, there was limited space for Africans (as subjects) to contribute to the local government system. African concerns had no platforms to be heard or addressed, making local governance, citizen participation and SA a preserve mainly for whites.



This of course affected detrimentally the kind of service delivery available to African locations/townships.

For example, between 1930 and 1950, the BCC was engaged in a water war with the BWC and the central state in which the former (the BCC) was in a quest for taking over the responsibility for water supply in Bulawayo. However, according to Musemwa (2006), the motivating force behind the BCC's clamour for control of water was part of a broader effect to ensure absolute political control of Bulawayo by the BCC. More specifically, the BCC continuously fought to maintain its independence as a municipality in order to protect the interests of its white residents. This was typified by its refusal to comply with demands of national government to improve the conditions in the Makokoba Township, even disregarding any pressure and complaints emanating from residents in the township.

White Bulawayo and in particular the white council was resolute and firm in governing African areas (townships) on its own terms. The condescending racial attitudes of white councilors would pose a threat to the domineering character of settlers as racial local government policies fueled emergent Africanist movements, with many of these emergent Africanists living in the Bulawayo location and incessantly complaining about conditions there. The exclusion of Africans from local governance processes created a crisis of expectation as Natives were unwisely reduced to second class citizens without a stake in the affairs of the city while they were expected to conform to racist urban governance legislation. Coupled with this, as indicated, exclusion ensured that the concerns from a growing population of urban Africans were not accommodated, heard or addressed. For example, Africans in Bulawayo demanded a hospital, a government school, a recreation hall, compensation for the owners of houses (which were being destroyed to create neat lines of municipal accommodation), better sanitation, and the removal of Indian traders who had monopoly of all trade in African locations (Ranger 2007). Nothing significant was forthcoming in meeting these demands.

Amid growing pressure from Africans, white citizens of Bulawayo felt no obligation to address African concerns. Further, the local authority did not feel compelled to account to Africans about the utilisation of collected revenue which was being collected from them by white local government. This was particularly problematic for Africans in Bulawayo since the living conditions in the locations exhibited no improvement despite the payment of tax by Africans. The bargaining position of Africans, in the light of racial policies, was not only curtailed by oppressive

laws and practices, but by the inability of Africans to coordinate and sustain pressure on local government authorities to improve their living conditions due to outright repression. For example, residents in the location constantly raised discontentment about the perennial presence of municipal and state police in the location and how these security agents wantonly raided their homes as a means of depleting and reversing emergent gains of African urban consciousness (Van Onselen 1976).

SA as a process is predicated on the establishment of good mutual relations between leaders/agents (who serve as interlocutors) and principals who are concerned citizens (Kyohairwe 2013). However, the socio-political environment in colonial Rhodesia, based on a radical disjuncture between citizen and subject, meant that there were neither good relations between the principals and agents nor motivation or reason to establish these. Because the status quo was premised on white dominance, under no circumstances were white local governance institutions required to account to Africans. Furthermore, there was no obligation on the part of the settler local government body to ensure the progressive realisation of African rights (and their transformation into capabilities), regardless of the fact that, by virtue of Africans being tax-payers, they were entitled to some form of accountability by white councilors.

#### **4.8.2 Inclusion and Social Accountability in Post-Colonial Bulawayo**

A comprehensive understanding of the politics surrounding urban local governance in Bulawayo historically, including in the years between 1980 and 1999, provides an important context for analysing Bulawayo's current urban local governance and citizen participation crisis. The 1980-1999 period was marked by considerable fluidity in the relationship between state and civil society. Immediately after independence (and into the mid-1990s), relations between local government and citizens were relatively hostile and un-accommodative, at least broadly speaking. However, from 1997 onwards, government and local government institutions would gradually deteriorate despite attempts by the ruling party to regain control of political dialogue and processes in Bulawayo, even as the state's popularity and ability to provide services was progressively weakened (Dorman 2003).

The newly formed government of Zimbabwe was engrossed initially with undoing unjust racialised local government laws, policies and institutions, with universal suffrage arising from independence being a key cornerstone of these efforts. Additionally, in the 1980s, in seeking to ensure African participation in the politics of post-independent Zimbabwe, the central state (as

discussed earlier) promoted forms of decentralisation and bottom-up planning as permanent bargaining spaces for citizen inclusion and participation in local governance processes. At least officially, then, urban governance in Bulawayo and elsewhere was marked by processes of inclusion. Engagement between the local government institution in Bulawayo and citizens took place on a reasonably regular basis during the 1980s at least, and citizens provided their input in shaping what and how local governance would work for them. For example, in Bulawayo's Magwegwe ward, immediately after independence, the newly elected councilor carried out regular feedback and consultative meetings with his constituents in order to raise local issues at full council meetings, a culture that was encouraged by the central government at the time<sup>3</sup>. Citizen participation was at its peak during this period; however, it was largely limited to formal political processes like elections (Makumbe 2011) such that local government between elections tended to be less accountable.

This period of euphoria, involving for the first-time full participation of all in regular electoral processes, was hence at the expense of deep and meaningful citizen participation in governance processes. Consequently, SA and monitoring of public funds and expenditure for instance was limited if not non-existent during this phase. This problem was being reproduced at national level as well. As a case in point, in 1988 and 1989, a political scandal arose which involved the illegal resale of car purchases by various high-level government officials. The subsequent investigation resulted in the resignations of five cabinet ministers from the ZANU-PF government. This scandal, known as Willowgate, raised questions about the credibility and transparency of ZANU-PF as a government. These and other scandals would raise and increase citizen interest in local governance processes, as issues of corruption repeatedly made headlines during this period but often with limited recourse action taken by the state.

The 1988-89 scandal in fact would mark a shift in citizen-state relations. After the exposure of high level graft within central government, government sought to exert its control on public media (which exposed the scandal). Increasingly during the 1990s, relations between the BCC and citizens would also take the same course, as avenues for citizens' participation and SA in Bulawayo were stifled by overbearing national and local government legislation. The failing economy, coupled with political scandals and a disregard for human rights by the government, would ensure

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<sup>3</sup> Based on key informant interview held on 10/4/16 with a former Bulawayo City Councilor elected during the 1984 local government general elections.

that a despondent citizenry could not effectively monitor government performance. In practice, then, inclusionary processes (certainly in terms of SA) became fraught and limited.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

This chapter provided a historically nuanced understanding of urban governance in Bulawayo. It traced the historical foundations of urban governance institutions in Bulawayo by focusing on the continuities and discontinuities of urban rule from the pre-colonial, colonial to the post-colonial period. The chapter explored the fundamental pillars of urban governance and how these shaped, broadly speaking, the lived experiences of the general population of Bulawayo. The chapter located the discipline and discourses of SA and citizen participation with reference to the level of integration and interaction between the state, power and authority. The importance of social factors was also brought to the fore, particularly how these influence patterns of citizen participation in urban governance in Bulawayo over time. The discussions pursued in the chapter thus helped to shed light on the importance of Bulawayo's historical experiences and the struggle for political power and how these struggles determined the trajectory of urban governance. In the following chapter, the post-2013 period is examined with regard to urban governance and SA in Bulawayo.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: AN UNDERSTANDING OF URBAN GOVERNANCE IN BULAWAYO FROM 2013 ONWARDS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an analysis of Bulawayo's polity, probing the city's urban governance and SA experiences in the period particularly since 2013, or after the GNU period. The chapter is the first empirical chapter in that it draws quite extensively on original fieldwork, including Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) carried out in Bulawayo between 2015 and 2016. The chapter examines local governance and SA in Bulawayo showing how it has evolved during the years since 2012, with this being examined in the context of post-2000 developments. In doing so, it raises questions around for example constitutionalism, coercion and citizen agency. The chapter also offers a thematic understanding of the background and social differentiation of civic and political actors and institutions which play a crucial role in local governance in contemporary Bulawayo. In addition, the chapter provides a periodisation of urban governance and its shifting form from 2012 to current. In doing so, it tries to paint a vivid description of these players, highlighting both the socio-political interactions between these groups and how they influence each other in shaping local governance and SA discourse in Bulawayo.

### **5.2 Post-2000 Background**

The current socio-political situation in Bulawayo can be understood in the first instance by juxtaposing and analysing local state and civil society relations within the broader macro-politics of Zimbabwe at the time. The progressive waning power of ZANU-PF's hegemony in local and national governance, from 2000 onwards, posed a threat to the existence of, and strong grip on, power which had been characteristic of the rule of ZANU-PF since independence. The waning of power and the subsequent measures taken by the state to protect and preserve ZANU-PF hegemony cumulatively led to an urban crisis, including a crisis of governance, in Bulawayo (Masunungure 2013). This manifested itself in, for example, failures by the local authority in Bulawayo to provide water, housing and other basic services, as well as challenges with regard to the participation of citizens in local development processes and accountability. Ultimately, Bulawayo became a key

local battleground for control and dominance between two rival political parties (ZANU-PF and MDC), with local government in the city becoming deeply politicised (Muchadenyika 2015).

Since 2000, the Zimbabwean state has drastically intervened in urban local government across the country, characterised by actions in which elected executive mayors have been dismissed, whole municipal councils sacked, and commissions appointed by the state to manage and administer cities (Ranger 2007). This overbearingness of government certainly gained momentum after the 2000 national parliamentary elections in which the MDC did extremely well, and state intrusions increased even further after the MDC won a majority in local government elections, in 2002, in Bulawayo and other urban centres. The creation of parallel local government structures by the ruling party, through the MLGRUD and the UCA, ensured that any existing fissures between Bulawayo city and the state were widened even more and this, consequently, affected the ability of citizens to play a significant role in shaping local governance and SA.

Relations between the city of Bulawayo and the post-colonial state, as indicated previously, have been problematic over an extended period, with the *Gukurahundi* massacres of the 1980s being particularly significant in this regard; in effect, Bulawayo was labelled and treated as a dissident city by the central state. These long-standing strained relations between Bulawayo and the state meant that any stance or action emanating from (or even associated with) the ZANU-PF controlled state (even if possibly of benefit to the citizens of Bulawayo), was bound to be received from a position of disdain. In this context, Bulawayo was a city open to any political ideology as long as it was in some way counter-hegemonic to the state and what it represented historically (Dorman 2016). For Bulawayo, an attitude of defiance to the central state was the fundamental premise for its relations with the state, including in the post-2000 period. For instance, in the face of resistance by the city, the post-colonial state's attempt to seize the role of water supply provider from the BCC and hand it over to ZINWA (a parastatal created in the wake of the 1998 Water Act) indicated the depth of opposition to any state interventions in Bulawayo. As Musemwa (2008) notes, the stance against ZINWA's overtures in Bulawayo had antecedents in the rejection of the BWC by the municipality in the formative years of Bulawayo, thus concretising the claim that Bulawayo, historically, has sought to defend its autonomy and pursue a localised agenda (Ranger 2007).

The exertion of power by the MLGRUD, notably from the early 2000s, exemplifies rule by coercion and not consent, with the former becoming a key feature of local governance in not

only Bulawayo but Zimbabwe in general. This was witnessed most vividly by the unabated launch, in June 2005, of the massive ‘clean-up’ exercise called Operation *Murambatsvina*, which saw the arbitrary demolition of illegal urban structures (including sites for both accommodation and informal economic activities). This operation was particularly prevalent in Harare and Bulawayo, with the claim sometimes made that it targeted properties belonging to perceived MDC supporters and sympathisers. Even if this was not the case, it seems clear that the operation involved the central state reasserting its control over urban spaces in post-2000 Zimbabwe in the context of a viable opposition party for the first time in Zimbabwe’s history.

With every election (2000, 2002, 2005, 2008 and 2013) at local, parliamentary and presidential levels, ZANU-PF dominion and support in Bulawayo waned and this triggered the tightening of the grip by the state, resulting in human rights abuses; for instance, in 2000, influential MDC supporters were subject to arbitrary arrest and to beatings. In addition, ZANU-PF has not won any council seats in Bulawayo since 2000 and, in Harare, the ruling party has only managed one seat in 2002, one seat in 2008, and 6 in 2013 in local authority elections; this is in comparison to the majority the party boasted of in the 1980s and 1990s. Every election, both before and after, thus saw drastic steps taken by central government to dismantle the strong urban support in Bulawayo for the MDC. Besides Operation *Murambatsvina* in 2005, there were major instances of violence and allegations of voter intimidation in 2008 while, in 2013, the government – through the MLGRUD – cancelled all debts owed by residents to local authorities in Bulawayo to compromise the ability of the MDC-run BCC to provide adequate services to rate-payers.

The abuse of power, for political expediency, by ZANU-PF during the post-2000 period saw the closure of civic and democratic space. However, this closure was not always successful, such that a proliferation of citizen-based groups took place in Bulawayo, with these groups seeking to ensure that local government institutions not only respected the rule of law but were accountable to citizens. These groups included oversight organisations like the Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association, Bulawayo Agenda and the National Youth Development Trust. These organisations experienced growing support amongst ordinary residents as they provided platforms for dissenting voices against the state of local governance affairs. The rise of these civil society bodies, post 2000, saw the emergence of what could be called – in a non-derogatory manner - a ‘third force’ in local governance discourses and practices, which had previously been the preserve for political elites at local and national levels. This ‘third force’ of civil bodies clamoured for

citizen consultation, inclusion and SA in local governance issues in Bulawayo. Emphasis in particular was focused on public expenditure processes and service delivery in the face of a strong state-centric system of local governance. Such groups likewise emerged in Harare and other urban centres in Zimbabwe. The response of the central state was to label these civic organisation actors as pro-MDC regime-change agents, prompting the government for instance to propose a NGO Act which promised to severely curtail the activities of any civil society groups with a whiff of human rights or governance activities (Moore 2005).

The period of GNU, from 2009 to 2013, saw the gradual opening up of political space where citizens could participate effectively in governance processes. However, the period was littered with instances of citizen disengagement as communities and civil society took a back seat in addressing issues of service delivery and urban governance. The inclusive government period brought in relative financial and political stability as tensions between the ruling party and opposition were quelled by the power sharing deal (Dorman 2013). The economic and political stability, consequently, resulted in the normalisation of service delivery, at least to some extent, as urban councils managed to attract funding and support from the inclusive government (Muchadenyika 2017). With the improved service delivery came complacency and disengagement, particularly on the part of civil society as citizen oversight was relaxed (Masunungure 2013). Transparency, accountability and good governance advocacy, which was strong in previous years, seems to have been downplayed as civil society was more concerned with partisan pursuits which were characteristic of civil society during the GNU (Masunungure 2013). As such, the critical oversight role of civil society was weakened leaving room for corruption and collusion by elected councillors and bureaucrats. In addition, what compounded the laxity in civil society oversight was the fact that the MDC and its formations were in government and this made it difficult for civil society to criticise government due to the paternalistic relationship between civil society and the MDC (Masunungure 2013).

For example, in Bulawayo, the period of the inclusive government saw a decline in petitions and protest marches against the local authority by civil society in line with the analysis that civil society was reluctant to criticise a government, local and national, of which MDC was part. On the political front, in Bulawayo, the struggle for the city, which is characterised by contestation and confrontation historically, witnessed relative calm with no instances of note taking place, between the state and the city. However, this relative calm did not mean increased



autonomy but instead maintained state authority, in principle, and sustained the power of the state while negating urban governance independence (Muchadenyika and Williams 2015). The impact of the period of inclusive government had numerous socio-political dimensions. Firstly, the period of GNU exposed, inadvertently, the level of alliance between civil society and the political opposition which weakened the ability of civil society to lead unbiased advocacy around SA and urban governance. Because of this, the ability of civil society to represent and convene civic spaces for urban governance reform was compromised. Secondly, the lack of strong oversight by civil society created a gap which would see the proliferation of corruption by elected councillors in Bulawayo and indeed elsewhere. Thirdly, the GNU period saw an improvement in service delivery at the expense of infrastructural development which would set the stage for citizen engagement post-GNU in 2013.

The post GNU period saw the return of political contestation and the restoration of the political order where ZANU-PF returned to power, through a majority in parliament. However, ZANU-PF still had no control of urban locales with Bulawayo remaining in the hands of the opposition. The return to power allowed ZANU-PF to resume its use of state institutions, the MLGRUD mainly, to frustrate the operations of urban governance in Bulawayo. For example, between 2014 and 2016, the BCC ran its operations without an approved budget from central government which was a bid by the state to create frustration at the grassroots level, due to city inefficiency, which in turn would provide just cause for government to influence the running of the city. Delaying tactics employed by government protracted the ability of the BCC to access state resources necessary for service delivery. Consequently, the local authority transferred the burden to citizens as there were increases in rates and fees as the city council had to find alternatives to broaden its resource base. Due to the lack of a strong link between horizontal and vertical accountability mechanisms, urban governance took a predatory form where residents became the only source of income and resources, which was spent without any processes of SA taking place, thereby fuelling tensions between the civil society, urban governance authorities and the state.

Post-GNU urban governance in Bulawayo coincided with the progressive decline of the economy. The decline of the economy heralded a relapse in the demise of social service delivery, water, sanitation and housing, which consequently meant the ability of the city council to abate the negative impacts of poor service delivery were stifled by a lack of resources. In addition to economic decline, the protracted contestation and confrontation between the state and political

opposition was manifested in the failure of the BCC to deliver on key human development services to citizens and this further compounded the resurgent crisis of service delivery failure. As such, the post GNU government would set the stage for further entrenchment of state power, violence and patronage in Bulawayo's urban governance.

### **5.3 Understanding Local Governance in Bulawayo, 2013 - 2016**

Thus, broader political tendencies in Zimbabwe nationally were to have implications for local governance in post-2013 Bulawayo, such that the latter cannot be understood outside of the former. Events in Bulawayo (as a strong MDC base), however, were not simply a 'text' within a broader national context. Bulawayo as a city has always been a protagonist in Zimbabwean politics and hence local processes in Bulawayo also shaped the national political dynamics.

A key marker of Bulawayo's agency in wider Zimbabwean politics, and an incident which was central to shaping city-state relations post-2013, was undoubtedly the outcome of the June 2013 elections where Bulawayo's electorate disenchanted ZANU-PF's bid to represent them in parliament and council. All twelve parliamentary constituencies in the city were swooped by the MDC, heralding the continued end of ZANU-PF hegemony in the city. Then in mayoral and council polls, the electorate eroded ZANU-PF of all remnants of democratic representation in Bulawayo as the party lost all 29 seats in council polls. According to Muchadenyika (2014), losses in urban centres across the country meant that ZANU-PF had become a rural party. These defeats incited ZANU-PF into action as it sought to re-model and assert its lost dominance in urban politics, including within Bulawayo. The quest by ZANU-PF to reassert itself in the urban centres would set the state on a collision course with citizens as unpopular coercive methods were to be utilised by the state to carve space and support in Bulawayo.

During the colonial period, confrontations in Bulawayo existed between white citizens and black subjects, and these were based on racism and discrimination. Post-2000, relations were premised on the politics of patronage, the spoils of governance and ZANU-PF hegemony. Between 1980 and 1999, state and civil society relations were broadly cordial and, to a reasonable extent, space for citizen views was available, at least until the mid-1990s. However, when the voices of citizens of Bulawayo spoke out and challenged ZANU-PF's hegemony, the central state sought to incorporate the Bulawayo local government system more fully into ZANU-PF dictates and to stem the tide of organised citizen action. In this way, local governance in Bulawayo became the battlefield for control and power between competing political parties. This contestation would have

serious implications for the involvement of citizens in governance processes (including a decline in citizen confidence in public developmental processes), as well as exacerbating the presence of corruption and creating a disabling environment for service delivery and SA (Muchadenyika 2015).

The end of the power-sharing deal between ZANU-PF and the MDC was crowned with the adoption of a new constitution in 2013 which would shape the urban governance landscape post 2013. The 2013 Zimbabwean constitution recognises two types of local government systems and tiers, urban and rural authorities, which existed in Zimbabwe even during the days of colonial rule. Within the proposed local government set up, as espoused in the Zimbabwean constitution, there are three legally recognised clusters of urban local authorities and these are municipal councils, encompassing cities, town councils and local boards. The constitution provides provision for decentralisation and devolution of power where councils can have either a mayor with executive powers or a ceremonial mayor, with the executive mayor option being contingent on the incumbent being directly elected by citizens. Currently, Bulawayo uses the ceremonial mayor approach to urban governance. While the legalistic framework implies that ceremonial mayors do not possess executive powers, they have significant influence on the day to day running of local authorities. However, the lack of alignment of the new constitution to any new legislative act of parliament that operationalises the constitution means that the UCA is still the statute to refer to when dealing with issues of urban governance. Urban governance reform seeks to address the imbalances and gaps between policy and practice as the UCA has lent itself to broad interpretations of the power to suspend and dismiss mayors, town clerks and other duty bearers, thereby weakening the strength of the 2013 constitution which strives to safeguard locally elected councillors from arbitrary suspension or dismissal. This set the stage for renewed contestation and confrontation between Bulawayo and central government.

### **5.3.1 The Constitutional Referendum and Elections in Local Governance, 2012 - 2013**

The June 2013 parliamentary elections coupled with the earlier constitutional referendum were a distinct period in the turn of city-state relations. During the constitutional referendum, opposition politicians, NGO activists and church people formed a formidable coalition that stood against the statutes and dictates of ZANU-PF to champion a people driven constitution making process. During this period, local governance in Bulawayo was characterised by relative calm as the constitution making period coincided with economic stability and arrested inflation (Dorman

2013). Constitutional dialogue and engagement was viewed as an attempt by ZANU-PF, at least in part, to regain control of political discourse, even as the state's ability to provide services was weakened (Dorman 2013).

The socio-economic conditions in Bulawayo were fertile ground for the city to express itself politically. As alluded to, the 2013 general election results in Bulawayo indicated the end of a forced and contrived relationship that existed between ZANU-PF and the MDC under the GNU, resuming the struggle for Bulawayo between the two parties (Muchadenyika and Williams 2015). However, victory and majority representation in local council chambers in Bulawayo did not in any way translate into the total exclusion of ZANU-PF from local government. The new urban dispensation in Bulawayo simply announced a change in the process and manner of governance that would manifest itself, at least potentially, in a different way of doing politics. In this case, the loss of an election for ZANU-PF did not mean an end to its control over local affairs. It only brought about a transformation in the devices of central state control, not a general loss of control (Muchadenyika 2014), and this was powerfully demonstrated in the ensuing battles for the control of Bulawayo.

For example, the MLGRUD had been providing supplementary budgets to local authorities since independence. However, after the 2000 and 2013 election outcomes, the MLGRUD stifled and frustrated processes for the BCC (and other cities under MDC control) to have access to such lines of revenue. The powers of the MLGRUD are predicated on the UCA, which confers almost dictatorial powers upon the Minister and enables the Ministry to act in ways which amount to political expediency on the part of ZANU-PF. In this regard, local authority budgets began shrinking from 2000 and bureaucratic bundling and red-tape increased so as to frustrate BCC's operations (Muchadenyika 2015). The frustration with regard to budget approvals and the non-provision of supplementary budgets meant there were delays in the provision of adequate goods and services by the local authority in Bulawayo. The resultant decline in social service delivery created an even deeper crisis in housing, education and social amenities which council of course was mandated to provide, thus possibly deepening discontent amongst the local citizenry. Despite efforts by government to sabotage MDC-run councils after the 2013 election outcome, support for the MDC never waned as the party has been dominant in the city until now (Muchadenyika and Williams 2015). In this sense, the citizens of Bulawayo have taken an anti-ruling party stance with the MDC becoming the beneficiaries of this in terms of control of the BCC.

During the period preceding 2013, particularly in the GNU period, the central state's human rights and SA record was relatively palatable. The government, at least officially, still valued local level development processes and the meaningful role of citizens in such processes particularly during the constitution making process. The relationship between the central state, local government and civil society in general was cordial (or at least based on co-operation and not confrontation). For instance, there was no significant criticism of the ruling party by civil society groups within this period (Sivalo 2013). Overall, non-state actors, local government authorities and the central state engaged each other as developmental partners (Ncube 2013), which involved a balance in equilibrium and interaction between actors (both state and non-state) and a focus on improving the socio-economic conditions of citizens in Bulawayo. For example, organisations like the Danish Church Aid, Norwegian People's Aid and Catholic Relief Services<sup>4</sup> partnered with the Bulawayo City Council to provide medical equipment and textbooks for council-run schools, and central government commended and encouraged such partnerships. However, these civil society groups were involved in development programmes (which the ruling party did not see conceive as threatening) and not in questions around human rights, democracy and civil liberties, as was the case with many groups in the 2000s. Further, when Bulawayo continued being an 'opposition city' post-2013, relations between the state and the city re-assumed their confrontational nature.

The constitutional process leading up to the 2013 referendum resulted in the opening up of citizen space for participation by way of public consultations, and it provided a platform for the articulation of major critiques of the regime's political and economic policies in public meetings which were extensively covered in the media. This oppositional stance had emerged in the late 1990s with the birth of civil society organisations which focused quite directly and explicitly on civil liberties, human rights and good governance. Groups like the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and the ZCTU, which increasingly spoke out against the ruling party, found widespread support in Bulawayo. The fact that Bulawayo was the industrial hub of Zimbabwe and was associated historically with trade unionism meant there was a critically mobilised population of workers (who bore the brunt of economic decline under structural adjustment) who were willing

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<sup>4</sup> This information was established during a key informant interview with a former councillor who sat in the local government financial management caucus group during his tenure as councillor for ward 24 in Bulawayo, 22/4/16.

to defy the machinations of central government. From the year 2000 to the period post 2013, Bulawayo certainly lived up to its historical stereotype of being a rebel city (McGregor 2014). The manifestation of such organisations and their support in Bulawayo, along with the rise of an opposition-controlled local authority in the city, confirmed the ideas and practices moving beyond and outside the hegemony of the ruling party/state (Dorman 2013). The subsequent rejection in Bulawayo of the way in which politics had been configured since independence set the stage for renewed violence, citizen exclusion, human rights violations and coercion which shaped local governance beyond 2013.

### **5.3.2 Resurgence of a Coercive System of Local Governance in Bulawayo, 2014 – 2015**

The overwhelming victory of the MDC in Bulawayo in 2013 was a rude awakening for the ZANU-PF government. It confirmed that people's support for, and patience with, the ruling party had dissipated and, as a result, the voting in of MDC was in effect a vote of no confidence in ZANU-PF's ability to spur socio-economic development in Bulawayo (Muchadenyika 2015). What this in turn triggered was retaliation from the state as it exerted its dominance and reasserted its authority by adopting a state-led metropolitan government approach. Rule by consent, or ZANU-PF seeking to rule the city by consensual methods, had indicated clearly that Bulawayo citizens had no confidence in a local government system that was in the hands of ZANU-PF (Muchadenyika and Williams 2015). Thus, from the perspective of the central state, rule by manipulation and coercion seemed to be the best approach in regaining control, however indirectly, of lost urban territory (Ncube 2013).

The coercive apparatus of the state manifested itself in the MLGRD using the UCA as a statutory instrument to coerce local governance processes. In any local government system, a key role of a local council is to provide localised social and infrastructural services (Bratton and Sibanyoni 2006). The financing of these is usually derived from government funds obtained mainly from taxation, borrowing and foreign aid. Collected revenue is usually channelled to state departments or local authorities via a government financial institution created specifically to ensure the provision of specific services (Kamete 1998). Given such a system of local government, there was, in the case of Bulawayo and other MDC controlled localities, an over-reliance on the discretion and power of the MLGRD for development to take place at the local level, as the city council depended upon central government for expenditure/budget approval and funding.

This in turn meant that local authorities like the MDC-run BCC had to rely on government disbursements or seek alternatives for revenue collection. The deterioration in relations between the city and the state during this period meant that, with the state reducing its role of financing local authorities (notably in Bulawayo), the same authorities (such as BCC) were compelled to transfer responsibilities to residents in terms of financing the city's services. This impaired the ability of BCC to render quality social services. Thus, the BCC exerted greater pressure on local rate-payers to finance its activities, which simultaneously created tensions between council and residents.

In this sense, a more coercive approach to local governance as used by the state would also be employed by local authorities in their drive to finance council activities. For example, between 2013 and 2015, the BCC decreased the frequency of refuse collection from three times a week in 2013, to two times a week in 2014 and to once a week in 2015 due to funding constraints. This was made clear in a citizen petition submitted by BPRA in 2014 which was focused on the increase in illegal dumping of refuse and the need for council to address this issue in Bulawayo's high density suburbs. In this way, the state (through the MLGRUD) used its prerogative and influence to starve BCC of resources so as to discredit the ability of the MDC in running local authorities, thereby trying to wrestle the control of Bulawayo from the opposition party. Coupled with that, evidence gathered during KIIs succinctly indicate that, in terms of financial priority for local authority funding, Bulawayo was at the bottom of government's list largely because of the ethnic tensions which informed relations between the city and the state. This was largely the assertion of the older generation of citizens (over sixty) of Bulawayo, who had witnessed the 1980s' *Gukurahundi* disturbances. No doubt, their views on post-2013 restructuring of city-state relations was informed by that experience.

The tension-riddled relationship between council and residents, created by state-city relations, provided the conditions for local authority corruption, lack of citizen consultation and the decreasing presence of SA in governance processes. Due to the laxity of government in providing local authority finances, local authorities like BCC became increasingly accountable to themselves alone, as there was now limited basis for national government to play an oversight role in the utilisation of public resources in local governance, despite central government's power to intervene by the sheer powers it had through the UCA (Muchadenyika 2015). The lack of financing and oversight by government allowed for the possibility of a progressive destabilisation of

opposition-run councils like the BCC. The fact that revenue collection, the heart of any local authority, was left in the hands of elected councillors and appointed technocrats (within the local authority) meant that local councillors and officials moved towards becoming a law unto themselves, and this was further exacerbated by the sour relations existent between the central ministry and local authorities. This was based on the claim that, since they were responsible for mobilising their own resources, they were accountable to themselves (Masunungure 2013). For example, in Bulawayo, between 2013 and 2015, the city council budget was developed based on limited consultation or input from residents. In the event that consultation was done, though this was seldom the case, issues reflected by residents would not be indicated or prioritised in the final document. This at least was the claim by the BPRA in its ‘Local Government Policy Review’ paper (BPRA 2014).

The period immediately post-2013 into 2016 can be summed up as a time when the national government made frantic attempts to regain and reassert its power post the GNU period. This exertion of power ensured destabilisation, at local level, and steps to regain control of local urban authorities which had been ‘captured’ by the main opposition party. This involved the intensification of state intervention and the abuse of power by the MLGRUD in the affairs of the BCC. For example, in order to curtail MDC running of the BCC, in September 2016, the MLGRUD suspended the Deputy Mayor of Bulawayo, together with four councillors, on allegations of corruption which appeared to be politically motivated and driven by political expediency. Such actions by the ministry catalysed the gradual decline in service delivery in Bulawayo, whose residents had been used to a reasonably high standard of service delivery compared to their counterparts elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa (Kamete 2008). While tactics by government stalled development in the city, fundraising strategies (such as debt collection, attachment and subsequent auctioning of debtors’ property) employed by council to raise funds became more predatory as the burden was transferred to an economically handicapped community.

### **5.3.3 Citizen Agency and Counter-Hegemony in Bulawayo, 2014 – 2015**

The stance by government to use its influence and control of the MLGRUD was a deliberate move by the state to maintain a foothold in urban politics. It was imperative for government to maintain a presence in Bulawayo (Zimbabwe’s second largest city) amid fading support for the ruling party. If the 2002 and 2008 parliamentary and council elections were anything to go by, the subsequent 2013 elections would confirm ZANU-PF’s unpopularity in Bulawayo, further frustrating the state



(Dorman 2016). The lack of political support for the party created the need for the state to re-assert its position in the national-local power hierarchy by imposing rule on Bulawayo through the (ab)use of the MLGRUD and the UCA (Muchadenyika 2015). The imposition of state power in this regard fuelled resistance from the BCC to government's rule by coercion.

The third wave of democracy, 1980s – 1990s, had set the stage for the emergence of decentralised systems of governance at local level as democratically elected subnational entities emerged and were characterised by empowerment. However, the wave of democracy, at least in Zimbabwe and Bulawayo specifically, would only last a short period as the political disturbances in the early 1980s would curtail development. Over the years, ZANU-PF would tighten its grip on civil liberties and related freedoms, but this only served to catalyse the emergence of a civil society focused on the protection and promotion of human rights. After the 2000 elections, ZANU-PF increased its violent approach to elections and the use of state security institutions to maintain and control power. In this context, post 2000, there was a rise in CSOs focusing on issues of good governance, transparency, accountability, human rights, service delivery and SA.

Given this, it is important to underline the critical role played by CSOs and residents' associations in Bulawayo especially within the context of citizen agency and counter hegemonic engagement and dialogue. Bulawayo has an array of CSOs which broadly focus on issues of SA, human rights, governance and democracy. These organisations are largely donor funded and have a grassroots presence, and they claim to represent governance issues on behalf of their social base. In addition, such organisations are key in spearheading social interventions that seek to empower citizens in participating more effectively on issues of urban governance, transparency and accountability. The BPRA is a community based organisation established in 2007 with a mandate to empower residents through the provision of platforms to discuss local governance and service delivery issues with the hope of ensuring more effective service delivery and accountability in local governance. It seeks to galvanise residents around key issues of service delivery and accountability; meanwhile, the Bulawayo United Residents' Association (BURA) seeks to represent residents' interest at council level with a bias towards the quality and cost of service delivery. Such organisations have found traction and support with regards the representation of residents' issues to city council.

The chain of events with reference to Bulawayo are quite significant during these times. To reiterate, due to attempts by the government to frustrate local governance processes in

Bulawayo, service delivery was compromised (Muchadenyika 2015). The consequent decline in social service delivery further triggered tension between the BCC and residents/ratepayers (Ranger 2011). Interestingly, the growing tension between BCC and residents, which resulted from the machinations of ZANU-PF, did not by any means gather support for ZANU-PF, as had been anticipated by the central state. In fact, local citizens elected a MDC led council in the 2004, 2008 and 2013 elections, further entrenching counter-hegemonic tendencies in Bulawayo across any local authority-local resident divide which may have existed. The counter-hegemonic mantra of the BCC and local residents would improve citizen agency in governance processes.

State tactics to retain a foothold in Bulawayo were straightforward and involved the indirect control of the local council through the use of Ministerial powers to oversee critical resources and infrastructure required to run an effective local government system (Chirisa 2013). This can be seen in the case of water delivery in Bulawayo. Historically, water in Bulawayo has remained a point of attrition between the city and the state, including since the days of colonialism (Musemwa 2006). In 2007, the state introduced a new institution for the purpose of wrestling the supply of water from MDC-run councils. The statutory body, the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA), was set up to regulate, treat and supply water for commercial purposes as an economic good. Most controversially, it was directed to take over water management from urban municipalities, including Harare in 2007 and Bulawayo (Musemwa 2008).

The deep-seated national political crisis (and challenges to the legitimacy of the ruling party) meant that any city-state dispute over water was deeply politicised. Hence, the state's attempt to take over water distribution roles from urban councils was not inherently problematic let alone political. But given the political crisis, this entailed taking authority away from urban governments led by the MDC, then handing this authority to ZINWA, as a way apparently of dispossessing the local authorities of a critical revenue base and rendering the BCC (more specifically) bankrupt and powerless (Musemwa 2006). Consequently, the move by government was interpreted by the BCC as a political attack on its very existence and integrity, which was further complicated by the fact that Bulawayo saw itself as having significance as a site of ethnic difference and opposition.

As a result, in 2007, Bulawayans fervently opposed the move. The general attitude towards resisting the proposed control of ZINWA can be attributed to the understanding that ZINWA was associated with the ruling party responsible for oppressing and marginalising people from

Matabeleland; as such, defiance towards ZINWA was equivalent to defiance towards the ruling party. In addition, the control of water by ZINWA would mean the BCC has a reduced revenue base as residents would remit to ZINWA and not the BCC. The refusal by Bulawayo residents and city council was motivated by varied reasons albeit against a common enemy, the state, in the form of ZINWA. Citizen action included a petition to the Ministry of Water, the MLGRUD, the parliamentary portfolio on local government and BCC; in addition, protest marches were conducted to show discontent towards the mooted decision by government to nationalise water. This refusal of ZINWA in fact saw the unification and coalescence of citizens across political divides to resist the take-over of water supply by ZINWA (Musemwa 2008). Bulawayans from ZANU-PF, MDC and other political parties coalesced and galvanised around the issue of water and took a concerted stand against the attempted move by the state. The strong stand against government and ZINWA was rooted in an understanding that the central state was seeking to undermine a democratically-elected council and ensure its demise for political mileage at the expense of service delivery. This stand-off between city and state rendered Bulawayo defiant of central authority (Ranger 2007). The ability of citizens to galvanise around a key national decision focusing on local governance was a way of trying to ensure that state leadership was not only accountable but also answerable for its actions. Counter-hegemony in this case thus sought to act as a counterweight against the prevailing rule by coercion enacted by national government and, thereby, maintain or recoup arrangements needed to run an efficient and effective Bulawayo City Council. As a result of such action, ZINWA was successfully rejected and Bulawayo remains the only city with direct control over water.

Such deliberate moves by the state sought to ensure that discontentment with MDC-run councils would pave way for the imposition of local government commissions to run the affairs of cities. But this was to no avail, at least in the case of Bulawayo. For example, during the fiscal year of 2012-2013, and in seeking to frustrate local processes in Bulawayo, the permanent secretary to the MLGRUD used the tactic of delaying the approval of the BCC budget in a bid to derail the ability of the city to deliver services to rate-payers. This move must be understood in context, since 2013 was an election year. Coupled with that, in the build up to the 2013 elections, the MLGRUD decreed – on the basis of the UCA – that all debts owed by residents to the BCC should be written off, prejudicing council's access to critical revenue required for even basic

operations. The move by the MLGRD was a low-blow attempt to gain political mileage while ensuring that the BCC was unable to provide fundamental services.

In addition, during the financial year period of 2014-2015, Bulawayo citizens, through CSO interventions, sought to mobilise for dialogue and engagement with the local authority on coming up with a citizen based budget making process focusing on an extensive budget consultation process, in line with the Zimbabwean constitution and the Public Finance Management Act. Hence, CSOs organised public participatory budget making training sessions to capacitate citizens to engage with council on issues of resource allocation, mobilisation and expenditure management. Given the increase in the need for comprehensive citizen consultation, council initiated a public budget consultation programme targeting the 29 wards of Bulawayo. However, such processes have been accused of being cosmetic in the sense that they are used to rubber-stamp pre-conceived decisions made at council level such that the meetings are portrayed as consultative, yet they are actually a false pretence of consultation.

In addition, during the build-up to the 2013 elections, the MLGRUD used his supervisory powers for political expediency to reactivate ZANU-PF destabilisation of opposition run city councils. The MLGRUD directed all local authorities to cancel debts owed by ratepayers, a move equated to vote-buying, which in turn compromised the potential of BCC to generate and recover necessary revenue for service delivery. The BCC initially resisted the directive but, with continued threats of disbanding of council by the MLGRUD, through the UCA, the BCC capitulated and cancelled debts albeit after a protracted period of time. The directive by central government to cancel debts was thus initially snubbed by the BCC; however, the local authority was compelled to implement the directive despite opposition. In addition, for example, in 2013, the BCC defied a directive by the MLGRUD to cut off water supplies to households in arrears as this was a violation of the right of access to clean and safe water. The defiance was based arbitrarily on the discretion of council outside consultation with affected households. Unfortunately, the attempt to buy votes by the state/ruling party failed as the MDC won all 29 local authority seats in the 2013 general elections.

The snubbing of directives from the state indicated that, while there were attempts to control local governance processes by the state, citizens from Bulawayo and council officials, both elected and appointed, were quick to resist these so as to preserve the sovereignty of Bulawayo (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010). These 'snubs' were consistent with the broader criticism of attempts by

the state to exert its dominion where it was not considered warranted (Jonga 2012). It also reinforced the tendency of the central government to disapprove of any separation of political representation between central and local government where, in this instance, the opposition had assumed control of the Bulawayo council (McGregor 2013).

As such, the tug of war between the city and the state in the local governance of Bulawayo would create an unprecedented crisis of governance. Indeed, in this context, the challenges in governance ceased to be about the administrative and development functions of local government or, more specifically, about whether or not the local council was performing its delegated roles and responsibilities and rendering adequate social services. Challenges became profoundly political given that central government exercised its power and authority in a manner that was contrary to the BCC council and its power base. In the end, Bulawayo residents interpreted government's attempts as an assault on their democratic choice and an erosion of local autonomy in an attempt to capture of BCC. These concerns were raised for instance by a civil society leader and expert on issues of local governance during a KII session in Bulawayo who espoused that:

*The state is always making attempts at capturing Bulawayo which is viewed as the last bastion of defiance to ZANU-PF hegemony politically and otherwise. So, it does not come as a surprise that there have been futile attempts by central government to make Bulawayo succumb to ZANU hegemony through hook and crook (KII held in Bulawayo on 9/4/2016).*

While animosity between the city and the state united residents with the city, this relationship was premised on the need to coalesce against a common enemy, the state. This pre-conditioned relationship however did not mean that relations between Bulawayo citizens and the BCC were always cordial. In 2016, for example, residents would engage and raise concerns vis-à-vis the council, in a demonstration organised by Bulawayo Agenda, on the lack of prioritisation by council of maternal health issues. Council clinics in Bulawayo had recently raised the maternal registration fees without factoring in residents'/ratepayers' views or concerns. The lack of citizen participation and consultation in such processes provided a basis for citizens to raise their discontentment with the BCC, thereby straining relations between the city and its residents/citizens.

#### **5.4 Transparency: A Culture of Accountability Deferred**

It is incontestable that, since the year 2000, local council elections in Bulawayo have been democratically dominated by the MDC. But this has not been without consequence. Tensions

between the state and the city, with particular reference to the BCC being deprived of state financial support for local government functions and delivery, have created room for the BCC to be accountable to itself. The inability or unwillingness of central government, perceived or real, to provide adequate local financing in Bulawayo has had the effect, perhaps unintentionally, of gradually weakening the ability of the state to play an effective role in monitoring the utilisation of public funds collected by the BCC. The laxity of government, in addition, also meant the local authority was susceptible to use public funds without any fear of reprisal by the state. Because of this, instances of corruption, abuse of power and collusive arrangements have forced citizens to form civic groups to monitor the activities of council in a bid to inculcate a culture of transparency, answerability and accountability. In this regard, one of the key roles and functions of civil society in development discourse is to play a watchdog role over government and related processes at local and national levels (Sivalo 2013).

Given the abdication of government's responsibility to provide public finance to the BCC, local authority officials had to utilise innovative means (like increasing service charges/rates, reducing the frequency of refuse collection and increasing fines) to generate revenue and, as well, ensure collected resources were utilised sustainably. But sustainable usage, or even proper usage, became deeply problematic. In effect, space was created for corruption and abuse of power by local government officials. Resultantly, allegations of corruption within the BCC would predicate the need for watchdog organisations like BPRA and BURA.

For example, in 2015, councillors from the BCC were linked to underhand dealings in the purchase of residential stands, at concessionary rates,<sup>5</sup> for resale at inflated rates. This exposure of graft would set the city on a collision course with residents, represented by BPRA, as the organisation called for a state probe of council by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Local Governance (PPCLG)<sup>6</sup>. While council had boasted of support from residents in its fight with the central state, this clearly did not guarantee the BCC immunity from scrutiny and criticism by local citizens. Criticism by residents, through residents' association, has however resulted in the systematic exclusion and closure of citizen platforms for participation, consultation and SA. For example, as ascertained during KIIs and FGDs with its representatives during fieldwork, BPRA highlighted that, while the constitution guarantees citizen consultation in budget making processes,

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<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.chronicle.co.zw/bcc-councillors-under-probe-over-land-deals>.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.radiodialogue.com/residents-call-councillors-investigated>.

the BCC had resorted to clandestine methods of budget formulation, where budgets are developed at council offices and consultation processes are used as processes for rubberstamping premeditated budgets, hence undermining the role of citizens in the budget cycle. In turn, what this has led to is the creation of alternative spaces, provided by organisations like BPRA, for citizens to engage and formulate petitions and protest marches calling council to account. Thus BPRA activities have included consultative arrangements whereby the organisation holds interface meetings at ward and constituency levels. The meetings act as platforms for interaction between residents and public officials on critical socio-economic and service delivery issues affecting residents.

Though the BCC independently raises revenue and resources, the UCA still dictates that councils (including the Bulawayo one) submit a budget (incorporating independently collected revenue) to the MLGRUD for approval. The budget to be approved has to meet certain standards stipulated by the MLGRUD. One stipulation states that all council budgets must meet a 70:30 ratio, meaning 70% of the total budget must be directed towards service delivery and 30% towards administrative and operational costs. The drive by the BCC to enhance revenue collection amid the declining Zimbabwean economy has seen the council fail to adhere to the 70:30 proposed ratio due to a high wage bill. At the end of the day, council directs almost 45% of collected revenue to administrative costs and the remainder to service delivery resulting in the gradual decline of service delivery. This has frustrated council operations leading to significant time-lags in the provision of essential social services. All this is taking place at a time of allegations of council corruption (including tender process corruption) and insider trading, sending council on a collision course with ratepayers.

SA in urban spaces, as a rights-based system of citizen oversight, relies upon the existence of strong and amicable city-citizen relations (Grandvoinnet et al. 2015). Strained relations between the BCC and residents, represented by RAs, have ensured a series of apprehensive interactions between the two groups, nullifying good relations. For example, in order to stamp and preserve its legitimacy, the BCC has resorted to labelling RAs as agents of political change in a bid to discredit their activities and calls for accountability. Consequently, as a key cause of concern and criticism, the BCC has received calls for SA from RAs, entailing almost a vote of no confidence in the council.

As a result, the Bulawayo local authority continues to resort to the closing of space for citizen participation in local governance processes (Madzivanyika 2014). For example, to carry out effective public expenditure monitoring, it is necessary for RAs to access critical council documents like strategy documents, council audit reports, meeting minutes and budgets. But council has resorted to denying access to these documents, citing central state instruments like the AIPPA in order to frustrate efforts by residents to effectively play an oversight role in public expenditure processes. During FGDs, representatives from BPRA structures (who are ordinary residents) brought this to the fore, thus claiming that the BCC – when deemed necessary – is willing and prepared to deploy the coercive apparatus of the detested central state against Bulawayans.

## **5.5 Commercialisation of Services and Dearth of Citizen Consultation and Participation**

The stance by central government not to avail funding for local authorities was undoubtedly politically motivated (Muchadenyika 2015). The resource gap created by such a move by the state prompted Bulawayo council to generate revenue through the commercialisation of goods and services. Between 2008 and 2013, council had not only gradually increased rates but resorted to inhumane measures to recover debts from residents. Strategies to recover debts included cutting off the supply of water (a fundamental human right) to households in arrears, attaching individual property to recover debts and the engagement of debt collectors. Residents from Ward 29 (Magwegwe) in particular – in a FGD – expressed concerns about this, though it affected Bulawayo residents more broadly. In doing this, what has been a constant in decisions taken by the BCC has been the gradual exclusion of, and lack of consultation with, citizens and disrespect for citizen rights. However, all this needs to be understood within the broader governance dynamics and approaches pursued by the central state and how these have been replicated, though not inevitably, at local government level (Muchadenyika 2015).

In Bulawayo, revenue generation and collection since 2000 has largely been the responsibility of the local council. This role has seen the transformation of the local authority from being service delivery oriented to being commercial in focus and priority (Zinyamba 2014). The commercialisation of services can be attributed to the growing need for council to finance its own operations given the absence of government support. In this respect, though related to the



withdrawal of state support, commercialisation of local authority functions is not reducible to the presence of neo-liberal restructuring. At the same time, the commercialisation of services has come with important implications. Monetisation of services has consequently meant amenities are beyond the reach of many households which are increasingly handicapped by unemployment and the failing Zimbabwean economy (Chikerema 2013).

The case of Iminyela (Ward 13) is significant in this context. Iminyela is a high density area in Bulawayo. The area has houses which belong to the city council which are occupied by tenants on a 20-year lease, with the transfer of ownership to occupants after the lapse of the lease period. One of the conditions of transfer states that rentals of US\$40 a month have to be paid to council; if there is defaulting of payments, then the agreement is nullified. Upon the lapse of the 20-lease agreements in 2014, council demanded the payment of US\$40 per month for an additional 10 years (thus making them 30-year leaseholds), thereby delaying the progressive realisation of residents to the right to secure shelter. The US\$40 fee and the extension were arrived at without citizen consultation and the extension was seen as a refusal by council to honour its promise in an attempt to increase council funds. The council was thus accused of soliciting for funds from poor residents by not honouring its promise. The ensuing challenge by citizens to the lease extension, arising from this exclusion from local government decision-making processes, contributed to the growing animosity between citizens and the city. As a general tendency, council has been condemned by RAs for commercialising its service by taking advantage of vulnerable communities. Consequently, the money paid by residents to council has not been accounted for in terms of public expenditure management, a key component of SA.

In 2013, without citizen consultation, the BCC resolved to introduce pre-paid water metres as a water management measure. Council mooted the project, allegedly, to solve challenges with revenue flows to the local authority coffers caused by low payment rates by debtors. The arbitrary decision by council, based on the assertion that the project would enhance the viability of council and ensure improved water services, incited residents. Through RAs, residents indicated how the proposed intervention was in violation of the fundamental right of access to clean and safe water. On this premise, residents took to the street in protest against council (BPRA 2015). The drive to commercialise essential services like water further widened the rift between citizens and city authorities. While it is important for local authorities to provide services and for rate-payers to (at least partially) finance the provision of such services, the basic rights of citizens should be upheld

at all times (Zinyamba 2014). Regrettably, citizen participation in local governance in Bulawayo was reduced, and continues to be, by the imposed monetisation of services by council. In tandem with this, council processes have tended to go unchecked and accountability compromised.

The commercialisation of services by the BCC ultimately alienated economically marginalised communities from accessing essential services. The alienation of communities from accessing these services disenfranchised communities from demanding SA from the BCC as their lack of access, due to economic reasons, handicapped their ability to dialogue and engage with council on critical issues around access, quality and cost of essential services.

## **5.6 Social Accountability in Bulawayo's Urban Governance**

The composition of local government in Bulawayo has its own complexities unique to the city alone (Chikerema 2013). While the city at times seems hell-bent at pursuing an independent path vis-à-vis the central state, as a local authority it invariably falls under the same rule book as other urban local authorities, namely, the UCA which informs local governance processes in Zimbabwe. In a bid at times to stave off pressure from the MLGRUD, BCC has leveraged citizen consent with political will to thwart government directives targeted at derailing and frustrating local governance processes. The sphere of SA at local level in Bulawayo has, over the years, expanded from merely questioning the exercise of power to include enhancing accountability with citizens for purposes of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of local governance and thereby increase access to quality service provision. According to Friis-Hansen (2014), SA can be broadly defined as citizen-led action to demand answers from state service providers. However, in Bulawayo, structural impediments at national and local levels have subdued the ability of residents to call council, elected and appointed, officials to account, and to explain and justify reasons behind poor service delivery.

The UCA as a rule book does not provide space for citizens to hold urban councils accountable because it clearly states that local authorities are only accountable to central government as represented by the MLGRUD (Chikerema 2013). Thus, it stresses upward accountability rather than downward accountability. However, the right to participate at local level is guaranteed in the Constitution of Zimbabwe as well as in enabling legislation like the Public Finance Management Act. This includes direct, indirect and joint participation in public processes either initiated by citizens themselves or by local government (Madzivanyika, 2014). This then is clearly set out in the founding values and principles of the Constitution which calls for good

governance. This entails the inclusion of all Zimbabweans, and it is from citizens that the very authority and right to govern is derived by the state, state institutions and agencies of government, including local government. This basically entails that, for the purposes of good governance at the local level, people's needs and views are of paramount importance and should be respected and valued.

At the same time, the Constitution does not explicitly outline citizen engagement through notably participatory budgeting; and, like the Constitution, the UCA does not impose an obligation for local governments to incorporate local citizens into the budget-crafting process. But local government is required in terms of Section 298 (1) of the Constitution to be transparent, accountable and responsible, as well as to produce fiscal reports (on all financial matters) which are accessible to the public (Muchadenyika 2014). This means that local government, in the exercise of its functions – especially where financial obligations are concerned – must be accountable to the rate-payers and service users (Muchadenyika 2015). The BCC is thus obliged to follow this course of action. But the ambiguity in the constitution and relevant legislation leaves city authorities with room to manoeuvre in terms of accountability to residents.

As such, the BCC has selectively applied, and conveniently so, the UCA rule book when asked to account by citizens. For instance, in terms of the UCA, the public is only required to inspect or object to an already crafted budget. In Bulawayo, a draft budget is put in place beforehand, and residents are able to articulate their voices and provide inputs at consultative meetings before the budget is finalised. In reality, though, the time afforded the public ends up being very limited for the community to meaningfully give input into the budget processes. As Madzivanyika (2014) argues, what exists is one-way communication from power-holders, with citizens serving to rubber stamp already made decisions.

Clearly, any improvement in public service provision and citizen-local authority engagement in Bulawayo cannot be effectively discussed without referring to the historical character of citizen-state relations in the country more broadly (Kamete 2006c). Historically, citizen engagement in Bulawayo has been tokenistic and the central state has often times displayed divergent attitudes towards fostering SA within urban spaces (Jonga 2015). Several factors have contributed to the sustained failure of citizen participation and these include resistance to citizen engagement by state actors, the weak rule of law, and the absence of a coherent legal framework for citizen participation (Musemwa 2008). The rule of law in Zimbabwe is fashioned in a manner

that seeks to protect hegemony such that civil society driven participation, in most cases, is curtailed by the selective application of the law in instances where the state assumes civic engagement is a threat, directly or indirectly, to the reins of power.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

The chapter provided an analysis of Bulawayo's current polity, paying attention to some of the contextual continuities and discontinuities influencing and shaping the lived experiences of Bulawayo communities. Discussions noted the complexity of the relations between the state and the city, and how these (post-2013) continue to structure and shape citizen participation and SA. The chapter periodised major urban governance developments in Bulawayo from 2012 onwards as a basis of underlining shifting relations in the city and how these pattern SA. The chapter plays a fundamental role in setting the context for understanding the tapestry of Bulawayo's strata in relation to intra-city and inter city-state relations as it provided a thematic presentation of issues central to urban governance and SA in Bulawayo noting how these have, historically, interacted with shifting inter and intra-city relations. In addition, it further interrogated how these influence and predicate lived SA experiences and outcomes in the city. The following chapter seeks to relate Bulawayo's current polity to the socio-political experiences of Bulawayo's residents with a focus on some of the structural issues that influence SA in Bulawayo.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CHARACTERISING THE STATE-SOCIETY RELATIONS AROUND SA IN BULAWAYO**

### **6.1 Introduction**

State-society relations in urban Africa have been variously described as dependent on political relations (Siziba 2016), premised on strong citizen participation foundations (King and Owusu 2013) and in most cases affected by the failure and fissures of both participatory and representative democracy (Fox 2014). Interactions between the state and society have for long been viewed as formal and informal because they not only operate outside the realm of government or state control and are legally recognised (Grandvoinnet et al. 2015), but are also influenced by the social contract that is based on government's obligation to ensure the progressive realisation of citizens' needs (Joshi and Houtzager 2012). The genesis of these relations is conditioned by the social, political and economic environment. For example, the advent of civil society organisations focusing on service delivery is linked to processes of urbanisation and economic decline that manifested itself in poor service delivery.

This chapter, along with the following two chapters, deals with more specific themes around SA in contemporary Bulawayo, such that it goes beyond the broader and more historical accounts about SA and urban governance in Bulawayo and more broadly in Zimbabwe as detailed in the three previous contextual chapters. This current chapter is concerned with highlighting the various processes and dynamics involved in the formation, taxonomy and structure of state-society relations, how these interact and ultimately affect SA and service delivery. It offers diverse typologies of state-society relations and how they impact on each other. For Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg (2015), differing formations of citizen-state relations impact the potential for realising outcomes for accountability and service delivery as the state has power to support or impede social accountability. This makes it imperative to contextualise SA to Bulawayo as state-society relations differ from place to place. There is need for further examining the agreements and relationships that bind the state to citizens. This is critical to understand as what is expected by citizens and what states are prepared to commit to delivering varies according to the goods and services, their level of political importance, and the history of state-society bargaining on the said issues (Houtzager and Joshi 2007).

State and society relations with reference to social accountability appear in various guises in Bulawayo. These interrelations in the country's urban polity occur on a continuum where formal and informal spheres of society converge. In this regard, state-society relations include all associational groupings (small or large, formal or informal) that operate at all levels of Bulawayo's polity. The taxonomy and formation of these various groupings is dependent on many internal and external dynamics which are fully discussed below. The emergence of strong representation of CSOs focused on governance and accountability in Bulawayo has been marked by novel forms of citizen capacity to demand better service delivery. The emergence of strong civic bodies and non-state institutions, in most cases, has seen an attempt by the central Zimbabwean state to use rule by coercion as a means of thwarting citizen voices and maintaining state power.

## **6.2 State-City Relations in Bulawayo**

The character of state-society relations is known to be central to the politics of socio-economic development (Thornton and Thornton 2008). These relations, and their effects, might lead to the institutionalisation of democratic forms of development processes or to the exact opposite, with corresponding feedback effects on state and society relationships (Hickey and King 2016). Development scholars (Thornton and Thornton 2008; Grandvoinnet *et al.* 2015; Ndou 2016) tend to make use of the term 'civil society' to designate the non-state realm in modern societies, though this term has different shades of meaning. For the purpose of analysing state-society relations, I adopt a largely organisational understanding of civil society (Siziba 2016) – that is, non-state organisations/groups which are rooted outside the state though normally structured by conditions set by the state. These organisations interact with the state in a multiplicity of fluctuating ways, from full cooperation to complete dissent, and the state engages with these groups likewise.

Civil society has, in addition, a more institutional definition relating to a social space within which liberal constitutional political and liberal rights exist and indeed flourish. When it comes to questions of SA, progressive civil society groups seek to defend and/or advance civil society rights. This has relevance to both central and local state accountability vis-à-vis the citizenry, and thus to the relationships between citizens/society on the one hand and local city authorities and central state authorities on the other. Any prospect of SA, as Fox (2014) notes, requires the development of relationships focused on building trust between state and society. Given Bulawayo's tenacious history and reputation as a defiant city (Ranger 2007), there has been a convoluted process involving the souring of relations over time between the central state (represented by the ruling

party and the MLGRUD), the local Bulawayo authority and society represented by urban Bulawayans. In this section, I thematically present the prevailing form of state-society relations and how these have influenced SA and related interventions in Bulawayo.

### **6.2.1 The Politics of Patronage**

Patronage continues to be a key feature of state-society relations in not only Zimbabwe generally but in Bulawayo more specifically. As an intrinsic system of maintaining and consolidating power, there have been continued efforts by ZANU-PF to wrest power, using state institutions, from democratically-elected councils in the country. From 2000, ZANU-PF has suffered recurrent electoral defeats in Bulawayo and lost control of the municipality to the opposition MDC. As such, contestation and the fight to regain control of urban governance in Bulawayo has become the central state's priority and this has had a number of effects on state-society relations at a local level. In Bulawayo (and indeed elsewhere), ZANU-PF has attempted on a strenuous basis to recentralise powers over local authorities, which has seen, as well, the development of parallel (ruling) party structures and the use of militia to supplant the local authority by way of for example controlling markets and peri-urban land (McGregor 2013). ZANU-PF, through the state and party structures, has utilised popular policies like arbitrary debt cancellations, parceling out of council lands to loyal supporters and the dismissal of elected (opposition) councilors to maintain a foothold in Bulawayo. Given this, patronage seems to have a strong bearing on social accountability, service delivery and citizen participation outcomes in Bulawayo.

Usually, the politics of patronage with regards to council land has been attributed to attempts by the state to mobilise electoral support (Boone and Kriger 2010). Certainly, in Bulawayo, land is being manipulated for political reasons by the state, leading to it becoming a patronage resource. To maintain a strong foot-hold in urban localities, like Bulawayo, the state has utilised land for two main purposes. Firstly, urban land in Bulawayo has been used by the state as a reward for working for (and on behalf of) the state and as an incentive to keep members mobilised and engaged actively in the ruling party. Secondly, urban land has become a basis for forming new/emerging urban settlements to neutralise forces opposed to ZANU-PF's continued rule, especially the MDC, which has previously capitalised on the rising disenchantment amongst urbanites against the state. By parceling out land to party loyalists, ZANU-PF has made attempts to change the demographic and spatial dimensions of Bulawayo through the creation of a key social base aligned to the party. This, to some extent, has created a loyal group of beneficiaries

with a perceived need to criticise and undercut the rule of a largely MDC-led BCC. It has also led to the active participation of citizens loyal to ZANU-PF being vocal against the way the city is run; however, for partisan and not accountability reasons. Such voices in turn have been ignored and sidelined, by council authorities, from the process of citizen consultation and participation as what has mattered most to the city authorities is the bearer of the message than its substance or content with regards service delivery and SA. This has largely been attributed to the partisan nature of urban governance in Bulawayo where views contrary to the ones of the MDC-run council are treated as motivated by ZANU-PF, and vice-versa; hence they are viewed as inconsequential without appreciating and understanding the merits and demerits of arguments raised. In this way, patronage has created a new set of challenges to SA in Bulawayo where citizens' views are treated on a partisan basis curtailing the development of an inclusive and non-partisan SA system in Bulawayo.

The marked expansion of such urban constituencies in Bulawayo needs to be understood in the context of the battle for Bulawayo between the state and opposition. In order to strengthen the ruling ZANU-PF's hand ahead of national elections, an arbitrary parceling of land has taken place. For example, in 2014, war veterans from the Bulawayo branch of the national war veteran association were handed out land belonging to the BCC at Mazwi Game Reserve located 20 kilometres outside of Bulawayo. There was contestation between the war veterans and council officials based on the legality, or lack of it, of the occupation with council seeking legal recourse and war veterans using their access to the power of the central state. The BCC took legal recourse and the illegal occupants were served with eviction orders, with fines amounting to US\$6,000 being paid to the local authority as compensation.

The incident highlighted the depth of patronage in local governance. Consequently, the incident exposed weak systems of SA as there were no formal processes followed or citizen consultations done in the parceling out of council-owned land. The same sentiments were raised by a participant (an ordinary citizen) during a FGD when he purported that:

*Patronage was legalised long back in our country, thus it is accepted in Zimbabwe. It will not stop any time soon. It feeds on greed and that has no limit. This scourge should have been opposed by citizens long ago but the fact that we as citizens have been gradually stripped of our voice has meant politicians are running the country as their own (FGD, Ward 13, Iminyela, 7/5/16).*



Through the use/abuse of the UCA by the MLGRUD, land as a tool for patronage includes annexing and regularising several illegal peri-urban settlements dotted around Bulawayo to extend state hegemony. One key informant indicated that:

*The parceling out of council land, since 2000, by the state is without a doubt aimed at neutralising the MDC's support base ahead of the 2018 elections. In line with the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim-Asset), the state promised to provide 80,000 housing units in Bulawayo by 2018 to vanquish the opposition. Just like the land reform programme, this scheme will not benefit ordinary deserving Bulawayo citizens but party loyalists (KII with a CSO opinion leader, 9/4/16).*

Land continues to be used as a tool for maintaining a central state presence in Bulawayo. These land deals entail the state gaining backdoor entry and control of the city, and they have had the effect of exacerbating strained relationships existing historically between the central state and local citizens, including the state's chequered history with reference to the *Gukurahundi* massacres of the 1980s. As a result, significant underlying unease with (and resentment against) the state is palpable. It is also noticeable that land – when it is parceled out – is usually given to party loyalists that are from outside the general Ndebele-speaking areas/people of Matabeleland North and South, and Bulawayo in particular. When people from outside Bulawayo benefit from local land, it creates further tensions between the state and Bulawayans. This view is epitomised by sentiments raised during a Key Informant Interview when the participant quoted (immediately above) indicated in addition that:

*Benefactors of council housing stands and land in general have been individuals from distant regions, outside Bulawayo, while locals are displaced and left homeless by government. The state has parceled out land on a patronage basis with party loyalists in the army and police being the largest benefactors (KII with a CSO opinion leader, 9/4/16).*

This overbearing nature of the state and its institutions on such a crucial matter as access to urban land/space has meant the blurring of lines between the mandates of local and national authorities with regards the provision of basic services, with consequent implications for social accountability. The overall effect has been the deepening lack of trust between citizens and the state, both local and national, in Bulawayo. This lack of trust has in turn manifested itself in the gradual disconnection between the state and society characterised by such tendencies as corruption, patronage, lack of citizen consultation and the general demise in SA on the part of the

state. As a process and practice, SA places emphasis on establishing firm relations and good rapport between duty bearers and citizens. One of the major premises of good rapport is trust and the lack of trust between citizens and the state, at local and national levels, presents a slippery slope for SA to take effect and bring in positive development in Bulawayo.

In this context, Bulawayo in the post-independence period is still governed using colonial by-laws. These by-laws continue to inhibit the formation and institutionalisation of a well-regulated informal economy which might counteract recent surges in unemployment in the formal economy. Because of this, in terms of informal economic activities, unemployed youth and women eke out a living through precarious vending. While vendors and other informal traders pay vending and other licenses to the local council, there is no accountability in the sense of clarity on the use made of the revenue generated. Municipality police also continue to raid and confiscate vendors' wares regardless of the fact that they possess valid trading documents. However, patronage as a tool is then used as a means of empowering party loyalists to trade freely and stave off competition from other traders. For instance, one participant during a FGD highlighted:

*Bakhona abangathintwayo, abafazi bamapholisa, abanye abeZANU, lobanye asebeze bethengisa inkukhu eduze kwako-Bakers inn. Abanye sebeze bethengisa lembanje ezingoleni. Thina esingazi muntu siyaxotshwa sidiziswa* [There are some of us vendors that are untouchable like those who are spouses to members of the Republic police and ZANU-PF members and others who are now selling chickens near Bakers Inn. Some hawkers are even illegally selling marijuana. Some of us without any influential people to protect us are harassed and made to pay bribes] (FGD Ward 13, Iminyela, 14/5/16).

To further understand the deep roots of patronage and its impact on SA in Bulawayo's governance, it is important to realise that patronage as a system is not unique to ZANU-PF and the central state. Given the challenges in revenue collection and service delivery in Bulawayo, the MDC-led BCC decided to initiate a public works programme leveraging on the burgeoning unemployment. This was done intentionally to combat the lack of funds to hire permanent workers by council and secondly to assist residents in obtaining an income so as to off-set local authority utility bills. Through politically-elected ward councilors, or MDC, the BCC targeted residents who could take up labour intensive programmes like trench digging and road habilitation on a short term basis, with 'needy' homesteads presenting themselves for paid work. However, the public works system led to a number of institutional challenges. For example, the selection and

documentation of beneficiaries was the sole responsibility of local councilors. In this regard, the process tended to be political rather than developmental, as councilors had the sole responsibility and space to determine the type of work to be done and the selection criteria for community members to be involved. Representative citizenry inclusion, participation and SA were clearly supposed to be embedded in the work programme process, but this did not take place in practice. Residents interviewed during the fieldwork expressed their deep dissatisfaction, such as in the following statement: *“Key principles such as consultation, accountability, non-discrimination and adherence to the set selection criterion were not respected as councilors employed their relatives, girlfriends and members drawn from their political parties”* (FGD, Ward 28, 13/5/16).

In the context of the central state continuing to contend for power in Bulawayo, patronage has taken centre-stage in the erosion and weakening of local governance systems which otherwise would be promoting citizen participation and consultation in service delivery. The antagonistic relationship between the state and the Bulawayo local authority, and the underhandedness of the central state, seems to condition the possibility of use and abuse of power by even local officials and councilors in Bulawayo at the expense of inclusive development. The continued contest for power, through patronage, between the city and the state, has set the city of Bulawayo on a collision course with its citizens as there are blurred lines in terms of who is accountable to whom.

### **6.2.2 State/Party Interests and City Interests**

Closely associated with the politics of patronage and its impact on SA in Bulawayo is the existence of political narratives and agendas from the central state which have been packaged and couched as city interests in Bulawayo's SA discourse. While politics of course play a significant part in the success or failure of SA, there is the need to further analyse major political strands which work in tandem with patronage in the local governance of Bulawayo. In this respect, Verheul (2013) posits that politicians in Zimbabwe have managed to ensure that party interests are packaged as citizens' interests so that resources, of any kind, benefit political elites at the expense of local development. This assertion bears testament to the prevalence of party interests being posited as city interests and how these have compromised SA. This tends to go contrary to ensuring that available public resources are progressively channeled to maximise service delivery and poverty alleviation (Joshi and Houtzager 2012).

For SA to be effective in any context, there needs to be a strong interaction between demand-side (civil society and citizens) and supply-side actors (state structures and processes)

(Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg 2015). However, these relations need to be understood in context, bearing in mind some of the historical experiences and existent institutions which are key in informing interactions between these two sets of actors. As alluded to earlier, the distinction between the nation, the ruling party and the state in Zimbabwe is difficult to ascertain, with the ruling party often propagating its own (exclusionary) notion of the nation. This issue manifests itself in unsavoury relations between the city of Bulawayo and the state (Musemwa, 2006, 2008; Ranger 2013). As a means of re-establishing its presence in Bulawayo, the state (through the MLGRD) usually seeks political mileage over the MDC through ruling party influence, vested in the need to control urban governance.

For example, in the build-up to the June 2013 general elections, the MLGRUD declared that utility bills owed by residents to the BCC should be cancelled with immediate effect, failure to which council would be dissolved. The move was a bid, first of all, to emasculate the local authority in terms of raising enough revenue to provide service delivery; secondly, it was a move to emasculate the MDC-run local authority to damage its credibility; and thirdly it was an attempt by the state to win votes for ZANU-PF. Such populist decisions need to be probed further, as there was no citizen consultation or engagement before this utility bill decision was made. While the decision was popular amongst locals in Bulawayo, it entailed a central state imposition which sooner or later would have detrimental effects on revenue collection, service delivery and SA. Resultantly, the decision paved way for a political (ruling) party interest, based on contestation for power and control in Bulawayo, to be articulated under the guise of a city interest; the public interest (according to the Ministry) was being served, when in fact the Ministry was acting on behalf of the ruling party. Because of this, it was implemented without any due diligence towards accountability or citizen participation and consultation. One key informant brought this to the fore:

*Local governance in Zimbabwe is in the hands of thugs and these bandits will always make sure there is incentives behind partisan decisions. When elections were declared in 2013, Minister Chombo and his cronies were keen on weakening the MDC base in the city by unilaterally declaring all debts null and void. Such thuggish behaviour is based on the assertion that ZANU-PF, through its powers and arms, can do as it pleases while candy-coating party interests as national ones (KII CSO opinion leader, 16/4/16).*

What the partisan nature of engagement between the city council and the central state has done is to generate friction between the city council and Bulawayo citizens. While the move to

cancel debts was well received by local citizens, the underlying factor which citizens overlooked was its impact on service delivery, as the local authority was prejudiced of necessary resources for service delivery. The overbearingness of the state thus posed a challenge in terms of decision-making and the ability of BCC to carry out its duties effectively. However, while debts were cancelled, the MLGRUD did not provide any reprieve for the local authority in terms of alternative funding streams. Consequently, a crisis of expectation was created as residents immediately thought debts would be cancelled on a regular basis while service delivery was expected to continue without any challenges. When the state tends to gravitate towards exerting its power and control over local government institutions, the results of such an approach might compromise service delivery, alienate the voice of citizens, and increase grounds for corruption and abuse of power. Consequently, even local state and civil society relations become confrontational, which makes engagement and dialogue, which are necessary for social accountability, difficult to maintain or develop.

The key point for now, though, is that the relationship between the MLGRUD and the BCC remains contentious with the ministry pursuing party priorities, as if they were in the public-national interest, and the city council pursuing opposing priorities. The subsequent impact of strained relations between the local authority and the state, represented by the ministry, involves stifling the voices of citizens and their priorities in an accountable system of governance, thereby creating a protracted condition of lack of accountability and poor service delivery. The constant confrontational engagements between the BCC and the MLGRUD has ensured the gradual silencing of citizen voices and, at the same time, provided a major obstacle for SA (which places due emphasis on citizen participation in any accountable system of governance). Continued populist but party-driven decisions and reforms in local governance underline the short-termism approach to local governance by the central state and this continues to stifle long-term socio-economic development. As such, the pretense by the state to push a citizen agenda (and outside of citizen consultation) leads to a crisis of service delivery and accountability where the role and mandate of the local authority is constantly undermined. This in turn blurs lines of accountability as there is continued contestation between the state, citizens and the BCC. Given the current context, the major question which remains relatively unanswered is who is accountable to who: is it the state and local authority being accountable to citizens, or citizens being accountable to the

state and local authorities? Whatever the situation, as it exists currently, citizens occupy the periphery of the accountability equation.

### **6.2.3 Tensions between the City of Bulawayo and Citizens**

As a tool for poverty reduction, SA has been largely treated by many development practitioners and scholars as a technical-cum-administrative instrument rather than as a necessary political (though not partisan) means to bring about poverty reduction (McGee and Gaventa 2013; Grandvoinnet 2015; Oduor 2015). In this light, most SA interventions in Bulawayo have been largely carried out by CSOs through donor funding. Given the fluid and problematic relations which exist between the central state and CSOs, SA has been tagged and stereotyped on a regular basis by the central state as a regime change tool bent on exposing state failure for political expediency purposes. The resultant perceptions have also informed relations between the BCC and citizens in general, where civil society has been viewed as a proponent of political change even at local council level, creating a ‘them and us’ based interaction between the state, local council and civil society. As well, tensions between the city and the state have forced the BCC to rely on its own efforts to raise revenue and this has created a culture of un-answerability by the local authority, to both local rate-payers and the central state. Consequently, this scenario has inhibited room for citizen consultation and participation in local authority processes, thus further solidifying the ground for corruption and abuse of power.

In this respect, emerging trends of importance include the relatively new key development actors at local levels who advocate for SA and citizen participation, particularly in public resources management, in state-society interactions. Before the advent of SA advocacy, led by CSOs in Bulawayo, the local authority – in response to government interference – did not realise the necessity of involving citizens in public resource management. However, the situation shifted with the emergence of local CSOs which started to scrutinise the operations of BCC through opening space and building capacity for citizens to demand accountability. Mapira (2012) notes that the predominant relationship, previously, used to be informed by council believing it was a law unto itself, without any obligations to citizens. As there was conflict between central and local government, this meant that the local authority did not feel compelled to report to either central government or local citizens. Now the relationship is between citizens, through CSOs, and the local authority. This creation of spaces for citizen participation in local government processes has largely been coordinated by civil society formations and this has become both a blessing and a

curse for SA interventions and outcomes in Bulawayo. There are thus both advantages and disadvantages for citizens within this new arrangement, as is shown below.

The full potential of SA in Bulawayo continues to be curtailed by existing political tensions between citizens and the local authority. Given this, it is important to note that the role of CSOs in SA was disrupted in the immediate post-2009 period when significant co-option of civil society leadership into positions of political authority, particularly during the GNU period, took place. Because of the close relationship between civil society and democratic movements in Bulawayo, dating back to the 1990s, the role of civil society as a watchdog in local governance became handicapped post 2009. Arguably, post-2009 service delivery in Bulawayo began to progressively decline because of a failure by civil society to coordinate and convene spaces for citizens to effectively criticise the operations of MDC run local authorities whose subsequent impact was poor accountability. The failure by civil society to play an oversight and watchdog role hampered its legitimacy to occupy critical space and champion accountability. The intermittent criticism and advocacy for SA post-2009 by civil society curtailed the influence of SA interventions as these became largely determined by those who were in political positions of power, as encapsulated in the inherent paternalistic relationship between civil society and the MDC. In addition, most SA initiatives were misdirected to the MLGRUD solely, at the expense of the BCC, and this resulted in non-compliance by both local and central states in the quest for SA. As such, political tensions in Bulawayo continued to play a hand in the pursuit (and outcomes) of SA, making the process a cumbersome endeavour. The inability of civil society organisations in Bulawayo to hold MDC-run councilors to account is linked then to the strong alliance and co-option of key civil society leaders into political office, and how this hindered the ability of civil society to mobilise citizens to play a stronger oversight role.

The adverse impact of SA being largely donor-CSO driven, rather than pursued vigorously by the local authority itself, is that there has been a continuous deafening of ears by responsible institutions and authorities in the local governance cycle as donor funded interventions have been linked to political change. Consequently, SA interventions by CSOs have been reduced by the local authority to political rhetoric despite the validity of points raised by such civic actors. As well, citizen voices and their connection to CSOs have been delegitimised by the central state as party-political because of the labelling of them as (supposedly opposition-aligned) regime-change agents (Sivalo 2013). This has led to a divide between citizens/society and the local authority in

Bulawayo, with citizen efforts and genuine concerns around accountability embodying a rift between citizens and the local authority. This rift has seen an emerging perception of state-society relations in which the BCC is depicted (by citizens) as ‘them’ and citizens view themselves as ‘us’, thereby negating any potential gains of SA and its ability to reduce poverty and improve service delivery.

But a new pattern of social relations is emerging, since 2014, between the two groups (BCC and Bulawayans) and this has seen the opening up of space for citizen consultation. However, the opening up of space has been premised on the nature of challenges being tackled. When the BCC has been in confrontation with central government, Bulawayo’s citizens have come to the fore in supporting positions taken by city council. Sequentially, where Bulawayo’s citizens have felt hard-done by council they have resumed the confrontational approach, driven by civil society, in order to bring council to account. This new pattern of unity in times of strife against central government, and confrontation in times of dissatisfaction with council conduct, has created an uneasy relationship for SA to take place as such inconsistencies in citizen engagement and disengagement in urban governance have created an intermittent environment for sustained citizen action to take effect. For example, the BCC has taken steps to provide public space for citizens to contribute to the budget-making process through participatory budget consultations in which citizens’ views are taken into account in relation to the prioritisation and allocation of resources. However, such steps by the local authority have not been sincere at times, such that there have been allegations directed at the BCC for using such public processes to legitimise its decisions rather than take citizen input fully on board. When it comes to expenditure tracking and providing justification and explanation on expenditure, council has been less forthcoming to the extent of withholding key information on public expenditure.

In this context, a draft budget is put in place beforehand by the local authority in Bulawayo and then residents are given the opportunity to give their input at consultative meetings before the budget is finalised. In reality, the time afforded the public ends up being very limited for purposes of ensuring meaningful input into the processes. Further, public input is at the tail-end of the process (at final draft stage), which means that citizens in Bulawayo are not involved in a deep participatory process. As Madzivanyika (2014) argues, what exists seems to be one-way communication from power holders, with citizens serving to rubber stamp already made decisions. What further discredits the entire participatory budgeting process as a charade is the fact that



budget proposals are to be published in three issues of any newspaper. Considering the current economic climate in Zimbabwe, characterised by high levels of unemployment and poverty, most people cannot afford to buy newspapers. Worse still, the information that the BCC provides through newspaper announcements, and lately through Facebook, twitter and the local authority's website, comes late, making it difficult for people to make use of it in any focused and deliberative manner.

#### **6.2.4 Rule of Law Vs Rule by Law**

One of the key issues in Bulawayo, and Zimbabwe in general, is dealing with the legacy of the colonial state, power and rule, including a state apparatus which was designed and used to oppress people. Post-independence, the nationalist government did not dismantle the authoritarian state and its malcontents. Rather, it altered and expanded its functional and institutional scope allowing for the gradual emergence and consolidation of a new post-colonial security and authoritarian state which celebrated independence from colonial rule but not democratic freedoms, and limited the (civil society) space for exercising civil and political liberties. The racialised dualism under colonialism was replaced by a new dualism rooted in the distinction between ZANU-PF patriots and anti-ZANU-PF groups, with the latter (for instance, MDC supporters) often said to exist outside the Zimbabwean nation. To protect the Zimbabwean nation, centralisation of power in the only authentic political party became an obsession and this centralisation project (despite formal claims about decentralising power) manifested itself in how central and local government functioned. This involved the conflation of party and state which has become an albatross around the neck of the country, as political party issues within ZANU-PF take centre stage, with the paralysis of the party leading to local and national governance paralysis.

The attack on the fabric of doctrine of the rule of law, in its current form, is informed by the idea that Zimbabwe is a society in which equality before the laws, respect for public institutions and consistent application of the law across various groups in an equitable manner is far-fetched. The rule of law is being replaced by rule by law, in which laws are enacted and enforced to target the opposition and civil society while the selective application of the law creates a crisis of confidence in the law. The attempt to curtail the freedom of certain spaces reduces the space for SA, hence reference to rule by law instead of consistency in adhering to the rule of law.

Rule by coercion has been a key feature of local governance in Zimbabwe (Kamete 2006; Makumbe 2008; Sachikonye 2012; Ranger 2013). Bulawayo has been subjected to state coercion

through directives passed, without consultation, by the MLGRUD. Part of the relationship which exists between the state and society is largely informed and shaped by the lack of consent between the city and state. It is for this reason that the city of Bulawayo, as indicated, has been labelled by the state as a rebel city (Stiff 2000), dissident city (Musemwa 2006) and a problem city (Chirisa and Jonga 2013). The state typically uses coercion where and when it has failed to get its way, paving the way for rule by force rather than consent in Bulawayo. At the same time, rule by coercion has had adverse impacts on citizen space and participation, thereby handicapping the potential for vibrant SA in local governance and public resource management.

To best understand the consent-coercion dichotomy, it is necessary to trace the origins and premises of interactions between the state and society in Bulawayo. The local government system in Zimbabwe and Bulawayo specifically is legislative rather than constitutional (Makumbe 2008). In practical terms, what this means is that local government is not a self-determining sphere of government, but a tier of government and ultimately an appendage of central government. Given the strong presence of central government and the state's tendency to exert its will on the people, coercion becomes an available tool in the event consent is not sought nor is possible. One of the key instruments of coercion in local governance which shapes state-society relations is the UCA which serves as the principal Act governing local authorities in Zimbabwe. The use and abuse of government interventions by the central state's line ministry has been facilitated by the UCA which gives unprecedented powers to the minister. One key informant posited that:

*There are deep tensions between the BCC and the state. These tensions are partly to blame for the corruption, impunity and lack of respect for citizen's rights in local governance. You have a minister of local government that has so much power and does not see the value-addition of citizen input in decision making; hence the prevalence of decisions that are out of touch with present circumstances being imposed on councils. The challenge is that the same undemocratic behaviour by the state is replicated at Council level where citizens are by-standers on issues concerning their governance (KII with a CSO Opinion leader, 23/4/16).*

On the one hand, the UCA bestows a semblance of local autonomy to residents through local council elections yet, on the other hand, it confers almost dictatorial power upon the Minister of Local Government. This legislative ambiguity and tension has provided a premise for contestation that has continued to undermine SA in Bulawayo. Consequently, the powers given to

the minister and his ministry have not gone unchallenged. For instance, BPRA has campaigned for the fundamental rights of residents to seek answers and accountability from their elected representatives at local level. These representatives, councilors, are accountable to the electorate in particular and the citizens in general. In the face of organised protest marches, accountability meetings and petitions, BPRA has been vilified by city council. For its part, the central state – in cahoots with local authorities – has deployed police to assault and detain BPRA officials and demonstrators, and accused the organisation of plotting regime-change, further entrenching rule by coercion over rule by consent.

A good case in point that exemplifies state coercive rule is that, during a protest march over prepaid water metres and tender process irregularities in Bulawayo, the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) denied BPRA a clearance to sanction the protest march. As a result, the organisation made an urgent High Court Chamber Application (HCCA) seeking to over-rule the state's decision to block the march. Resultantly, the decision to block the march was revoked. However, on the eve of the protest march, members of the organisation were rounded up and detained without trial on instructions given to the Minister of Home Affairs by the MLGRUD. One resident lamented that:

*We were rounded up by the police because we were members of BPRA structures. We were detained at a local police station simply because we wanted to voice our discontentment with BCC and corrupt activities going on at city hall.... At times the price for demanding accountability is paid through physical and psychological torture (FGD, Ward 8, Makokoba, 21/5/16).*

To thwart dissenting citizen voices, the state has used force on countless occasions.

For SA to work in any given context, there is need for the guaranteeing of certain freedoms which enable citizens to make their voices heard (King 2013). However, the use of coercion over consent stifles room for citizens to raise valid concerns towards issues of corruption, governance and accountability. Some of the underlying factors which shape and inform rule by coercion in Bulawayo are strongly tied to institutionalised violence at state/national level where government uses its coercive apparatuses to close down voices against corruption and abuse of power. Rule by coercion undermines the importance of citizen participation in local governance and accountability processes which in turn erodes the prospects of future accountability interventions and outcomes. This goes to highlight the extent to which SA processes and outcomes are not independent and that there is need for other supporting structures that can act as determinants of accountability

interventions in an environment where coercion plays a central role in ensuring that the wishes of a political party, at local and national governance level(s), are given preference. In addition, it becomes necessary to further understand the relationship between coercion on the one hand and attaining, maintaining and wrestling central and local power on the other. The existence of an opposing force in Bulawayo in the form of a political party, MDC, and a strategic institution of local hegemony, the BCC, ultimately reduces the relationship with the central state to a deeply partisan-political one without providing avenues for Bulawayo's polity to coalesce around fundamental SA issues.

Furthermore, whereas citizens in Bulawayo, through civic society groupings, have attempted to peacefully coalesce and carve space for their voices in local governance to be heard, the local authority has been unaccommodating in terms of taking citizen views on board. One key informant thus noted that:

*Once we organised a meeting with council technocrats to share findings from a perception study we held, or community scorecards, in order to share residents' perspectives on service delivery. We were asked by council representatives what authority, academically or otherwise, we had to engage with council officials as none of us had PhDs or Master's Degree in local governance or engineering (Key Informant Interview with representatives from BPRA, 16/4/16).*

Hence, the nonchalant approach to addressing citizen interests based on SA has proven to be a work-in-progress as there is a lack of trust and understanding of what role and mandate each actor, both state and non-state, should focus on and play in the accountability cycle in Bulawayo. Given that, there is great need to increase democratic participation in governance by all citizens and communities of Bulawayo, as this will lead to enhanced service delivery and improved quality of life amongst citizens. It will also promote sustainable and accountable governance in the management of public resource at local government level for effective service delivery.

#### **6.2.5 Citizen Attitudes on State-City Relations**

The impact of state-society relations on the development of SA was repeatedly mentioned and discussed during discussions with interviewees. The unfavourable impact of these relations and the manner in which city-state political relations undercut accountability outcomes and consequently development appeared to strongly inform respondents' attitudes towards the relationship between the city and the state. For example, certain political relations (or at least

activities) were viewed in general by residents as having a positive impact with regard to citizen participation and thus were not a cause for concern with reference to social accountability; here though the focus was on political advocacy on the part of citizen groups. Views of civil society opinion leaders and members drawn from sample residents' associations indicated though that the politicised character of the relations between the state and city had significant repercussions for SA processes. Further, they highlighted the uncertainty arising from shifts in state-city relations.

For example, before the formation of the MDC and subsequent takeover of cities by the party, the role and mandate of BCC was clearly defined and spelt out. BCC was able to carry out its mandate effectively without interference from the MLGRUD. Local development in that regard seemed to be the core of not only BCC functions but the state as well. This is despite, comparatively speaking, the marginalisation of the overall Matabeleland region in national development. Furthermore, during the period post-2000, state and city lines became blurred due to the overbearing nature of the state which has resulted in the souring of relations between the state and the city, in Bulawayo's polity. Similarly, a small number of other participants evaluated that, as a result of this, service delivery and development in general declined because of contestation and conflict between the city and the state.

Coupled with the lack of cooperation and mistrust between local government and citizens, council officials often resisted SA interventions. This lack of cooperation is compounded by a key theme, acknowledged by many of the ordinary citizen interviewees, that most local authority officials view civil society organisations as sympathisers of opposition political parties. For instance, one respondent during a FGD espoused that *"city council views the work done by organisations such as BPRA as regime change interventions bent on tarnishing the image of the local authority"* (FGD ward 8, 21/4/16). Indicating the shifting relations between council and residents. For example, there seems to be more cooperation between the BCC and residents during instances of central state intervention in urban governance. However, these relations change to become confrontational in instances where residents, through civil society organizations like RAs, feel aggrieved by the BCC.

### **6.3 Limitations to Inclusive Social Accountability in Bulawayo**

Local governance weaknesses in not only Zimbabwe broadly but Bulawayo in particular lies not only in the legal instruments and provisions but they are also engrained in the city's structural foundations. Discussions pursued in this section focus largely on constitutional provisions and

access to information for SA. The facilitation of local economic development and public openness is still handicapped due to tensions and mistrust which informs the behaviour and practices of local authorities. Some of the challenges which hinder inclusive SA in local governance in Bulawayo include: lack of constitutional provisions/legislation that compel local authorities to explain, justify and account to citizens, as well as barriers to access to information.

### **6.3.1 Ambiguities of Constitutional Provisions**

The right to participate in SA and other local developmental processes is guaranteed in the Constitution of Zimbabwe as well as in enabling legislation. This includes direct, indirect and joint participation in public processes either initiated by citizens themselves or by government (Madzivanyika, 2014). It is clearly set out in the founding values and principles of the Constitution which calls for good governance through the respect of all Zimbabweans' views from whom the authority to govern is derived by the state, state institutions and agencies of government, including local government. This basically entails that, for the purposes of good governance, be it at the local or national level, people's needs and views are of paramount importance and should be respected and valued. Section 3 (g) of the Constitution hence obligates the state, state institutions and agencies of government to be transparent, accountable and responsive to the public's needs and demands in the exercise of their functions and provision of services.

However, the lack of clear definitions in terms of separation of roles and responsibilities between different levels of state/local authority and citizens blurs channels of SA while the lack of financial resources at the same time provide structural impediments in SA. The Constitution thus does not explicitly outline citizen engagement through specific processes like participatory budgeting for example. But local government is required in terms of Section 298 (1) of the Constitution to be transparent and accountable on financial matters, and clearly make fiscal reports that are accessible to the public. This entails that local government, in the exercise of its functions (especially where financial obligations are concerned), must be accountable to the rate-payers and service users. The BCC is thus obliged in terms of the constitution to be fiscally responsible in the manner. Additionally, the 'National Objective on National Development', as provided for in Section 13 of the Zimbabwean constitution, compels state institutions and agencies of government at every level to facilitate rapid and equitable local development. From this, the BCC is compelled to involve the residents of Bulawayo in the development of programmatic plans and financial plans (budgets).

The framework for public participation at local government level that is outlined in the Constitution is further defined in relation to the budget making process in the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15) of 1996 which stipulates that, before the expiry of any financial/fiscal year, the finance committee of a local authority must draw up and present (for the approval of council) estimates in such detail as the council may require of the income and expenditure on revenue and capital accounts (of the council) for the next succeeding financial year. When the estimates presented in terms of subsection (1) of the Urban Councils Act have been approved by the council and signed by the mayor or chairperson of the council, as the case may be, the council shall ensure that copies of the estimates are forthwith made available for inspection by the public. The Act further stipulates that all local government budget proposals are to be published in three issues of any newspaper so as to give the public a chance to scrutinise the budget (Chikerema 2013). According to the Urban Councils Act (2006), a participatory budget process is part of the overall strategic effort to promote meaningful democracy in local authorities. Thus its main objectives are to promote civic interest and participation in local governance, while promoting SA, by communities in generating self-sustaining livelihoods options, and promoting accountability and transparency in local public finance and budgeting (Chikerema 2013).

### **6.3.2 Access to Information for Social Accountability**

Access to information and critical strategic documents necessary for SA interventions continues to be a challenge for most civic actors in Bulawayo. For effective public participation in issues of SA and governance to be possible, there is a need for people to have access to relevant information held by local government. There are several regional and international instruments that provide for the right of access to information that have been ratified by Zimbabwe, creating significant obligations for the country. For instance, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (the Charter) provide that: "Every individual shall have the right to receive information". The Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa, which the African Commission on Human and People's Rights adopted, further expands the right of access to information within the African continent. These provisions oblige the state to make sure that citizens have access to adequate information so as to effectively participate in processes such as budgeting for example.

As a party to these international instruments, the Zimbabwean government, its agencies and local authorities are obliged to avail citizens with critical information, including budgeting information and other information on local authority processes. In this respect, Section 62 of Zimbabwe's 2013 constitution makes further strides in complying with international and regional instruments in providing for access to information, importantly outlining that every Zimbabwean citizen or permanent resident, including juristic persons and the Zimbabwean media, has the right of access to any information held by the state or by any institution or agency of government at every level, in so far as the information is required in the interests of public accountability. It follows that all citizens have the right, constitutionally, to access information on city budgets, especially noting that participatory budgeting is viewed by numerous scholars (Moyo 1992; Joshi and Houtzager) as a critical tool for promoting accountability and development. It is pertinent however to note that Zimbabwe lacks a Right to Information Law, with the misnamed Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) in effect making it difficult for citizens to access information in the custody of public bodies. Other laws impacting negatively on access to information include the Official Secrets Act (OSA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA).

Without a Right to Information Law that compels the Bulawayo City Council to avail residents with information, the discretion is with the Town Clerk on whether or not to avail such information. Indeed, as this study found, citizens have failed regularly to access critical information, which is required for SA, like the strategic plan and budget on numerous occasions. In order to update and carry out comprehensive analyses of budgets and expenditure patterns, timely access to relevant information is needed by residents' associations; however, AIPPA has hindered rather than facilitated free access to information on revenues and expenditures. The relationship between the state, local government and civic bodies, which is often marred by suspicion and mistrust, has compounded the situation. In this respect, the capacity to access information, scrutinise and demand answers with a view to influencing governance processes becomes non-existent. Accountability in the end is the capacity and will of those who set and, crucially, implement society's rules (including the executive at different levels and public officials) to respond to citizens' demands. Answerability and enforceability are critical dimensions of SA, and substantive accountability implies some form of sanction on the BCC in the case of Bulawayo, be it through the ballot box, legal processes, institutional oversight bodies, or media exposure. In the case of the BCC, this seems to be vacuous in the context of Bulawayo's quest for a socially



accountable system of governance, as espoused by a key informant who opined that *“accountability is only as effective as the systems and structures in place to reinforce it; what the law stipulates and what the law says happens on the ground is key. If the law is there but is not translated into lived realities, then there is limited SA”* (Key Informant Interview, 9/4/16). Given this, the inability of the law to guarantee the progressive realisation of citizen-driven SA systems handicaps the potential for SA to reform urban governance in Bulawayo.

There is thus a need for laws governing access to information and protection of state secrets to be aligned to the constitution and, additionally, for a proper Right to Information law to be put in place. This will ensure that citizens enjoy their right to information such as budgets and other information in the custody of the central government, local governments or other public entities. The question that then arises relates to the effect of the lack of Right to Information laws on the accessibility of critical information to residents and ratepayers, and how this impacts on their ability to participate in SA. Evidence gathered during the fieldwork points to the fact that the BCC does not avail these documents to residents or civic actors, so that SA processes are critically hampered. As one participant (ordinary citizen) during a FGD noted, *“council will never give you information that can be used against it; as such we have to use other means, like bribing employees, to get hold of internal documents like audit reports and minutes from meetings”* (FGD ward 8, 21/5/16). In respect of this, access to information becomes a key obstacle to SA interventions and, in the event that citizens acquire information, it is usually inadmissible due to the informal processes it would have been obtained through.

#### **6.4 Centralisation or Devolution in Social Accountability**

In 2013, Zimbabweans passed a new Constitution through a referendum and, in doing so, expressed their desire to have a more inclusive and accountable system of governance through the devolution of power. Chapter 14 (section 274, part 1) of the Constitution explicitly refers to local government reform in Zimbabwe in this context, as it states that different classes of local authorities may be established for different areas, and two or more different urban areas may be placed under a single local authority. The discourse of devolution is largely premised on the belief that sharing responsibilities between central, provincial and local governments would ultimately lead to socio-economic development and the betterment of public service delivery (Moyo and Ncube 2014). More so, it is regarded as critical in fostering citizen participation in the formulation and implementation of SA (Oduor 2015).

Due to tensions in relations between the central state and the BCC (and its operations), and the centralised character of national governance historically, the state has been instrumental in making decisions on what local priorities should entail. The results of having central government as the main development player, in the case of Bulawayo, have been disheartening, largely characterised by high unemployment levels, poor public service delivery, poverty, dilapidated infrastructure and corruption. The sharp decline in effective delivery of services continues to affect citizens' access to their basic socio-economic rights. Current dissatisfaction with service delivery in areas of health, education, water and sanitation amongst many others is certainly evidence of this poor performance of government in the provision of social services. In this context, the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI) survey results (from 2014) point to the fact that Bulawayo Metropolitan Province faces serious challenges with regards to access for example to clean water services.

Such a situation, and there are many other examples, has provided grounds and justification for a devolved system of governance where the state is divorced from fundamental decisions and the day-to-day management with reference to local governance in Bulawayo. It is important to note that there currently is no enabling legislation that operationalises or provides any basis for the implementation of devolution of power. The proposed devolved system though is anticipated to give greater powers of local governance to local citizens and enhance their participation in the exercise of the powers of the state. Through the local authority, this implies making key decisions affecting them and thereby promoting democratic, effective, transparent and accountable government by transferring authority to lower tiers of government. Clearly, then, key drivers supporting devolution is the bringing of governance closer to the lives of people, increasing citizen participation in public governance processes (due to the increased ability of residents to make claims), and playing an oversight role by holding those in power accountable (Makumbe 1998). This type of scenario dates back, in Zimbabwe, to the 1980s, but any pressures for devolution have been subjected to over-bearing centralisation tendencies as discussed.

Devolution is, in this context, expected to result in improved planning and prioritisation of local needs as leaders at the local level are also under pressure to perform, hence leading to better access to quality public services and removing barriers focused on centralised decision-making processes. Such sentiments were frequently raised by participants during fieldwork in Bulawayo, as one key informant highlighted that:

*Devolution is the answer to all these issues of accountability as it will ensure that the Bulawayo City Council, and other local authorities in Zimbabwe have the autonomy to carry out meaningful budgeting processes and meet the needs of the citizens. It is imperative that any such legislation institutionalises participatory budgeting, setting standards for its implementation (KII with a CSO opinion leader, 23/4/16).*

As such, the lack of SA in Bulawayo is strongly tied to the presence of state control in local governance issues and processes.

There seems to be a strong inclination, amongst fieldwork respondents, to vigorously support devolution and a reduced central state presence in Bulawayo because it has the potential for reducing barriers to inclusive citizen participation and consultation with regards public resource management, thereby improving accountability and service delivery through a devolved system of governance. For example, in 2012, central government embarked on a move to centralise all procurement processes and this was met with considerable resistance by Bulawayo residents, through platforms like meetings and conferences provided by BPRA, due to its perceived implications for service delivery. The BPRA indicated that the attempted move negated prevailing global trends which show that systems of governance, administration and power serve the interests of residents better when resources and power are devolved from the centre to the grassroots. Hence stripping local authorities of their power to make procurements and control their tender processes would have inevitably created bottlenecks which would frustrate effective delivery of services at the local level. Adding more responsibilities to the central state would have undoubtedly resulted in delays in the procurement of essential services like water treatment chemicals, resulting in local authorities failing to carry out their duties. Thus, sentiments raised by respondents in Bulawayo pointed towards devolution of power as the best alternative.

#### **6.4.1 Prospects and Constraints**

Governments, the world over, are adopting inclusive, responsive and more accountable systems of governance due to the realisation that they perform better when citizens are directly involved in policy making and public service delivery (Alves 2013). Devolution of power from central government to lower levels of government is largely viewed as one of the most effective means to enhance SA and ultimately improve public service provision (Fox 2013). However, regardless of sound arguments supporting the functioning of Bulawayo as an urban locale under a system of devolution, this does not come without reservations and risks. The devolution of power to

Bulawayo may not necessarily result in local government efficiency and effectiveness. In turn, this may disprove the notion that devolution inevitably results in improved service delivery, SA and enhanced standards of living among the local urban citizenry.

Processes of decentralisation in Zimbabwe in the past (dating back to the 1980s) have been marred with numerous challenges. For example, the process of devolving power to Bulawayo has been met with dissenting voices from the central state which resonate with concerns about cessation and the breaking of ties between Bulawayo (and Matabeleland broadly) and the rest of the country. One participant during a FGD notes that:

*A ZANU-PF government is highly unlikely to implement devolution of power because the giving of governing powers to independent [rebel] cities, like Bulawayo, would fuel ideas of cutting ties between the city and Zimbabwe. But we need to understand the historical insecurities on the part of the state and how these have been used to hold local governance in Matabeleland to ransom (FGD in Ward 23, 7/5/16).*

A degree of political commitment to decentralisation from the centre is essential for effective decentralisation, particularly for pro-poor decentralisation (Cabral 2011). But, in the case of Bulawayo specifically, there seem to be structural and discursive impediments which may curtail the realisation of an accountable devolved system of governance. However, Zimbabwe is currently faced with persistent calls from civic society organisations for the prioritisation of the implementation of devolution as a pre-requisite to SA.

## **6.5 Social Contract and Social Accountability**

Social accountability is more likely to have a stronger footing when the political system is inclusive of broader social groups (McGee and Gaventa 2012). This possibility is however dependent upon an agreement between elites on what the basis of political and societal engagement is, and how this should relate to existing issues (King 2013). In this light, it is imperative to understand and discuss state-city relations in terms of a binding obligation or ‘social contract’ by the state and how this affects SA or lack thereof. According to de Waal (1996), a social contract touches on both the legitimacy of political rule and the pursuit of social justice. It is important then to contextualise this notion of social contract which is relatively alien to Zimbabwean society and hence specifically Bulawayo. Literature on SA (McGee and Gaventa 2012; Joshi and Houtzager 2012; Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg 2015) imagines a social contract as a process consisting of autonomous, well-informed active citizens able to make demands on responsive public officials.

However, in Bulawayo, as alluded to, state-city relations are heavily personalised or informal, and this is reinforced by a logic of patronage which is glaringly in contrast to ideals purported in the SA literature.

The notion of a social contract offers a highly relevant framework for the politics of SA in relation to Bulawayo's polity. The broad notion of a social contract is delineated further by investigating the agreements in place around different sections of a country's polity and the structural linkages which bind states and citizens to each other (Skocpol 1992). This is critical, as what is anticipated by citizens and what the state is prepared to commit to delivering, varies according to the particular goods and services under discussion.

For example, the BCC in 2014 made an arbitrary decision to install water metres without consulting citizens, this was done in spite of the fact that water, as a resource in the city, has a history of contestation and bargaining around it. As such, the local authority was willing to abandon the project based on citizen dissenting voices as citizen protests and petitions saw council renege on its arbitrary decision to install water metres. Bulawayo citizens anticipated the local authority to provide constant supplies of water and the local authority was committed to doing this; however, the BCC sought to use processes, involving non-consultation, which did not sit well with residents. One resident during a FGD is quoted saying: *"Prepaid water metres posed a threat to the right to water, particularly for us the poor who would not always have the money to purchase water credits in advance. To make matters worse, council did not consider our views on this"* (FGD in ward 13, Iminyela, 7/5/16).

Water as an essential commodity in Bulawayo provides a basis for a social contract for engagement between the local authority and citizens, in terms of supply and demand. Given that the issue of water, as a fundamental human right, created a platform for negotiation between the city and citizens, it became a possible binding factor for SA dialogue. Furthermore, assessing the possibilities for locating SA within existing social contracts could therefore start from appreciating how the rights of citizens to water, for example, have been dealt with over time. Evidence that a social contract is operational, in relation to a particular public good for at least some citizens, may be derived in part from an examination of constitutional rights and provisions, as with the #No to Prepaid Water Metre Campaign in Bulawayo.

However, it would be important to identify the presence of an active process of sustained popular pressure and state-city bargaining around the issue of access to water as a right. Recent

calls on the significance of SA in providing an obligation for service providers to explain and justify their actions suggest that it might be noble for local authorities to promote SA where commitment, by state actors and service providers, already exists, rather than to establish new social contracts around public goods that are not currently recognised by the state. Realising improved levels of SA is largely a political than developmental challenge because such initiatives often seek to challenge powerful vested interests, usually pertaining to the state and its systems. Findings from Bulawayo strongly suggest that effective SA requires a restructuring of how politics interacts with other spheres of society, particularly in terms of the broader social contract between states and citizens. This argument echoes with efforts to change SA praxis from a technocratic approach into a more political direction but, in this regard, it is important not to underestimate the contentious character of state-society relations. A social contract approach may be able to shed considerable light on the actual forms of power and politics that matter in securing accountability. But no easy routes have yet been devised to operationalise a social contract approach within development policy and practice in Bulawayo.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

This chapter outlined state-city/society relations focusing on the formation, taxonomy and impact on SA in Bulawayo, with an emphasis on both formal and informal modes of state-society engagement. The discussion drew on various views collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) to better understand how state-society relations were conceived and have evolved over the years. I noted, thematically, how internal and external forces and actors configured interactions between state and society, and the ways in which certain institutions, actors and practices are continuities from the colonial past. The relationships between state-society, SA and service delivery were also brought the fore. The chapter examined the influence of patronage, state-party interest and incentives and how the rule of law is manipulated by political elites and how these impact and influence social accountability outcomes. At the same time, the chapter interrogated the significance of constitutional provisions and the extent to which such provisions provide opportunities and constraints for not only devolution of power but social accountability in general.

Relations between the state and society depend on a number of factors which in turn inform the form and extent (or even absence) of SA. In Bulawayo, state, city and society relations tend to be reliant on rule by coercion on the part of the central state, along with the abuse of state power

by local authorities (including patronage) and the lack of a binding social contract. These factors lead to a disabling environment for SA and improved citizen participation in service delivery and public resource management. For instance, patronage has resulted in uneven development and access to resources by local citizens of Bulawayo and this has fueled apathy in terms of participation in local government processes. In the case of when coercion is used as a tool of governance, Bulawayo residents were reluctant to participate in governance processes. Using state-centric governance as an approach to represent citizens' interest, and as a method of local governance, creates disparities and exclusions, and this means that the urgent needs of citizens do not match state priorities, thereby creating deficiencies in having an effective local government system that is responsive to Bulawayo's needs.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN BULAWAYO**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an analysis of the key contextual drivers that shape politics, power and the rule of law with regard to urban governance in Bulawayo and how this complex array of factors interacts with SA processes through various state and non-state institutions. The chapter thus continues to focus on urban governance and SA in Bulawayo, however interrogating the contextual drivers. This involves a focus on both political and non-political formations and institutions and their involvement in a myriad of roles and functions within the SA system in Bulawayo. The chapter seeks to underline the importance of the operating context indicating its significance in shaping social accountability and how the context predicates the conditions for citizen participation and urban governance. Understanding the context of SA assists in highlighting the complexities and dexterities associated with not only SA but urban governance and citizen participation. Thus, drawing on the case study from Bulawayo, the chapter outlines how the structural and operating context is an important facet in understanding SA mechanisms and deficits with regard to citizenship participation, local governance and service delivery. Findings gathered during the study pinpoint a set of fundamental elements of political society that are critical for the effective operation of SA in Bulawayo, including political and social will, state commitment, state and civil society capacity, the nature of key political institutions, and the compartmentalisation of SA efforts by state and non-state actors.

### **7.2 Influence of Political Will, Actors and Institutions on Social Accountability**

The political system is critical to ensuring SA and improved service delivery, particularly concerning the will and capacity of both central and local state institutions (elected government and state administration) in facilitating accountability. In the case of Bulawayo, central state processes and dynamics influence SA and citizen participation in local governance processes. In this regard, the ways in which the state enacts ruler-ship produces and maintains different patterns of state-society relationships and thereby shapes the form of, and scope for, SA (King 2013). The political system involves an array of institutions and agents which act out their governance mandates in diverse and fluctuating ways, and changes in the form of governance are bound to



alter state-society relationships. Political governance also entails a cultural mode which might go contrary to a SA agenda, and this governance culture might become deeply entrenched (Hickey and King 2016). At the same time, governance changes themselves often arise as a response to challenges emerging out of society, including societal opposition to prevailing systems of state governance. This implies that an absence of sustained citizen agitation around accountability will likely entrench a cultural mode of politics marked by local authority disinterest in the views of citizens. In this context, a key question emerges. While there may be formal legal and institutional provisions for electoral processes which might enhance the ability of citizens to effectively exercise their civil and political rights, can the same be said for SA processes? More specifically, do formal legal and institutional provisions exist which facilitate effective citizen participation over and beyond the electoral system?

### **7.2.1 Obligations of State and Non-State Actors in Bulawayo's Social Accountability**

The commitment of key actors in promoting SA, both appointed officials and elected representatives, has been established as one of the cornerstones of SA in meta-reviews of state governance (McGee and Gaventa 2011; Brinkerhoff and Wetterberg 2015). The role played by these actors is critical not only in providing solid ground for ensuring the possibility of demands for SA in the first place, but also for allowing space for advocating for accountability reforms and in some instances mobilising for specific claims by citizens (Hickey and King 2016). However, existing literature does not pay close enough attention to the nature of urban governance and the enabling environment that is critical in shaping and forming SA outcomes. Further, this problem is compounded by the emphasis on the role played by elected representative, who are susceptible to political and popular pressures, without understanding fully the political forces, formation and foundations that shape the behaviour of local political actors such as the case in Bulawayo.

In addition, comprehending the influence of political will and its impact on the commitment of respective actors needs to be appreciated by way of stating the reasons and interests which underpin and establish political elite behaviour and how this influences political will (Booth 2012). Focusing on the interests of political elites, which are formed and altered under contingent circumstances, facilitates an understanding of the levels of commitment of these elites to SA initiatives in Bulawayo and the challenges which arise from for example patronage and impunity from wrongdoings. Coupled with this, in understanding SA, there is a need to appreciate the balance or distribution of power between citizens and local council duty bearers in Bulawayo, both

councilors and appointed officials. A key issue here is that the commitment of duty bearers to SA is strongly shaped by incentives available to them, and whether or not these compel them to act in favour of citizens' interests over and above the interests of others, including their own interests. For instance, the decision to install pre-paid water metres in Bulawayo was done without citizen views largely because the local ruling elites (elected and appointed officials) took into primary consideration the economic and financial viability of the BCC. In this light, the will to act or not to act in line with SA principles becomes selectively applied. In the example given, there was a financial incentive to increase council revenue, without any concern necessarily about the short-term implications for citizens and even accounting for public funds generated in this way.

With a history of lack of political will around SA in Bulawayo (by both councilors and council officials), and with civil society largely disinterested and apathetic, residents demobilised, resources scarce and the rules for civic participation in local governance largely unknown or misunderstood, SA in Bulawayo faces serious challenges. Certainly, the fieldwork shows that there is a stark non-committal attitude by local government duty bearers in Bulawayo towards social accountability. Factors influencing this also include the lack of adequate resources, both in terms of social and economic capital, on the part of Bulawayo residents themselves in trying to follow up on local governance issues and thereby enhance BCC accountability.

Activities such as budget monitoring for instance are expensive undertakings which require sustained citizen action, and local RAs face serious problems in this regard. The overall lack of pressure from the grassroots provides grounds for the local authority to take a tokenistic stance towards public consultation, citizen participation and SA. For example, with reference to the participatory budget process in Bulawayo, the participation of citizens is very limited, with their voice only sought when draft budgets have been developed. Citizens have not been afforded adequate space and time to take part in all stages of the budget process – that is, the preparation stage, the budget formulation stage, the implementation stage and the monitoring and evaluation stage. These processes in Bulawayo are replete with indications of lack of political will in carrying out participatory budgeting, and thus they express a flawed system of budgeting and lack of BCC interest in widening the involvement of residents and marginalised groups. A resident from ward 26, Emganwini, raised her concerns by stating:

*Our councilors who are required to represent our concerns to the city fathers seem to be eating with those criminals in suits because there seems to be no resident voice in what they*

*do at council chambers. The challenge we have is we have no power to even call them to account because they are always busy. When election time comes, they start looking for us because they want our votes* (FGD, Ward 26 Emganwini, 22/5/16).

The issue raised by this resident speaks to the lack of concern for genuine citizen trepidations by BCC regarding citizen voices in governance and accountability. In this vein, citizen consultation seems to be evident only during elections at which time engagement between citizens and BCC duty bearers is premised on the democratic principle of voting. One of the factors inhibiting a deeper commitment to accountability is the lack of a culture of accountability (outside of elections) within local governance in Bulawayo, which is a manifestation of a broader tendency within the local and central state systems in Zimbabwe. Consequently, the prevailing culture has created a sense of impunity and lack of obligation within the BCC to explain or justify issues to rate-payers and the wider electorate. In some cases, concerns around the abuse of local authority funds are raised by residents' associations without any significant responses being given by the local authority, thus further fueling impunity in a vicious downward cycle.

Accountability requires the support of involved civic actors and political will from local government. But there seems to be a gap with regards commitment to SA by the BCC, which must be understood in part in the context of the central state-led top-down character of local governance in Zimbabwe, with accountability often biased towards upward accountability. One of the challenges highlighted by council bureaucrats (interviewed as key informants during the study) was the council's lack of resources to gather citizen's views in their multitude as a way of establishing and enhancing an accountable system of local governance. This implies though the existence of political will on the part of the BCC, with the problem being lack of capacity to engage in SA processes. Curiously, though, a proposal by a local media organisation to record full council meetings and distribute Compact Disks (CDs) to the public was denied by the city council in 2014, an indication of lack of political will in being transparent and accountable to residents.

Overall, the evidence suggests that the political will and commitment of actors within political society (or the political system) to undertake effective SA reform are narrowly shaped by the financial imperatives and incentives animating local government.

### **7.2.2 Subjugation of Local Government Institutions in Bulawayo**

The lack of autonomy of local governance and a strong state presence and interference of central government in the affairs of local authorities is well documented in the Zimbabwean literature

(Ranger 2007; Musemwa 2008; Kamete 2006; Chirisa and Jonga 2013). This prevailing status quo and the power relations between the central state, BCC and residents, and how this affects SA, thus invariably relates back to local government policy. At the centre of local governance in Bulawayo is the MLGRUD which is the lead central state agency. The Ministry provides the legislative and policy framework within which local government units operate. Functionally, the Ministry is supposed to provide an enabling or facilitative environment within which local government operates. In practice, however, the ministry of Local Government has increasingly played a controlling and directive role especially since the emergence of a formidable opposition (MDC) with significant control over local government authorities in the urban areas. It was the Ministry's excessive interference, especially in BCC, which finally led to the cancellation of all debts owed by rate-payers to the city council in the run-up to the 2013 general elections. As such, the BCC does not owe its allegiance to rate-payers or citizens, but to the MLGRUD.

The MLGRUD manages all the Acts and Statutory Instruments necessary for the running of local authorities. The exercising of overwhelming powers by the minister then dilutes the power and autonomy of the BCC which in turn adopts and reproduces central government's stance in the manner it governs its residents. The power of the ministry serves as a tool to emasculate and subjugate council powers thus creating a barrier in terms of SA. The overbearing role of the ministry in local governance is particularly evident when it comes to the approval of council budgets. According to the UCA, local authorities are meant to submit budgets to the MLGRUD for approval before the commencement of the fiscal year. Expenditure outside state approval is deemed unauthorised and illegal. However, central government has abused this requirement to frustrate service delivery by the MDC-run BCC. In 2015, central government delayed the approval of the BCC budget by almost a year. The major issue, as a result of the delay, was that there was no basis for ensuring citizen oversight and SA as public funds were utilised without a clear indication of budget priorities. This was because the main document for that, the approved budget, was neither approved nor availed by the responsible authorities. As such, council (and its ability to autonomously mobilise and spend resources) has no prerogative or power to spend on service delivery, on the basis of an approved budget, outside of the authority of the MLGRUD. Such subjugation then creates grounds for tension between the central state and the city and inadvertently the city and its citizens, compromising the potential of SA in improved service delivery.

In addition, the central government (in the form of the MLGRUD, parliament and the Auditor General) has been weak in as far as their roles in SA, with specific respect to public resource management, are concerned. The parliament as the law-making arm of the government has failed to ensure that provisions for devolution as enshrined in Chapter 14 of the new constitution are implemented through passing of laws to operationalise it. The Ministry has been particularly problematic as it has, year after year, failed to approve local authority budgets on time. As of April 2016, the Bulawayo City Council's budget for the year had not been approved, which begs the question of how the ministry expects the local authority to pursue and perform its obligations.

The study also found that, as of 2016, the Auditor General's Office had only audited the BCC's financial files up to the year 2013. This means that the government is failing in its oversight role, with audits lagging behind by at least three years. Worse, the Auditor General's Report (2013) found that the BCC last had a general audit in 2010, which is a cause for concern as well as a failure by the state, with all its powers, to constructively set a precedent for a socially-accountable environment for local governance. More so, the control of decision-making trapped within the office of the Minister has meant that local authorities ignore citizens they serve and this has had negative implications on SA. For instance, citizen participation in budget consultations in Bulawayo has largely been superficial and a means by local authorities to merely meet statutory or ministerial requirements. This is best demonstrated by the fact that approved budgets or budgets submitted to the ministry are rarely a reflection of community views or inputs.

In summation, the subjugation of BCC institutions and the intrusive presence of central state authority and power, through the MLGRUD and the UCA, poses challenges for not only BCC decision-making but for citizen participation and SA as well. The unequal power relations between the city and the state creates tensions between the two and this consequently affects performance management and monitoring of not only national but also local public resources. As a side-effect, the lack of performance monitoring creates service delivery gaps and curtails avenues for SA. The inability and/or lack of will by the state to use its powers constructively inhibits SA. For instance, the delays in approving and publicising the council budget, a requisite document on which to hold duty bearers accountable, reduces the potency of citizen oversight of public expenditure, thereby rendering SA a cumbersome process. Coupled with the lack of appetite to reform power relations and reluctance by central government to water-down and decentralise power, the subjugation of

local authority institutions will continue to curtail SA and service delivery. All this exists despite the fact that the Zimbabwean Constitution (Chapter 9) speaks to the principles of public administration and leadership. The Constitution, along with the Public Finance Management Act of 1999, provides a reasonably sound legal framework for Parliament to monitor the use of public funds expended from the national budget. Due to the high standards set in the constitution, Bulawayo citizens should not be experiencing the current rampant abuse and mismanagement of public resources, certainly if provisions in these statutes were being enforced.

### **7.2.3 Weak Conceptions of Local Government Institutions in Bulawayo**

Through the study, it was established that there is general disconnection between what the law states and what transpires on the ground in relation to SA, local governance and the rule of law in Bulawayo. Discussing this entails examining some of the legislative provisions (frameworks and policies) which govern SA and how these manifest themselves in reality locally with regard to citizen participation and the rule of law. Related to this, as also discussed, is the right to information and issues of social inclusion which have a bearing on the practicability of SA in local governance processes

In Bulawayo, weak governance institutions are often an underlying root cause of the lack of SA and local authority incapacity in this regard. This institutional weakness has provided space and opportunities for ineffectiveness which has, in turn, fueled social grievances. For example, in 2015, the BPRA organised a protest march against the BCC citing the lack of transparency and consultation of residents on pre-paid water metres. In this regard, SA initiatives in Bulawayo, and Zimbabwe in general, are normally underpinned by rights-based approaches which means that transparency and accountability work, in Bulawayo at least, is couched in the language of rights, such as the right to information or the right to carry out social audits focusing on the use of public funds.

As a general tendency, many ‘inclusion’ movements (those advocating for marginalised groups) are also framed in the language of rights, such as children’s rights or the rights of indigenous peoples. Certainly, in the case of Bulawayo, there is tremendous scope for increasing the possibility for social inclusion to become a more standard feature of future SA initiatives, given that the populations in Bulawayo consist of minority ethnic groups that are usually sidelined from national governance processes. However, for now, the inability of local government institutions, like the local authority in Bulawayo, to establish and utilise legal and institutional arrangements to

ensure accountability is dependent upon the strength of relevant institutions, like the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC), and the Auditor General's (AG) office whose current weaknesses compromise SA. For example, while the UCA is clear in terms of the minimum standards for budget formulation and implementation, in the event that the BCC does not adhere to those accountability standards, there is no room for the sanctioning of the local authority because of the prevalence of weak institutions. Because of the fact that most SA interventions in Bulawayo are based on the language of rights, there is a need to appreciate the apprehensive and disdain treatment experienced by human-rights activities through the use of the police and repressive legislation of the state, like AIPPA and POSA. In addition, central and local government bodies in Zimbabwe generally treat human rights-based discourses as appendages of regime-change agents (and a regime-change agenda) bent on soiling the image of government in a bid to initiate political change. More broadly, in the case of local authorities like Bulawayo, such initiatives are seen as a drive to expose the inadequacies of local authorities hence mobilising citizens against council.

A similar factor is closely linked to the character of civil society organisations. In particular, just as a functional democratic state cannot be taken as a given, neither can a capable, organised civil society with a strong, independent media be presumed. The formation and growth of local associations, interest groups, NGOs and community-based organizations depend upon individuals having the capacity and the political space to take collective action, which in turn is strongly influenced by social cleavages along lines of gender, ethnicity and religion. It can also not be assumed that all civil society organisations will want to become a strident voice for SA, or will have the necessary capacity to act for the poor and marginalised in engaging with government. Based on discussions during KIIs, there was therefore a general feeling that CSOs, as institutions for initiating social change, were simply unable as societal forces to compel the BCC to be more socially accountable within the prevailing political system in Zimbabwe. For example, one key informant opined that, *"outside advocacy around social accountability, there is nothing more CSOs can do to make sure direct action is taken [on SA] because they have no real power"* (KII with CSO opinion leader, 23/4/16).

Strongly related to the issue of weak institutions is the lack of skilled personnel to undertake credible SA initiatives. This holds true for the BCC and its councilors who lack the requisite skills for carrying out, for instance, budget analysis. This assertion is based on the fact that, from the 29 elected MDC councilors, only four had completed tertiary education with the rest

having ordinary and advanced level as their highest level of academic qualification (Dorman 2016). Lack of adequate financial resources further hobbles the already-weak institutions and this also threatens the sustainability of SA initiatives in Bulawayo. Because activities such as budget monitoring are expensive undertakings, institutions such as the BCC and CSOs face similar constraints.

### **7.3 Capacity and SA in Bulawayo**

Institutional capacity of the state plays a crucial role in SA; usually, its absence often limits the scope for positive outcomes from SA work. The state needs to respond to demands for accountability by making changes in policy and practice which reflects a change in reasoning and rationale for action. Although responsiveness is partly a function of capacity, it is also a matter of prevailing policy and institutional culture. Low capacity on the part of several actors has continued to impinge upon certain operational aspects of SA initiatives in Bulawayo. State capacity in this regard needs to be understood with reference to various forms of financial, human resource and bureaucratic capacity of a local authority which potentially allows for SA to thrive in a sustainable manner. The capacity of civil society actors is also critically important to understand as governance and SA rely to a large part on it. This section thus focuses on the capacity of both state (supply-side) and non-state (demand-side) actors in Bulawayo's local governance.

#### **7.3.1 Local Authority and Elected Councilors' Capacity and Accountability**

Closely related, and indeed influenced by political will and incentives, is the notion of state capacity to ensure an enabling political, social and economic environment for SA to take place. In that regard, the relational elements of SA hinge on the capacity of state actors (appointed and elected) to act in the public interest around accountability issues but also more generally (for instance, in terms of service delivery). Developmental dimensions of the state need to be unpacked not only in terms of organisational competency, and human resource and administrative capacity, but also state capacity to forge and maintain relations with the diverse social groups instrumental to SA (Vom Hau 2012). However, in Bulawayo, there are indications of weak capacity within the local authority, which has led to public service delivery failure and weak mechanisms for citizen participation and accountability.

The nexus between council capacity and SA indicates that the institutional capacity of the BCC often limits the scope for positive outcomes from any accountability work undertaken. The



inability of the local authority to utilise its resource capacity, admittedly somewhat limited, inhibits the progressive realisation of citizen rights through SA. For instance, the BCC has had challenges in raising adequate revenue for the equal distribution of resources between administration and service delivery costs. Given that, the imbalance between expenditure has seen the local authority violate the 70% service delivery vs 30% administration costs rule. The violation of this rule provides a challenge for SA as the local authority budget then ignores rate-payers' views on expenditure priorities and limits state-created space for citizens to follow and monitor public expenditure due to the lack of resources. This lack of resources curtails SA in the sense that the BCC does not have the financial capability to mass produce, for public dissemination, critical documents like the council strategic plan and budget necessary for expenditure monitoring and tracking. Lastly, the resource gap in the form of financial capital on the part of council manifests itself in the failure by council to respond, through policy and action, to citizen needs and priorities, which means that revenue collection and the lack of accountability impede the social development of Bulawayo communities. One councilor claimed that:

*What you need to understand is that council is struggling to mobilise resources because our only source of revenue for all our activities, administrative and otherwise, is money paid by service users as rates. Without a wider revenue base, us as council can only do so much to cater for every resident's need. Currently we are not even receiving a cent from government and we are our only source of revenue. So people need to be patient with council as we are also in dire straits just like every citizen in Zimbabwe* (Key Informant Interview with a councilor, 15/4/16).

Given the lack of financial support from central government, the ability of the BCC to meet and respond to citizen needs in an accountable manner becomes curtailed by the lack of local authority resources and financial capacity, as it becomes unable to direct funds to improve SA and citizen participation in local governance processes. This is because the BCC ultimately needs to respond to demands for accountability by making changes in policy and practice.

One of the main contributors to the demise of financial capacity in the running of the BCC is associated with the macro-economics of Zimbabwe. The decline in local industries in Bulawayo coupled with the deteriorating economy more broadly and weak social protection measures in the context of unemployment, acted as push factors which led to unprecedented levels of skills-flight through brain-drain and outward-migration. Technical skills such as engineering, mining and

surveying were hit hardest as seasoned professionals moved to other countries for better economic returns. To that end, the BCC saw the migration of a top crop of seasoned professionals to South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. A good example is that, in 2009, the BCC lost its city engineer, with more than 25 years' worth of work experience, to South Africa, forcing the local authority to promote from within the ranks. Another example is that the period between 2007 and 2009 saw a mass resignation of staff from the health and public works divisions as these members immigrated mainly to Australia for better economic opportunities. Coincidentally, this period of skills-flight also saw the progressive decline in service delivery in Bulawayo while corruption and underhand dealings seemed to increase during the same period as well. The loss of skilled personnel meant that any chance for the BCC – in terms of human resource capacity – to be responsive to citizens' concerns was curtailed. It also meant a subsequent decline in service delivery, the weakening of the BCC as a capacitated institution and rising lack of accountability in public resource management. The inability by council to employ personnel with the right skills and experiences compromised the effectiveness of SA interventions and their focus on improved service delivery and citizen participation. At the same time, the incapacity of the local authority to respond to SA demands and processes coming from prevailing citizen activism requires to be understood in relation to other enabling factors which animate SA.

Thus, another key factor in SA (as a tool for poverty alleviation and public resource management) relates to its form and function. The gaps in the technical and political capacity of local state duty bearers in Bulawayo hinders their understanding of some of the functions and benefits of SA and its potential in service delivery. Interviews with Bulawayo council officials indicated a lack of knowledge and capacity with regard to SA and the forms it can take, as it was assumed to refer to upward accountability, where council accounts to the state through the line ministry and not to residents and ratepayers. Unfamiliarity with the fundamentals of SA, and misunderstandings about it, then influences attitudes and relations between the BCC and ratepayers, creating ground for conflict and tensions given the lack of common understanding of SA and different priorities given to it. This also ties in with the ways in which the SA message emanating from the BCC is framed (the amount and form of information provided), the method of delivery (the tools and means used to provide information), and the clarity of the message (the way information is presented), all of which has had adverse effects. For instance, one council official was quoted saying; *“This talk about SA is not really coming from our people; it’s rhetoric that is*

*fed to our otherwise peaceful residents by western funded pressure groups like BPRA. If you look at some of the issues residents raise, you can clearly see that they have been coached to raise those things as issues”* (KII with a local authority technocrat, 15/4/16).

In this context, local government officials in Bulawayo often resist SA interventions, and thus have cooperated little with the interventions. This lack of cooperation is compounded by the fact that most public officials view SA and civil society organisations as sympathisers of opposition political parties. As such, central state institutions (such as the local government Ministry) and BCC officials in Bulawayo view SA as a means of exposing their inefficacy thus providing grounds for their dismissal and illegitimate civic groups in their dubious quest to effect regime change. Sadly, party politics then takes precedence over general principles of good governance in local government, undermining the will of the electorate and thereby resulting in failed service delivery.

Councilors in particular are considered as central to facilitating SA. Residents elect them to represent them in the local council. Each urban council in Zimbabwe is divided into wards, with each ward represented by a councilor. In Bulawayo, there are 29 wards. As the representatives of the people, ward councilors have a huge responsibility to raise awareness and conduct broad-based mobilisation of residents to participate for example in the budget-making process and to make sure that the draft budget presented by local authority officials encompasses the priorities and aspirations of the people they represent. Ideally, in functioning SA processes, communities thus communicate with their elected councilors through council-arranged community meetings to ensure participatory budgeting processes.

In practice, however, there have been significant problems in the exercise of these roles by the council in Bulawayo, with many councilors failing to consult and mobilise residents effectively. Councilors for instance have tended to mobilise along partisan (party-political) lines, meaning that residents who do not belong to the councilor’s political party are excluded from such mobilisation. For instance, the councilor for ward 29, who is a member of the MDC, has refused to engage members of the BPRA in budget consultations due to a long-standing feud with this RA, which she views as a political entity challenging her authority. The same is true for ward 12 (covering Njube), ward 8 (Mzilikazi, Thorngrove and Nguboyenja), ward 10 (Entumbane) and ward 14 (Lobengula) where elected councilors view the RA as a political body creating parallel governance structures with the desire of assuming political power.

Councilors also have an obligation to analyse and review the draft budget and evaluate whether it captures the challenges, priorities, aspirations and desires of the communities they represent. In the process, they possess the right to bring to the council any issues which may be key to the concerns of ward residents, but which are not being properly tackled by the BCC. Their capacity to do this though is questionable amid reports that most councilors did not progress further than ordinary ‘O’ level (in secondary school), with some not even having basic literacy let alone financial skills. Councilors in the BCC do engage and debate the draft budget before it is approved locally and is forwarded to the Minister of local government, but the quality of their council contributions around the budget indicate a lack of competence because of shortfalls in necessary skill-sets as espoused in the council minutes reviewed during the study.

At the same time, council officials (i.e. bureaucrats) are crucial in the budget-making process as their duties and roles include the arranging and coordinating of budget consultations, capturing inputs, and documenting and drafting of the budget. All the critical paper work, and the processing of documentation, is in the hands of BCC officials as they are the technical-cum-financial experts in the crafting of the budget. Essentially, council bureaucrats have responsibility for producing and formulating a sound budget through the proper laid-out procedures. They are expected to work together with elected councilors and monitor budget-making procedures as the budget works its way through the BCC. At the budget consultation meetings with residents (including the business community, civil society and other stakeholders), the Finance Director of the BCC is tasked with presenting the budget and addressing the concerns of citizens. As such, it is essential to underline that the weakness of such processes and platforms, like other meetings with citizens, lies in the fact that they are neither participatory nor engaging but are rubber-stamping processes disguised as report back meetings.

The failure of representative democracy with reference to the budget process, in which councilors do not fully represent citizen interests and concerns, delays the progressive realisation of a socially-accountable local governance system in Bulawayo. The close interplay between political will, capacity and representative democracy makes the building of SA a challenge, as those tasked with ensuring that citizens’ views are heard are insufficiently strident and capacitated and, further, local government policies curtail the possibilities of SA and – along with it – poverty reduction and improved service delivery.

An interesting strand in understanding SA and its ties to the budget process in Bulawayo can be best appreciated in understanding existent, functional and otherwise, relations between council officials, bureaucrats, and elected councilors. Ideally elected officials are mandated to represent citizen interests and priorities while ensuring strong oversight functions, including the use of resources in a manner that guarantees the realisation of citizen needs. Due to the politicisation of urban governance in Bulawayo, there tends to be a conflation of the bureaucratic and the political, which leads to collusion between the two. For instance, the land deals that involve the Deputy Mayor, Gift Banda, were facilitated by council bureaucrats, like the city engineer, who in turn received kick-backs from the sale of land. In this respect, the oversight and representative function of elected councilors is clouded by the conflation of duties where council officials conspire with elected councilors to carry out business in a corrupt manner.

### **7.3.2 Residents, Rate-Payers, Capacity and Social Accountability in Bulawayo**

Residents or rate-payers also have a critical role to play in operationalising SA. In Bulawayo, residents under the aegis of the two major residents' associations in the city, the Bulawayo Progressive Residents' Association and the Bulawayo United Residents' Association, have sought to play a central role in the formulation and monitoring of budgets by providing significant input around for example issues of service delivery needing attention and possible ways of raising revenue. BPRA has gone a step further to mobilise its structures and wider society to participate in budget meetings, using fliers, social media and bulk Short Message Services (SMSs) in engaging with citizens for this purpose. The association has also in the past produced position papers, like the 'No to prepaid water metres' paper, outlining the preferences of residents with regards to the budgets.

The budget consultation meetings afford rate-payers a potential platform to fulfill their role as active citizens by expressing or airing their problems and priorities. Residents' role of participating in, and contributing to, SA through budget-making consultations is considered important for socio-economic development and improvements in service delivery (Shah 2007). According to the Urban Councils Act (2006), participatory budgeting is part of the overall strategic effort to promote democracy in local authorities, with its main objectives including: to promote civic interest and participation in local governance, to involve the community in generating self-sustaining livelihoods options, and to ensure accountability and transparency in local public finance and budgeting. The participation of residents is key in holding the BCC socially

accountable to grassroots needs and interests, and in preventing the council from detaching itself from its citizen base and acting independently of citizen concerns.

Unfortunately, participation of residents has been limited, with resident turnout being low due to a number of reasons. In the first consultations for the 2016 budget, which were held from 14 August to 5 September 2015, only 2,086 residents (1,056 men and 1,030 women) attended the consultations. During the second consultations, a total of 2,146 (1,053 men and 1,093 women) participated in the consultations (Bulawayo Annual Budget Report 2015). A major contrast arising from the research is that participation in SA processes was high in low-literacy high-density areas and low in medium-to-high literacy communities in medium- to low-density areas. This was attributed to issues of income, where service delivery experiences vary in Bulawayo leaving those with low income levels to bear the brunt of poor service delivery. This composition of participation speaks to the quality and form of SA interventions in terms of their impact and effect on improved service delivery and good governance, as high-density areas were less able to engage thoughtfully with these interventions. In focus group discussions, residents revealed that they did not bother to attend budget meetings as they believed their views would not be considered. Also, the participation of residents has been weakened by their lack of understanding of budget processes, especially in low income and low literacy communities.

There was as well only a half-hearted implementation of efforts by BCC to ensure participation of citizens in SA. In essence, Bulawayo is not pursuing and undertaking participatory budgeting, with citizens not participating effectively in all stages of the budgeting process. Participation of citizens is very limited, with their voice only sought when draft budgets have been developed and are then presented with, as indicated, severe limitations in the quality of resident input at the budget presentations. Simply put, residents have not been afforded any space to take part in all the stages of the budget process – that is, the preparation stage, the formulation stage, the implementation stage and the monitoring and evaluation stage, thereby compromising the role of citizens in SA processes. There were indications of lack of political will in carrying out participatory budgeting as shown by a flawed system of budgeting, considering the technicalities of budget making, and lack of interest in widening the involvement of residents and marginalised groups.

Overall, the BCC undertakes budget formulation as an isolated activity rather than as a part of a broader process in which rate-payers are incorporated. Because of its approach, residents

only participate in one out of the four stages of the budget cycle. In terms of the four stages, citizens essentially have a say only in the second stage, that of budget formulation. Thus, citizens are completely absent from the crucial preparation stage where local authority priorities pertaining to budget expenditure are in large part already set. Even in the formulation stage, rate-payer participation is limited in that it takes place only through once-off budget consultations meetings which last for at most three hours. Instead of substantive budget issues being discussed at these meetings, it was established that citizens are reduced to only stating and emphasising the service delivery issues that they wish to be prioritised, along with the question of whether or not tariffs should be increased. Resident input in these meetings usually bordered around social services like health care and education. Further, most of the budget formulation in fact takes place behind-the-scenes, within the offices of local government officials in Bulawayo.

Failure by the Bulawayo City Council to avail residents with copies of the budgets beforehand was certainly one of the reasons why debate and oversight with reference to the budgets was weak. Additionally, important background documents for participatory budgeting and SA (like the strategic plan, financial reports and audit reports), which are essential for meaningful discussion on the budget itself, are not availed to the public at all and the procedures to be followed for these to be accessed are clouded in secrecy. Organisations like BPRA have in the past requested full access to these documents but have been unable to access them, facing numerous bureaucratic hurdles which indicates a lack of political will at BCC level to avail these documents. Resultantly, civil society, residents' associations and other stakeholders become frustrated and are simply unable to carry out meaningful SA work or participate fully in budgeting.

SA as an approach to good governance and public resource management is often packaged by local authorities as a technical subject-matter requiring expertise and special skill-sets. This narrow understanding of SA raises complications in the use of the approach as a galvanising method for citizen participation in governance. Because of this, critics of the approach (Fox 2015) have labelled it alienating, bookish, academic and technical – in this way, the SA discourse becomes a justification for exclusion of 'ordinary' citizens. Residents' associations and civil society groups in Bulawayo also tend at times to adopt and rely upon this approach. This means that rate-payers (particularly those with limited formal education) experienced SA mechanisms as intimidating, with questions about public expenditure monitoring, budget integrity management,

and resource mobilisation, allocation and utilisation becoming impossible to grasp. One resident from Ward 18 noted that:

*We have difficulties understanding and grasping most of the concepts people from BPRA will be training us on with this accountability topic. There is too much reading of documents and some of us are not good with figures and you need to be good especially when analysing council budgets. Personally, I am not educated, I ended with standard six so I can only do so much* (Conversation with a female participant from ward 8, 22/5/16).

Claiming that residents' associations often reproduce the 'technicity' in SA processes as propagated by the local authority (most notably expressed in the budget process) is not to deny that certain forms of expertise are significant in engaging in this process. But insofar as the budget process is seen by groups such as the BPRA as deeply technical and they act on this basis, then the capacity of Bulawayo residents to engage in SA processes and to 'own' these processes is inhibited.

When there is a limited capacity to understand basic budget principles then there is a subsequent limited ability to engage with these principles in any intelligible manner. Given the pronounced relationship between even basic literacy skills and SA approaches and tools used by most CSOs in Bulawayo, there is a tendency for community members in Bulawayo to participate in reasonably large numbers but without any effective meaningful input due to the inability to articulate their thoughts on key budget issues. Low literacy audiences find it difficult to be included in such SA processes largely due to the character of participation pre-supposed by these processes as an approach to citizen participation, good governance and improved service delivery. Technician packaging of budgets in the context of financial illiteracy then becomes a key determinant of citizen participation in SA. This tends to leave the potential for SA as an active and engaged process unrealised and largely dependent upon those who have, or at least claim to have, the necessary capacity to become involved in SA mechanisms. As a result, local authority officials and even leaders of CSOs and residents' associations tend to monopolise the processes, alienating low literacy participants to the periphery of local governance and citizen participation.

Consequently, the lack of alleged capacity among community members has burdened CSOs as they have to speak on behalf of communities and coach communities on how and what to engage on. This situation has undermined the ability of citizens to voice their concerns and participate meaningfully to effect local change in governance processes. Resultantly, it has been



relatively easy for the BCC to dismiss the voices of CSOs due to their perceived partisan character as the BCC claims CSOs do not have citizen support and just pursue their own agenda.

### **7.3.3 Civil Society Capacity and Social Accountability**

SA as an approach to good governance and citizen participation is strongly rooted in the civil society movement in urban Zimbabwe with a greater part of the movement being pushed by CSOs in pursuit of a (anti-ruling party) democratisation agenda. The relationship between CSOs and SA is further complicated by the reliance of such actors on donor funding. As such, the agenda setting and priorities contained within SA procedures are usually informed by donor priorities and approaches. As well, respective donors have their own specific priorities and these, in most cases, prove to vary across donors. This creates a multiplicity of tools and approaches endeavouring to achieve one main outcome, but without consensus among key implementers. Additionally, in Bulawayo, CSOs speak and practice SA from a unidimensional perspective where accountability is understood, monolithically, with reference to service delivery. They do not necessarily have a broader understanding of SA as a system, in its entirety, with interdependent and complementary building blocks of which service delivery is an outcome and not necessarily the very premise of accountability. These shortcomings of civil society groups, in practice, point to deficits in their capacity to understand, develop, customise and apply organic SA approaches which speak to (contingent) best-fit and not (universal) best-practice approaches.

Hence, most of the indices and tools used by CSOs sampled during the study, such as BPRA and BURA, have largely focused on service delivery and not on the entire accountability process. Tools such as score cards, perception reports, satisfactory surveys and participatory budgeting and monitoring exhibit a bias towards resource allocation and expenditure tracking without understanding their relationship to Public Resource Management as a system; and such tools focus on the quality of service delivery and fail to ensure an understanding of the systemic shortfalls of service delivery, which are tied to good governance, strong institutions, vibrant citizen agency and access to public information for example. This has limited the potential of SA interventions in improving not only service delivery but building strong institutions and good governance.

Part of the challenge emanates from a lack of capacity and coordination of SA interventions by CSOs in Bulawayo. The fact that most donors have contradictory approaches and definitions of SA means that the same discord is mirrored by the CSO interventions on the ground and their

subsequent outcomes. For example, donors like the Danish Church Aid understands SA as a tool for poverty reduction while the Norwegian People's Aid views it as a process for democratisation. The dependence of CSOs, working on SA in Bulawayo, on donor funding inhibits their capacity to define accountability according to their own understanding and terms, which creates conflict between donor and community expectations. Overall, the emphasis by CSOs though is on SA outcomes (products) and not processes. Most CSOs in Bulawayo also have a strong history of civil liberty advocacy (focusing on civil and political liberties) and this has handicapped even their ability to converse with technical subjects, including financial literacy, which has become a necessary ingredient in engaging with budget monitoring and tracking given the technicised take on budget processes. Considering that most of the CSOs doing SA work in Bulawayo purport to represent marginalised communities, the lack of capacity to define the citizen agenda, coupled with low financial literacy capacity, hampers the ability of CSOs to facilitate and represent citizen needs and translate the lived experiences of residents into meaningful SA inputs.

The capacity of CSOs to represent citizen interest on issues of SA in Bulawayo has been subject to a lot of debate by donor agencies, academics, political parties and development practitioners in general. While it is commendable to note the important role of such organisations in seeking to galvanise marginalised citizens through the provision of platforms for dialogue and engagement between citizens and local authority duty bearers, there have been questions raised constantly around the capacity and willingness of CSOs to be neutral and non-partisan. One common position in understanding not only Bulawayo but Zimbabwe's polity is that CSOs and the opposition party, MDC in particular, have an inherent and necessary relationship. From the beginning, civil society and the MDC were linked ideologically and even organisationally; consequently, combined they were viewed as enemies of the state by ZANU-PF. As such, there has always been a consistent confrontational relationship between ZANU-PF, CSOs and MDC-led urban councils. The adversarial roots of civil society and its pursuit of SA raises issues around the legitimacy and neutrality of civil society in its capacity as a champion of all citizens' interests.

A good case in point is that, during the Government of National Unity (GNU) period, civil society found itself in an invidious position as there was a dilemma as to how to treat the GNU whose composition included its own off-spring, namely, the political opposition parties (Sachikonye 2012). The major direction that most CSOs working on SA in Bulawayo took was to support the MDC-side in the implementation of the GNU. This close proximity to the MDC cost

CSOs considerable objectivity and legitimacy when it came to playing a watchdog and oversight role in the running of BCC affairs, as they were bound to be uncritical of the BCC. This led to a gap in the ability of an ideally-robust civil society to provide meaningful oversight over a local authority.

Most CSOs, like Bulawayo Agenda and *Ibhetshu likazulu*, were inhibited by their ties to the MDC, whose policy stances were in fact often informed by suggestions from such organisations. Bulawayo Agenda (established in 2002) was a citizen driven organisation which sought to represent issues affecting communities in Bulawayo with the intention of turning citizen views into governance reforms. However, the organisation was known to mobilise support for the MDC and, in the GNU period, its director was co-opted into government by the MDC as Minister for State Enterprises. *Ibhetshu likazulu* is a Bulawayo based pressure group lobbying for transitional justice, accountability and truth around *Gukurahundi*. Given that CSOs in Bulawayo found themselves in a highly compromised position, this led to legitimate accusations of lack of objectivity and capacity to represent citizen interests in an apolitical manner from the central state and to some extent local citizens.

On their part, civil society groups have offered little if anything in the direction of leadership and inspiration, struggling to provide imaginative and game-changing alternative solutions and ideas with which to engage in order to enhance SA. Having in fact created false hopes of being a key catalyst for the much-needed changes in governance in the country broadly, efforts by CSOs acting on SA in Bulawayo have fizzled in sync with a decline in donor funding, with no clear strategies for sustained engagement and pressure beyond donor funding. For example, SA initiatives in the city went down, between 2016 and 2017, due to budget cuts by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). At the beginning of 2016, USAID provided CSOs in Bulawayo with support amounting to US\$1.2 million towards SA. However, by mid-2017, that budget had been cut to US\$480,000. In general, CSOs are struggling not only to survive operationally because of severe funding constraints but also to come up with innovative programmes, policy positions and interventions which could help to bring positive SA changes to Bulawayo's local governance conundrum. Most of the civic groups now face an existential threat on account of the triple burden of leadership challenges, resource deficits and lack of programmatic imagination. One key informed opined that:

*To be taken seriously, civil society in Bulawayo needs to re-configure and review strategic thinking approaches to SA. It will need to deploy a series of game changing initiatives targeted at leadership that brings new strategies to engage the next 12 to 18 months, a new way of working between and among civil society and within itself and with the wider democracy; and lastly, around critically relevant themes that will have national resonance* (Key Informant Interview with CSO opinion leader, 9/4/16).

Most civil society interventions on SA in Bulawayo have been pre-occupied with the demand side, citizen empowerment, at the expense of the supply-side, local authorities and other state duty bearers. This stress on empowering citizens and representing their voices for meaningful social change has meant the neglect of the supply side of the SA chain. An over-emphasis on the demand side of the equation, due to the lack of capacity to engage the other side, has led to criticism, by academics and bureaucrats, about a biased approach to civic advocacy and accountability. The one-sided engagement approach has created a rift and discrepancy in terms of capacity as citizens are being capacitated to demand their rights from an incapacitated local authority. What this in turn has done is to bring about a disparity in terms of the many demands citizens make and the capacity of the local authority to understand and particularly respond to the demands raised, given the inability of the BCC as well to raise adequate financial resources for responsive service delivery in Bulawayo. The subsequent stalemate arising from prevailing CSO efforts have adversely left the BCC in a precarious position of ‘not knowing what to do’ in terms of designing and implementing responses which will create an apt environment for SA and improved service delivery. Additionally, the continued contestation between civil society (‘the good’) and the BCC (‘the evil’) has limited the understanding of the power of symbiotic interaction between state and non-state entities, and this has led to the lack of SA and citizen participation consolidation as there is continued support to only one side of the equation.

The partisanship of civic society and how this has impacted CSOs’ capacity to represent citizens’ interest is tied strongly to the failure to draw the line between being political and being partisan by CSOs pursuing SA in Bulawayo. As noted earlier, most CSOs doing SA work in Bulawayo are funded by, and are often creatures of, foreign donors. Given this relationship, donors often call the shots to which CSOs oblige. In this, CSOs inevitably mutate into the bodies they receive funding from, rather than the societies they represent and purport to draw their legitimacy. Under these circumstances, CSOs tend to push a certain political and partisan agenda, usually an

MDC agenda, in Bulawayo and this, as argued, inhibits these CSOs from engaging critically with the BCC.

In this regard, some scholars (Munzwa and Jonga 2010; Muchadenyika 2017) attribute the decline in SA-based good governance, particularly between 2000 and 2008, to the broader political and economic meltdown in Zimbabwe. But such an argument fails to recognise that this period marked the MDC's rise in dominance in local authorities, with the partisan character of CSOs undertaking work around SA undercutting their local authority watchdog role. While it is undeniable that CSOs (in Bulawayo and elsewhere) are invariably political given their functions around good governance, they however also exhibit characteristics of being political in a political party-partisan way. Ideally CSOs involved in SA in Bulawayo should be non-partisan in terms of political-party affiliation, but this has become blurred by the partisan nature of CSOs in Bulawayo. CSOs in Bulawayo expect to be understood as non-partisan but, by acting in partisan manner, they are resultantly treated as such by the central party-state. The advocacy and promotion of SA and citizen participation in governance processes are political functions but not necessarily partisan functions.

Furthermore, the instrumentalisation of CSOs (and their SA interventions) by donors has created challenges in defining citizen agendas and priorities on a national scale. The approach by donors in funding CSOs has fragmented and compromised the potential of SA processes in making broader changes on a macro-scale. Accountability interventions in Bulawayo have been limited to CSO actions, as funded by donors, and this has led to a rift between the voices of civil society institutions and the voices of ordinary citizens. This is largely due to the fact that SA programmes driven by CSOs have in large part been rooted in an urbanised and elite movement which has diluted their potency and ability to initiate local governance reforms at a grassroots level on a national scale. Most SA interventions driven by CSOs thus use technical and formalistic language which alienates low literacy communities, whom they purport to represent. Given that current national (local government) legislation affects local authorities in both rural and urban spaces, the SA activities by organisations in urban spaces like Bulawayo have fallen far short of addressing the systemic challenges at the apex of central/national government. The lack of a national approach to accountability by CSOs has in turn seen intermittent, piecemeal, populist and cosmetic reforms, addressing symptoms and not causes, being introduced by government at local and national levels. For example, during the build-up to the 2013 elections, the Minister of Local Governance issued

a directive that all residents' debts should be written off. This clearly was simply addressing a symptom and not the cause of poor service delivery and lack of SA in Bulawayo and beyond.

## **7.4 Compartmentalisation, Apathy and Disconnections between State/CSOs/Citizens in Social Accountability**

The study has clearly established that there is a myriad of problems in implementing SA interventions in Bulawayo, despite some commendable efforts being made at times by the local authority such as involving residents' associations in mobilising residents to participate in budget consultative meetings. Overall, these challenges and pitfalls have resulted in an ineffective budget process in terms of maximising citizen participation, leading to negative consequences for SA, for inclusion of marginalised groupings in participatory development, for prioritising citizen-centric local governance procedures and even for enabling service delivery. In this context, this section discusses arising matters within Bulawayo's polity and how these shape SA.

### **7.4.1 Publicity and Awareness Raising**

A critical finding of this study is that there is poor publicity and awareness-raising in Bulawayo's public and democratic processes including in relation to platforms for citizen participation in governance processes. Several factors have been noted, including the use by the Bulawayo City Council of local newspapers to announce its budget meetings for example. To the most vulnerable and poverty-stricken residents in Bulawayo communities, the newspaper remains a rare and unaffordable commodity, hence information about BCC initiatives does not reach this (majority) population located in particular in high-density areas where service delivery and infrastructural maintenance are deeply problematic. Buying a newspaper is viewed as a luxury by most of these residents who are facing challenges paying their bills and pursuing household-based livelihoods more broadly. As a result, most residents remain unaware of meetings scheduled for participatory budgeting for instance, and therefore do not participate. The implication has been that attendance at council budget meetings is relatively low though not insignificant. For example, in the financial year 2014-2015, less than 3,000 residents participated in budget meetings (City of Bulawayo 2015). There were improvements however in the financial year 2015-2016 as civil society and RAs sought to reactivate their structures (which were in decline due to minimal donor budgets) for citizen mobilisation purposes.

As well, the observed trend has been that the announcement of dates, times and venues for public engagement meetings is usually done only a few days before the commencement of the budget-making process. This means that residents in a particular ward do not receive adequate time to plan and perhaps prepare their input based on ‘ward-based budgets’ that they can then submit to the local authority. Linked to this, after the first publication of the draft budget, citizens and CSOs are not provided sufficient time to produce solid and comprehensive analyses of the draft budget, even if they had the capacity to do so. Due to this, debates at budget meetings are uninformed and shallow, with residents in the main concerned with whether council rates are to be increased in the forthcoming budget period, given the centrality of this for their prevailing levels of poverty.

Access to adequate and timely details about public processes which have a bearing on SA should be a priority of the local authority in Bulawayo if citizen participation is considered as a key enabler in local development. The stifling of information, deliberate or otherwise, by the local authority, hobbles the ability of rate-payers in Bulawayo to play at least some minimal role in SA processes. It also implies that the BCC does not consider the views and concerns of residents of any significance, with the local authority then pursuing a kind of elite politics removed from the lives of rate-payers. While the timely sharing of detailed and accessible information is critical, it has less significant implications compared to a situation where no information is being shared at all. The local authority is compelled by the constitution to provide pertinent documentation, and information in general, for effective citizen participation in public processes. However, the reality on the ground points to a gap, in practice, where the local authority does not adhere to such constitutional requirements. This is coupled by the fact that there is no firm stance taken by the central state to ensure any adherence to this by local authorities like the BCC.

#### **7.4.2 Political Polarisation and Citizen Apathy**

The prospect of participatory accountability processes, existing and flourishing, has also been compounded by political polarisation and citizen apathy. The study found that some councilors in Bulawayo mobilise participants, for budget consultation meetings for example, on a party-political partisan basis with, in many cases, MDC foot soldiers tasked with mobilising residents and using political party structures in doing so. This political polarisation, where councillors mobilise people on a partisan basis, leaves a range of citizens out of any participatory processes. Although in some instances party-aligned councilors do not intentionally shut out certain residents from consultative

meetings, the lack of innovation in mobilising residents to attend budget meetings has led to others being left out, especially those outside the circle of the political party (the MDC) to which the councilor belongs. Politicisation of civic issues at the local level, and resulting political-party polarisation amongst local citizens, seems to have produced a quagmire in which it becomes nearly impossible for reasonable proposals to gain traction as they are often viewed and delegitimised through political lenses.

Also, the study found that residents themselves abscond from local governance processes in Bulawayo due to negative perceptions which they have about these processes, thereby deepening levels of apathy. Interviewed residents revealed that they believe the budget consultations are carried out as a way of rubber stamping an already formulated budget, and feel that the opinions they articulate are not considered with the attention they deserve. Thus, a woman during a focus group argued that: *“We always attend these meetings and what comes out in the end is a budget that has none of our issues; these council people just want to use us to legitimate a process they would have set even before engaging with us”* (FGD in ward 28, 22/5/16). Meanwhile, others feel that the BCC does not have adequate funding to address critical concerns around service delivery, hence they argue that attending the meetings is a waste of time. One resident from Mabuthweni indicated that: *“Council is struggling financially and it’s of no use for us to spend hours sharing views and priorities when there are no funds to address these. I would rather use my time more productively, selling my wares at the market than sit in these meetings”* (Conversation with a youth participant in Mabuthweni, 22/5/16). Issues of political polarisation, as noted above, have also contributed to apathy, with some residents reluctant to attend meetings called by councilors because a particular councilor belongs to a different political party than the resident. For example, one resident from ward 23 said: *“I have seen no need to attend these ‘mini MDC rallies’ because as soon as people realise you are from a [different] political party, you are booed even before stating your point so personally I see no need to attend these meetings”* (Conversation with a female participant, 22/5/16). In the end, this means that SA is curtailed by both demand-side and supply-side actors, that is, by Bulawayo citizens and the BCC respectively.

#### **7.4.3 Residents’ Negative Perceptions on Bulawayo’s Social Accountability Processes**

A critical component of the study was to understand the perceptions of the residents of Bulawayo on SA processes to understand why participation is low. From the focus group discussions that were carried out with residents, it emerged that residents felt that they were not actively involved



in setting priorities for resource allocation and are only consulted to rubberstamp the priorities set by council. Only a few respondents felt that their input was valued while the majority expressed a belief that consultations were done only to comply with national requirements for budget making. Residents also felt that budgets, for example, failed to address their needs as they were not specific to developmental needs relevant to different communities in Bulawayo, which differ with those from others. For instance, residents from Emabuthweni and Pelandaba felt there was a need for a ward specific project to address problems of poor housing in the area, while residents of Cowdray Park were more concerned with connection to water and electricity, and construction of schools and clinics in parts of their area.

The presence of a ward specific budget consultative process, in principle, however does not result in a ward specific budget allocation, in practice. As such, residents from Bulawayo always see a city budget that aggregates citizen priorities which is not reflective of ward specific needs and views. In respect of that, residents have developed attitudes that seem to suggest budget making processes are rigged in favour of the imperatives of technocrats in the BCC. Given that, the budget making process in Bulawayo, as a means for SA, sows the seeds for citizen exclusion as the lack of trust and sincerity, in the process, is undermined by existing community pre-dispositions.

The lack of a comprehensive approach to SA, through budget making, further creates fissures at community level as council development plans, as espoused in the budget, lack a definitive way of addressing specific community needs and priorities which clearly differ from ward to ward. The lack of an adequate response tailored to the needs of respective communities then fuels inter-community tensions as there is a general feeling prevailing that some wards are considered as more important than others in the eyes of the BCC. These perceptions, at community and ward level, further fuel apathy in the sense that residents then view the budget consultation process as a smoke-screen to window-dress issues under the guise of citizen consultation; thus, residents do not take such processes seriously.

The lack of a tailored response by way of the budget to diverse community needs and priorities ensures a disconnection between citizen views and their lived experiences. SA tries to ensure the inclusion of citizen views and to translate these into tangible improvements in lived experiences. But, in the case of Bulawayo's budget making and resource allocation process for example, this has proved to be problematic as council has failed to deal with issues unique to each

context and locality in its budgeting and expenditure processes. One key informant espoused that: *“While council does attempt to gather views from citizens, the challenge is that council budgets are not ward based. Citizen views are gathered, averaged and aggregated to see which issues were raised the most times”* (Key Informant Interview with council technocrat, 23/4/16). Such a process inevitably sees priorities from other areas being relegated to the periphery. In addition, the relegation of such issues consequently means such issues remain un-addressed, creating an impression that council favours certain issues, from specific ward-based areas, over others.

#### **7.4.4 Compartmentalisation of Social Accountability in Bulawayo**

While SA provides opportunities for coalescence around key service delivery issues, the limited focus and particular character of accountability initiatives in Bulawayo acts as a compartmentalising mechanism limiting the potential for citizen-local authority coalescence. Compartmentalisation in this case refers to how CSOs compartmentalise their work into service delivery exclusively (without recognising its relationship to national level governance/institutions) and, further, that their work is compartmentalised vis-à-vis each other. SA focus areas pursued by civic actors in Bulawayo point to the fact that most organisations concentrate on such issues as gender budgeting, basic service delivery monitoring and community based planning, but any one CSO tends to focus on one or two of these issues and not all. Thus, SA work and outcomes are compartmentalised and attributed to specific civic actors engaged in specific issues without any cross-fertilisation or consolidation of SA outcomes at local, sub-national or national levels. The fact that SA interventions in Bulawayo focus exclusively on the mentioned priorities is an indication of a key deficiency of prevailing accountability approaches as they fail to address the systemic causes of poor governance which emanate largely from the mode of governance at central state level, which informs the development and implementation of policy at national level and is responsible, through path-dependency, for cascading centralisation to local authorities like the BCC.

Through the study, it was established that most SA interventions in Bulawayo are carried out by CSOs through financial aid from donors. The emphasis on results-based programming by donors compels most CSOs to focus on *“‘low hanging fruits’ or interventions with quick measurable results”* (KII with CS opinion leader, 9/4/16). Due to the restrictive and fluid character of the operating environment in Zimbabwe, most CSOs seem to focus on accountability activities focusing on local government processes at the expense of national level policy and institutions

which ultimately are the source of poor governance and lack of accountability in Zimbabwe. Given this, CSO accountability interventions in Bulawayo concentrate on issues which have to do with service delivery programmes without addressing systemic and institutional concerns. Consequently, interventions tend to be compartmentalised into a box labeled as service delivery, without linking service delivery issues to broader governance concerns at central governance level, further limiting the potential of local accountability initiatives in mutually reinforcing national level SA processes, frameworks and institutions. In addition, the fact that accountability initiatives are driven by CSOs which are accountable to their respective donors means that any accountability outcomes are largely driven and owned by CSOs and their donors. This serves to reinforce the undercutting of SA as a process of collective action involving inclusive and deep participatory methodologies.

SA as a basis for democratisation by both local authority and civil society actors in Bulawayo has been driven by the need to reduce centralisation or central state-led urban governance with Bulawayo becoming a turf for contestation. This entails another kind of compartmentalisation, as accountability processes have been categorised as, and slotted into, a broad struggle for democratisation and devolution of power with SA being used as a means to this sweeping end. Because of this, the emphasis and basis of CSO accountability interventions in Bulawayo have focused, as indicated earlier, on capacitating demand-side actors. This means that the discipline and practice of SA derives from a counter-hegemonic narrative without meaningful contribution to the complexities of governance, besides a propagandist commitment to regime change. This leads to further challenges in inhibiting SA as collective action in Bulawayo as it excludes central (and at times local) government actors and institutions in its scope and approach. Given all this, SA continues to be a littered with hurdles partly because of the compartmentalised and exclusionist forms of accountability taking place in Bulawayo. This relates to the politicised and partisan character of national politics in Zimbabwe and how this becomes translated and manifested in the tension-riddled demeanour of state and non-state actors in the governance of Bulawayo.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

The chapter provided an analysis of the contextual drivers of SA in Bulawayo, with a special focus on political and social will, state commitment, state and civil society capacity, the nature of key political institutions and how the compartmentalisation of SA efforts by state and non-state actors

collide. These areas highlight the close interplay between local level urban politics and SA processes with specific reference to Bulawayo. The chapter also looked at the operating environment and how this plays a significant role in shaping SA outcomes. Additionally, it considered the perceptions and attitudes of state and non-state actors and how these interface and become intertwined with possibilities of pursuing SA. The role of political institutions in particular was highlighted, including their range of functions within the SA system in Bulawayo.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND NORMATIVE SOCIO-CULTURAL DYNAMICS**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the influence of normative socio-cultural dynamics (or drivers) on SA and its interaction with urban governance in Bulawayo. These emergent issues are germane to our understanding of SA and how, to some extent, it is influenced by the socio-cultural context in which it is pursued. The chapter thus considers the interactions between socio-cultural norms, arrangements and practices and SA, and how these interactions affect service delivery, urban governance and citizen participation in Bulawayo. The previous chapter focused its discussions more on the political economy context which is inadvertently silent on the socio-cultural dynamics conditioning SA. This chapter thus highlights these dynamics and a range of social constructs which play an instrumental role in shaping community attitudes and perceptions towards SA. Discussions ensuing in this chapter thus emphasise cultural issues (including cultures of entitlement, patronage and corruption) and social phenomenon rooted in gender, class and ethnicity. These social constructs create a critical social context for SA and an understanding of these provides critical insights into the social dynamics that pattern SA at community levels in urban centres like Bulawayo.

### **8.2 Culture of Fear and Despondency**

The political, social, economic and historical experiences of a country and a city more specifically are strongly tied to foundational socio-cultural traditions and norms which in turn have a bearing on how communities view and relate to power, institutions and each other. Accountability in particular is shaped by political culture as the latter shapes influences attitudes towards public participation, public integrity and SA. In appreciating the importance of collective responsibility and participation in governance processes, it is thus necessary to underline the specific character of accountability as defined by society and culture in Bulawayo.

Bulawayo's political, historical and cultural experiences are strongly informed by power dynamics as manifested by the *Gukurahundi* disturbances of the 1980s. The violence and targeting of people from the general Matabeleland region created stigma and fear which has been ingrained in the psyche of the population. In addition, this culture of fear has acted as a perpetual barrier in

respect of the freedom of participation, expression and association, thus contributing to a culture of passive participation and lack of accountability. The violent silencing of citizens during *Gukurahundi* has led to a culture of ‘suffering in silence’ and ‘not speaking out’ as one participant stated that:

*Part of the reason why we as people from this [Matabeleland] region do not speak out on issues of accountability is largely because of the fear that still remains at the back of our minds. We experienced hardships of unprecedented levels. Given the fear that is rife, how do we overcome such and speak out particularly on issues of accountability without the fear of disappearing or being physically harmed by the powers that be, knowing what happened in the not so distant past (FGD on 14/5/16, ward 28).*

Historical experiences and memories run deep and perpetuate a fear of actively engaging in local politics in Bulawayo, particularly considering the ongoing national rule of ZANU-PF. This impacts negatively on the confidence of citizens in Bulawayo in articulating and influencing systems of accountability in local governance.

The local authority (BCC) has taken advantage of this by utilising largely top-down decision-making processes which further limit and close space for Bulawayo citizens to clamour for more accountability. Consequently, this has cultivated a culture of corruption and impunity among local authority officials, with any calls for social accountability from citizens being often hastily curtailed. A case in point was the publicised issue of corrupt practices by elected councillors in the acquisition of residential stands at concessionary prices amid a housing backlog of 657,298<sup>7</sup> house seekers. Two councillors, Gift Banda (Ward 5) and Reuben Matengu (Ward 21), were then suspended after a commission of inquiry was instituted by the MLGRD, with its findings and recommendations pointing towards the abuse of power and office. In this instance, accountability was driven by the central state’s line ministry but for political reasons, as the suspended councillors belonged to the opposition party, MDC. One key informant reflected upon this by arguing that the BCC acts as if it were part of a colonial state:

*The legislative and policy framework in Zimbabwe’s local authorities is still very colonial and repressive in nature. The current by-laws still entrench powers for those in authority and close space for dissenting voices from ordinary citizens. These laws were designed to*

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<sup>7</sup> Council Minutes from a full council meeting held on 24 March 2016.

*keep [black] people in check and the post-colonial local authority continued that legacy and quite effectively so* (KII on 16/4/16 with Civil Society opinion leader).

Remnants of top-down colonial-style local government structures, along with post-colonial restructuring of a repressive kind, have combined to undercut SA in Bulawayo as residents feel disinclined to engage as citizens in political processes. In this respect, the state's commandist approach to governance is mirrored by local authorities, like the BCC. There is thus a reluctance by communities to speak out and play an effective oversight role in public and governance processes, which sets the condition for local authority leaders to disregard citizen opinion.

The strong presence of a culture of impunity in local authority representatives became apparent during the participatory budget processes where citizen views are supposed to inform the budget making process through public consultations held in each of the 29 wards in Bulawayo. Though legally obliged to carry out these consultations, they are reduced to superficial forms of engagement and this is done deliberately by BCC to push its own agenda<sup>8</sup>. For instance, during the 2016 Fiscal Year, the meetings were publicised late and insufficient budget details were provided to citizens. The lack of a culture of active citizen participation, premised on the prevalence of fear, created ample room for the BCC to exclude citizen input from a process as critical as budget making.

During the KIIs and FGDs, there was a deep sense of citizen despondency leading to a lack of interest in – and disengagement from – SA processes in Bulawayo. This despondency, which in part arose from the culture of fear, affected citizen confidence and uptake with regard to SA. Given this lack of general citizen appetite and stamina for citizen participation in Bulawayo, SA efforts become increasingly difficult to not only sustain but to manage as well. Based on the study findings, it seems that citizens of Bulawayo awoke from their slumber of despondency during elections times when they became captivated with local governance processes. Part of the reason for this is attributed to the vibrant partisan and political character of most communities in Bulawayo as indicated at least by the mere diversity of political representation. One key informant thus said, in jest, that *“Bulawayo is the place in Zimbabwe where there is the highest number of political parties per square metre”* (KII with CSO opinion leader, 23/4/16).

This sentiment indicated the extent of political pluralism and level of politicisation within Bulawayo communities, but it also speaks to the fragmentation of citizen views and voices around

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<sup>8</sup> These sentiments were consistently raised by both Key Informants and participants during FGDs.

issues of SA and governance in general. Political pluralism in Bulawayo generates much hype during elections but the momentum developed during election periods is hardly translated into active citizen participation beyond plebiscites. As such, SA interventions suffer from low citizen buy-in, ownership and drive. This lack of citizen ownership explains, to some extent, why most SA interventions in Bulawayo are donor and CSO driven, raising questions around sustainability of SA interventions. Coupled with this, levels of inequality and exclusion (as discussed later for instance with relation to gender) evidently shape the constraints around SA in numerous ways. In Bulawayo's case, efforts at citizen voice and participation have been found to replicate existing inequalities despite efforts to mitigate these. For example, most communities indicated that they rarely participated in SA processes because they did not contribute, financially, to the BCC resource purse. Hence, they had no obligation to clamour for accountability in a system that they did not finance. Such financial inequalities then fuel the lack of citizen participation in a city faced with collapsing industries, rising unemployment and urban poverty. Urban poverty, in this case, acts as a driver and barrier to citizen participation in SA.

The resource dependency of SA interventions in Bulawayo poses challenges to citizen participation. Bulawayo citizens participate in SA interventions that are initiated and driven by local CSOs receiving donor funding. Due to the rising levels of urban poverty and unemployment, citizens are relatively easily mobilised to attend CSO-driven SA activities with the hope of receiving per-diems, transport and food allowances as incentives for participation. This has fuelled artificial citizen agency and buy in into SA interventions. The 'rent a crowd' practice behind SA creates fragmentation of citizen voices, because of bussing, which in turn creates a situation where responsible duty bearers ignore such voices. The fragmentation of citizen voices is exacerbated by the fact that active participants in SA activity are usually CSO members, hence the fragmentation and alienation of ordinary citizen's voices. In such cases, it is all too obvious that communities are recruited and actively participate in SA to meet procedural requirements, making it ironic to talk about 'choice,' since most members are not even aware of the value, beyond personal incentives, of participating in SA interventions.

### **8.3 Gender, Class and Ethnicity**

The type of political leadership and citizen participation in Zimbabwe entails patriarchal arrangements (Jackson 2003) which permeate the social, political and economic formations in Bulawayo. The power relations within households in Bulawayo's communities is marked by male



domination, i.e. ruled by household-based patriarchs. Additionally, as culturally-defined, women tend to be confined to this domestic sphere (Hine 2000), with the public sphere (the economy and polity) said to be the space for male participation. This undercuts women's ability to access SA platforms. Despite this, if not because of it, most BCC policies and programmes and social accountability processes have been largely gender blind and unresponsive to the needs of women. As a result, the high levels of inequality, poverty, disease, citizen disenfranchisement and other challenges that affect the efficacy of SA processes in local governance have not addressed the specific concerns of women. In this way, while SA processes have been curtailed by fear in the context of a strong state presence and have thus created difficulties for ordinary citizens to participate effectively, patriarchy has compounded these challenges even more so for women in Bulawayo. Certainly, the lack of strong SA mechanisms and frameworks has a direct relationship with poor service delivery, and poor service delivery negatively affects women in particular due to their gender role within households.

The study established that there is underrepresentation of women in SA processes in Bulawayo due to their inaccessibility to public spaces for their voices to be heard. Most respondents therefore highlighted the lack of vibrant representation of women within SA mechanisms. Women participants during a FGD lamented the fact that, for instance, budget consultation meetings are organised on short notice and the time scheduled for these meetings usually clashed with their daily duties. One female respondent espoused that:

*Most of these meetings where we are invited as participants to contribute to policies and development processes are not sensitive to our daily routines as women. They happen either in the morning or in the afternoon when we will be doing our daily chores. As such we find it difficult to neglect our household duties just to go and sit quietly under a tree while things remain unattended to at home (FGD with women participants in Ward 19, 21/5/16).*

The gradual decline in the Zimbabwe's economy has led to a corresponding deterioration in service delivery standards. For instance, in 2016, the BCC introduced a 72-hour weekly water rationing schedule due to the dwindling volume of water in the supply dams, poor infrastructure connecting the city's reservoirs and supply dams, and the lack of resources to purchase purification chemicals.<sup>9</sup> This situation adversely affected women in SA processes as women would be in queues to fetch water from communal boreholes at the expense of engaging in other activities. At

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.chronicle.co.zw/72-hour-water-shedding-for-bulawayo>.

the same time, women have become increasingly involved in informal trading and other income-generating projects, in the face of an absence of formal employment opportunities. This consists of women traders selling various wares which include clothes, fruits, vegetables, air-time, cell-phones and toiletries. An independent source of income on their part may shift gendered power relations at household level and enhance their decision-making responsibilities. It has also meant that, as informal traders, women have been able to protect and promote their socio-economic rights. This has entailed the formation of loosely coordinated social formations, committees and associations, through which they are able to articulate their interests in the public realm. An example of such an organisation is the Bulawayo Vendors and Traders Association (BVTA) which creates platforms for vendor interests to be heard by facilitating social accountability dialogues between vendors and local government decision makers. However, these engagements have not led to SA processes becoming more inclusive of women overall in Bulawayo.

Throughout the study, there were consistent innuendos pointing to the fact that women have largely remained on the margins of local authority plans, policies and programmes, as well as SA mechanisms. Hence, local government processes including around SA in large part are configured around a masculine politics framed in terms of patriarchal norms and networks. The depiction of women, from the perspective of central and local government, continues to be reduced to the “motherly figure” as in their household and caregiving activities.

The disenfranchisement of women in SA processes in Bulawayo has hampered the ability of demand side actors (civil society groups) to effectively coalesce as a collective to ensure that the BCC is accountable to service users. The absence of collective actions that include pronounced women’s perspectives undermines the importance of inclusiveness of citizen participation in SA programmes, thus rendering responses by the supply-side of the chain (the BCC) inadequate due to the absence of the key concerns of women. In this sense, patriarchy systems have in a sense perpetually colluded with state authoritarianism, at local government level, over the years to marginalise women from participating in and benefiting equitably from SA processes.

In essence, most of the work around SA in Bulawayo is driven by civil society, and civil society activism in Bulawayo emanates from a deeply entrenched culture and practice of masculinities which leads to the instrumentalisation of women. Key civil society actors in SA in Bulawayo claim though that, while women’s voices are seemingly side-lined, this is not because the issues being addressed were packaged to appeal to males only. Rather, women hardly

participated actively in such processes. One key informant noted that: *“In the beginning we would call meetings for all the community members as a collective. The women would attend. We would have the numbers present, but the challenge was that they would not contribute as they would be quiet”* (KII with a civil society leader, 9/5/16). Of course, the failure of women to participate is a manifestation of the patriarchal practice of women remaining silent in the presence of men. Creating separate spaces for women to meet on their own, apart from men, would likely provide a stronger platform for women to participate in SA processes.

The study also established that in instances where women are consulted and effectively engage in SA processes, it is window-dressing measure to give the impression that women’s voices are incorporated. For example, women participants in wards 19 and 23 noted that: *“Even in spaces where we are invited, women are relegated to the less important tasks such as saying the opening prayer or giving the vote of thanks”* (FGD meeting with women in Ward 19, 21/5/16). Another participant raised the point that: *“Women’s participation is treated as cosmetic. It is not rooted in most of the duty bearers’ ideology or philosophy. We have ornamental compliance from these. As far as women and their participation goes, there is no real representation”* (KII with a Women CSO leader 8/5/16). Challenging patriarchal SA procedures clearly is crucial.

Income, wealth and possessions, as indicators of social class, have also played a central role in shaping the pattern of citizen participation in governance processes in Bulawayo and Zimbabwe in general. The class divide, for instance between high-density and low-density areas, has seen fragmentation of citizen efforts and voices around accountability, poor service delivery and good governance. There is considerable unspoken resentment amongst poorer Bulawayo residents directed at the low participation in SA processes, if any, by residents from the low density, affluent and leafy suburbs to the east of Bulawayo. For example, during KIIs and FGDs with civil society leaders, residents’ associations and ordinary Bulawayo citizens noted the lack of buy in and involvement by residents from the eastern suburbs, specifically wards 1-6 which consist mainly of the urban high-middle class communities, especially on issues requiring citizen action in addressing SA, service delivery and good governance.

The interplay between income-class disparities and citizen participation in SA has continued to compartmentalise service delivery experiences within Bulawayo further shaping patterns of inclusion-exclusion and citizen participation in SA interventions in Bulawayo. For example, with regards to poor service delivery, water rationing for instance, most households in

the eastern suburbs have boreholes and wells whereas, in high density areas, where community boreholes are common place. Given these disparities, water rationing affects poor and rich households differently and these varying experiences, in turn, inform the need, or lack of it, to participate in SA processes. This division along class lines thus fragments and curtails the potential of collective citizen action and coalescence on issues of SA. In Bulawayo, for example, the BPRA spear headed the #notoprepaidmeters campaign which sought to challenge a move by the local authority to install pre-paid water metres without the consent of citizens. However, there were divisions among citizens themselves, with those from the eastern suburbs noting that they saw no issue with the introduction of these metres as they would boost revenue collection while improving service delivery. This, however, resulted in the disjointedness in voices between the urban poor and the elites, curtailing the potential of collective participation in shaping SA outcomes.

In addition, the study established that the class dimension was not only limited to the urban poor and elite dynamic. Within urban Bulawayo, there are also ‘class’ dimensions that shape the level of participation among community members in high density areas. These dimensions are largely informed by patterns of income and status in Bulawayo society. Public meetings on issues of accountability organised by BPRA have a significant bias towards the urban poor whose need for efficient service delivery is imperative to their day to day living. One key informant from civil society noted that:

*At times we struggle to get community members to actively participate in these organised accountability platforms. In most cases you have the ones that are better economically, especially those with children in the diaspora, dominating such platforms with those that are known to lack [the urban poor] being pushed to the peripheries and their voices not entirely heard. (KII with a CSO leader, 23/4/16).*

Even in low income, high density communities in Bulawayo, class differences at times lead to SA interventions and outcomes reflecting the concerns of the elite while the expressions of the majority of residents remain subdued. Those who participate less are not long-term residents of the wards. Due to unemployment and dissipating opportunities for employment, most of Bulawayo’s inhabitants are informal traders who in turn rent houses from better-off proprietors and ‘lodgers’. Lodgers find no incentive to participate as they are neither homeowners nor ratepayers because they remit rent and rates to landlords and not the local authority. They are in

large part excluded from local governance processes as they are regarded as non-residents, rendering SA interventions in Bulawayo a preserve for home-owners and ratepayers.

A further class-based issue relates to the fact that, as indicated, interventions in Bulawayo are largely driven by donor funded civil society organisations like the BPRA, National Youth Development Trust (NYDT), Women in Leadership for Development (WILD) and Habakkuk Trust. Given the donor funded push towards SA, issues of sustainability and continued engagement and participation by citizens beyond specific donor funded projects has remained a challenge. The lack of an organic drive for SA and citizen participation in Bulawayo has thus created the problem of the agenda of SA being dictated by donors, leading to an elitist approach and view of SA interventions. Civil society in Bulawayo, by nature, is run by civic activists – cum development practitioners who run formalised institutions, through donor support, in the pursuit of different agendas. This scenario has meant that SA approaches have become technical and rigid based on the tools and approaches utilised by such actors. What this has done, consequently, is to alienate low literacy (and low income) audiences who cannot confidently engage with the technical language used in such tools and approaches, especially in old suburbs like wards 7 (Makokoba), 8 (Mzilikazi), 12 (Njube) and 13 (Iminyela), where comparatively larger number of elderly residents and women reside.

Beyond gender and class, a recurring feature of the lack of participation by Bulawayo's citizenry in SA processes is the contentious issue of ethnicity. Bulawayo's historical experiences shaped and perpetuated a culture of exclusion, marginalisation and separate development premised in part on the Gukurahundi experiences of the early 1980s. Such experiences created tensions within Bulawayo's communities where citizen participation in national and local governance processes is strongly tied to the ruling party responsible for the atrocities. Since 2000, the BCC has been run by MDC elected councillors. However, the technocrats responsible for implementing the development agenda within the local authority of Bulawayo have remained ZANU-PF appointed loyalists. The presence of such loyalists, from the view of citizens, has continued to represent the atrocities of the 1980s and the spin-off has been detrimental to citizen participation as Bulawayo's citizens constantly feel alienated from power and decision-making processes. This alienation, based on ethnicity and regionalism, has provided enough space for council technocrats to be unaccountable to not only the elected council representatives but citizens in general. For example, in 2012, the MLGRUD permanent secretary under the instruction of the Minister,

instructed all local authorities to reserve seats for special interests councillors. As such, partly because of the animosity between ZANU-PF and BCC, the BPRA blocked the move on the basis that there was no citizen consultation and the stated councillors were chosen at the Minister's discretion thereby blurring lines of accountability.

Regional and ethnic politics have also dampened the appetite for citizen participation in SA processes in Bulawayo. For example, during FGDs, it was established that residents' groups in Bulawayo attempted to hold local authority actors to account for inadequate investment in infrastructure and economic development in Bulawayo. But many of these actions were divided along ethnic lines, thereby limiting the opportunities for a more cohesive and broad-based understanding and practice of citizenship and SA. For instance, in some public meetings held by BPRA, contributions by non-Ndebele speaking people, especially Shona speaking ones, were not given audience based on the language used to communicate points. This further exacerbated pre-existing inter-ethnic disputes over access to resources and disparities in regional development. In this respect, ethnic issues can be deeply ingrained and difficult to overcome without significant attention over time, as one respondent in the study put it:

*Knowing one's self is everything to a Ndebele speaking person from Bulawayo, but in Zimbabwe, we have been stripped of our dignity. We are treated like second-class citizens by the government and our own city council. Only those that are recognised politically or have relationships with power holders are people treated with dignity (FGD in Ward 19, 22/5/16).*

These sentiments are testament to the fact that, where citizens have been historically excluded, or in regions with low levels of social cohesion, the promotion of measures for citizen participation and engagement in SA processes must take into careful consideration the histories of local population groups and the best strategies for promoting genuinely inclusive participatory processes.

What is evident in Bulawayo's case, in considering gender, class and ethnicity combined, is that there has been no deliberate framing of SA frameworks in a genuinely inclusive manner, such that SA initiatives have often reproduced and mirrored existing inequalities. Various cases in Bulawayo therefore suggest that attempts to promote collective citizen participation and representation, for example in SA processes, has had limited reach, buy-in and sustained impact. The influence of inequality on SA is arguably double-edged. On the one hand, in cases like

Bulawayo, it is the perception of inequalities that stimulated aggrieved citizens to call on the local authority and the state to account, explain and justify its actions with regards to the lack of infrastructural development and investment. On the other hand, the degree of fractionalisation along ethnic and class lines, among others, negatively affected the capacity of citizens to collectively bargain for action.

#### **8.4 Culture of Entitlement, Patronage and Corruption**

Finally, I examine a culture of entitlement and particularly of corruption which exists with Bulawayo. Again, to understand the origins, evolution and character of SA and its relationship to culture of entitlement and corruption in Bulawayo, it is necessary to take into account the role of colonial and post-colonial historical experiences embodied in the city's polity. Post independent Bulawayo in particular is characterised by a number of political struggles that shaped the experiences, culture and perception of leadership and accountability. The national liberation struggle created a scenario where the past informs the present, with the position and positionality of individuals during the struggle contributing to current depictions of individuals as loyalists and anti-regime agents. Certainly, the relationship between the liberation war and power/rule in contemporary Zimbabwe, and specifically Bulawayo, is undeniable. The subsequent relationship between liberation war heroes/heroines and power has inevitably created an exclusionary patriotism as propagated by the ruling party, leading to rule by 'war' credentials. In essence, what determines access to power is position and positionality during the war period. In turn, this has created avenues for the contestation of power not based on merit and efficiency but on patriotic history's identification of liberation struggle stalwarts who remain loyal to ruling party historiography. This system of rewarding loyalty is shown in the case of central state ministers and line ministries who/which engage in problematic activities with impunity and despite the negative consequences of these activities for the general citizenry in Bulawayo and elsewhere. This all boils down to a patronage-based culture of entitlement and corruption (both undercutting a culture of SA) which has become a key feature of local governance in Bulawayo dating back to the 1980s.

Post 2000, when the MDC took over the running of the BCC, a similar attitude of entitlement based on the 'struggle for emancipation through democratisation' provided a premise for the emergence of a new political elite who were entitled to govern citizens, without being questioned, based on the hardships endured in democratising the city. As such, pre- and post-2000 (during both the pre-MDC and MDC periods), the BCC as an institution has been reduced to a

resources-portal where the elite are entitled to abuse their power; and this goes without punitive measures as long as there is loyalty to the party and its leader. Before 2000, loyalty was rooted in the liberation war history whereas, post-2000, it was based on loyalty to the MDC's agenda of (supposedly) democratisation. In this sense, the MDC articulated its own localised patriotic history in Bulawayo. A good case in point is the scandal that involved the Bulawayo Deputy Mayor who in 2015 was involved in the procurement of pre-paid water metres where the contracted company had a conflict of interest, as the deputy mayor was a board member/owner of the company. Despite an uproar from civil society about this, no punitive measures were taken against him by either the MLGRD or his political party as he was a known loyalist and financier of party activities.

Through the study, it was established that the culture of entitlement has further created contestations between supply side (central state and local authority) and demand side (civil society) actors, fuelled by the culture of rule by entitlement versus the need for accountability and good governance. As such, any possible social contract in Bulawayo is blocked by the control of power and resources, along with entitlement, which creates problems for SA. This leads to unaccountability at both local and central state levels, as there is constant shifting of blame onto the shoulders of others when it comes to accepting responsibility for government deficiencies. For example, the reason for poor service delivery, weak institutions and lack of accountability at national level is blamed by ZANU-PF on targeted sanctions by the West. At local level, the BCC places blame on ZANU-PF because of its hard stance on opposition run councils. This results in the blurring of who is accountable and who should be held accountable for abuse of public resources and poor service delivery.

Corrupt practices, as an outcome of existing tensions, have ensured the almost deliberate handicap, by respective power-holders, of public institutions of accountability, further perpetuating a culture of corruption and impunity. For example, numerous cases of corruption involving the BCC have been revealed in research studies, media reports, government investigations and audits. However, anti-corruption activities have remained concentrated at the national level, with institutions such as the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) focusing their attention on parastatals, state enterprises and government ministries. This has meant that the linkages between corruption, patronage and SA activities at local authority level have been at best ad-hoc and reactionary. At worst, they have been politicised as they have been placed under the jurisdiction of a partisan MLGRD.



This is problematic as there is increasing evidence that corruption in local authorities has a direct and negative bearing on the livelihoods of citizens, and therefore must be addressed in a holistic, impartial, and systemic manner. However, the matrix gets further complicated especially in instances where corruption, in contrast to normative standards, has gradually become acceptable and normal, to some extent. One respondent highlighted that:

*It is normal for someone who works for the BCC's public works department to disconnect water for a household with an outstanding water bill. However, what is now common occurrence is when the council worker comes to disconnect a household we give him/her \$5 as incentive not to close the water and because he has not received his salary for two months, he will be tempted to take the money and not close the water because he does not benefit anything from closing the water (FGD in Ward 26, 22/5/16).*

Such responses highlight the depth of corruption and lack of accountability where both supply and demand actors collaborate in stifling the potential for SA measures to improve service delivery. In this light, the current situation in the Bulawayo context presents difficulty in the application of SA not only in state led metropolitan governance but where corruption has become inherently accessible and acceptable in the community. This prevalence of corruption at local level is derived from the culture of corruption at national level, posing serious questions on public integrity.

Corruption is common across Zimbabwe, and it is important to understand its implications on SA and service delivery. Many scholars view corruption as involving abuse of public office for private gain (Bank 1997, cited in Mukonza 2013; Palmier 1985, cited in Sithole 2013). In the end, corruption is a governance problem, with links to issues of political power, weakness of democracy, discretion over decision making, limited transparency and weak SA. In its manifestation in local authorities, it occurs in the context of public resource management, that is, the process by which local authorities utilise the available resources to provide public services. It is for this reason that Sithole (2013) argues that corruption poses a serious threat to SA, citizen participation and service delivery. Meanwhile, Huberts and Hoekstra (2016) view public integrity (in contrast to corruption) as being about professional responsibility, moral reflection, compliance with laws and codes, and remaining steadfast to moral standards and values. Certain, in the Bulawayo context, public integrity was being undermined by patronage and corruption.

The failure and refusal by public council officials in BCC tasked with public resource management (including the budget process) to comply with integrity expectations has contributed to curtailing SA efforts. When corruption is added to the mix, it means that the local authority has violated the norms of duty and welfare coupled with a callous disregard for any consequence suffered by the public resulting in the misuse of public authority. The prevalence of corruption and its negative impact on SA continues to curtail improved service delivery where integrity as a core value of public service is overshadowed by patronage, impunity and lack of strong government oversight and mechanisms for recourse. For example, the study established that institutions of accountability and related mechanisms, at BCC level, were weak and ineffective to prevent the misuse and the ineffective use of public resources. A concerned resident noted that:

*If my son was employed as an ambulance driver by the local council and I needed transportation to attend a funeral, I would definitely call him to pick me up with the ambulance, on company time, for him to take me to the funeral. I see no problem with that, he is my son and I am his father, so he must attend to my needs as well. The community would find it concerning if he was to refuse to do that, because I invested a lot in him, for him to get that job it is through my sacrifices and therefore he should reciprocate that (FGD in Ward 29, 22/5/16).*

However, the lack of appreciation and understanding of the fact that public integrity involves good stewardship and due diligence is lost in cultural translation, leading to SA values clashing with cultural norms and expectations. In any case, it is bad practice to divert local authority resources, in this case the ambulance and fuel, for personal use, ferrying one's parent to a funeral, while the intended use of such resources, ferrying sick and needy patients for medical attention, is foregone regardless of the nature and importance of kinship or father-son relationship.

The best way to explain this point is by understanding that the practices that come under the complex of corruption and lack of SA, while being legally culpable and widely reprovved, are none the less considered by their perpetrators as being legitimate and often as not being corrupt at all. In other words, the borderline between what is corrupt and what is not fluctuates and depends on the context and the position of the actors involved (Sardan 1999). As such, cultural norms and values, in this case, pose serious challenges for SA outcomes in Bulawayo where public integrity is compromised. In addition to this, during a KII, a BCC employee did not see any condemnable practice with the above-mentioned scenario (the ambulance), indicating that there is a need to

*“understand that we are Africans and at times it is difficult to draw the line between family and duty, especially on matters involving public resources and pressing family emergencies (KII with a BCC technocrat, 23/4/16).* Such sentiments highlight the depth of institutionalised misuses and ineffective use of public resources and lack of SA in local governance processes in Bulawayo.

BCC has not performed well in promoting and strengthening public integrity, in SA, with corruption in the sector rampant. Anti-corruption activities in the country have been concentrated at the national level, with efforts at the local government level left to the MLGRD. This has been problematic as the ministry is not an autonomous body and has vested political interests since it is appointed by the ruling party – ZANU PF. Thus, actions taken by the ministry of local government, ostensibly to address corruption, are often undertaken to advance the interests of the ruling ZANU PF party, which has controlled the ministry of local government since independence in 1980. Even where the corruption is real, the ministry takes advantage of it to advance its political interests. Indeed, control of the ministry has been a weapon for the ruling party to control major urban areas, which have largely been under the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) since 2000 and this has been espoused by poor systems of SA in the BCC and the disengagement between local and national level accountability processes. The study established the existence of policy gaps with regards to anti-corruption efforts and public integrity at the local government level in Bulawayo. Issues to do with the powers conferred upon the minister of local government over the operations of local authorities inevitably become part of the problem. Structural reform is needed at the local government level, in order to fight corruption.

#### **8.4.1 Corruption Problem and SA in Bulawayo**

Corruption is not a new phenomenon in Zimbabwe, with its manifestation having become apparent soon after independence in 1980. In the late 1980s there was the infamous Willow Gate Scandal which involved illegal resell of vehicles by government officials at an inflated cost, while in the 1990s a pension fund meant for war veterans was abused. More recently, in the past decade (2006 to 2015), there have been reports of shady dealings in the mining sector, particularly the diamond trade, and concerns that heads of parastatals and local authorities were awarding themselves hefty salaries in what came to be termed the Salary Gate Scandal.

But in recent years, it is local authorities that are increasingly featuring in revelations on corruption in Zimbabwe. This is concerning since corruption in local government has a direct bearing on the lived realities of citizens as it has effects on provision of services such as water,

healthcare, refuse collection and road maintenance. It is even more worrying because the 2013 constitution officially recognises local governments and provides for devolution of power, which means that more functions and revenues would be channelled to local authorities. Furthermore, there are more opportunities for corruption in local governments, which have a direct contact with citizens on a continuous basis at the local level. When local authority funds are misappropriated or misused due to corruption, there is less available for service provision.

The subject of corruption in local authorities in Zimbabwe has recently been receiving attention from researchers, academics and students (Mukonza 2013; Sithole 2013). There has also been a surge in media reports on corruption at local government level, with the Bulawayo City Council, Gweru Council, Harare City Council, Mutare City Council and Chitungwiza Council being implicated in underhand dealings (see Table 8.1). The most common forms of corruption have been bribery, rent-seeking and misappropriation of funds or equipment.

**Table 8.1: Summary of Corruption in Selected Zimbabwean Local Authorities**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Examples of Cases of Corruption</b>
Bulawayo	- Looting of stands by councillors, who owe the city \$662 000 in unpaid fees -Tender scandals and prejudicing the city of at least \$1 million
Gweru	-Mayor and town Clerk illegally buying 400 herd of cattle -The city had 18 bank accounts, which raised eye brows
Mutare	-City engineer suspended for tender fraud to the tune of \$330 000 -Gimboki Housing Scheme prejudicing residents of “millions of dollars”
Harare	-Fraudulent billing/receipting possible costing the city of “millions of dollars” -Up to \$2 million lost through leakages from transporters not paying fees
Chitungwiza	-Corruption in allocation of stands, vending bays and leasing of council properties -Corruption in tender processes

**Source:** Compiled by author.

For instance, the Bulawayo City Council (BCC), in 2016, had its reputation of being the best run city in Zimbabwe shattered following revelations of gross abuse of office and corruption in awarding of stands and leases. This came to light after the BPRA in April 2016 unearthed information in council documents that two councillors had been awarded commercial stands with a combined value of over US\$300 000. Further scrutiny of available council minutes by BPRA found that many councillors and council bureaucrats had been awarded numerous and expansive tracts of land including residential stands, commercial stands, school stands, and leases for public

toilets, car parks and crèches. An investigation by the MLGRUD confirmed that Bulawayo councillors were corruptly amassing wealth, leading to suspension of five councillors, including the Deputy Mayor of Bulawayo, Gift Banda, on 19 September 2016.

Presenting the report of the investigation in Bulawayo, the MLGRUD revealed that not only were Bulawayo councillors awarding themselves stands in an unprocedural manner, but they were also not bothering to pay for the stands, and owed the Bulawayo City Council over half a million dollars. Notwithstanding the fact that the ministry is a partisan entity, there was overwhelming evidence against the councillors, and they did not deny the allegations, but rather sought to justify their looting. Other inappropriate conduct was noted in tender processes with indications the city could have been prejudiced of huge amounts of money through compromised bidding and awarding of contracts. Given such high levels of corruption in Bulawayo, there is a need to review policy and practice with regards to promotion of public integrity in SA. This is critical because corruption has negative effects on development and SA which present impediments to societal progress.

#### **8.4.2 Corruption, Law and SA**

A focus on public integrity recognises not only the interplay between SA and cultural values and norms but also the law as it is defined and applied in prevailing contexts. Part of the questions necessary to probe the effectiveness of public integrity are usually around instances of when there is misuse or ineffective use of public resource: the issue becomes how promptly, consistently, and fairly does the institutional environment ensure that disciplinary and/or corrective action is taken. While there is no anti-corruption policy for local authorities in Zimbabwe, there are numerous measures at the national and local level that seek to militate against corruption in local authorities and promote integrity. The Constitution of Zimbabwe, the Prevention of Corruption Act, the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15) and the Public Finance Management Act 9 (Chapter 22: 19) are some of the legal instruments containing provisions deterring corruption and promoting ethical conduct and integrity in local authorities. It is important to discuss these legislative provisions, identifying gaps and limitations.

The Constitution of Zimbabwe is the principal document containing provisions on prevention of corruption and promotion of public integrity in Zimbabwe. Section 9 (1) of the supreme law has provisions on good governance, including requirements for the state to implement policies that promote transparency, personal integrity and financial probity. Section 9 (1) (b)

provides that “measures must be taken to expose, combat and eradicate all forms of corruption and abuse of power by those holding political and public offices. In addition, section 194 of the constitution, on Basic Values and Principles Governing Public Administration provides for institutions, state agencies and public entities to be governed by democratic values and principles including high standards of professional ethics, efficient use of resources, accountable public administration, and transparency through provision of timely, accessible and accurate information.

Further, Section 196 of the constitution on Responsibilities of Public Officers and Principles of Leadership provides that authority assigned to a public officer is a public trust which must be exercised in a manner which is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the constitution, demonstrates respect for the people and a readiness to serve rather than rule them, and promote public confidence in the office held by the public officer. The section also stipulates that public officials should be honest, accountable and disciplined in the execution of their duties. Importantly, Section 254 of the constitution provides for the establishment and composition of ZACC, which is broadly tasked with investigating and exposing cases of corruption in both the public and private sectors; combating corruption, theft, misappropriation and abuse of office; and promoting honesty, financial discipline and transparency in the public and private sectors.

The constitution further provides for establishment of bodies to exercise an oversight role over the operations of public entities including state enterprises, statutory bodies and local authorities. For instance, section 299 provides that parliament must monitor and oversee expenditure of statutory bodies, public entities and local authorities to ensure, among other things, that all revenues are accounted for. Meanwhile, section 309 of the constitution provides for the appointment and functions of the Auditor General who is among other things tasked with auditing the accounts, financial systems and financial management of all departments, institutions and agencies of government, and all provincial, metropolitan and local authorities.

Clearly, the corruption that has been noted in Bulawayo, highlighted above, amounts to an affront on the Zimbabwean constitution. By failing to address this corruption, the government of Zimbabwe and the BCC are failing to uphold the constitution. But any such corruption within the BCC goes against other legal instruments. Hence, in addition to the constitution, numerous legislations have been designed to address issues of corruption. The Prevention of Corruption Act (Chapter 9: 16) is the main legislation governing issues related to corruption and contains guidelines on what should be considered an act of corruption and stipulates penalties for public

officials convicted of corruption. According to Makonza (2013: 16), in its preamble, the act states that it seeks to “provide for the prevention of corruption and the investigation of claims arising from dishonesty, or corruption, and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.” With regards to local authorities, the Prevention of Corruption Act (Chapter 9: 16) specifically states that its provisions cover a member of council, board, committee or authority which is a statutory body or local authority or which is responsible for administering the affairs of a statutory, local authority, body corporate or association. Section 4 of the act contains provisions including some of the actions that local authority officials are prohibited from doing, which include anything contrary to or inconsistent with his duty as a public officer and omitting to do anything which is his duty as a public officer to do, for the purposes of showing favour or disfavour to any person.

Furthermore, the Public Finance Management Act (chapter 22: 19), seeks to secure transparency, accountability and sound management of the revenues, expenditure, assets and liabilities of public entities. Section 42 of the legislation, on ‘Fiduciary Duties of Accounting Authorities’ provides that the accounting authorities of public entities should exercise utmost care to ensure reasonable protection of the assets and records of the public entity and act with fidelity, honesty, integrity and in the best interests of the public entity in managing the affairs of the public entity. Also, section 44 (1) (a) (ii) of the legislation among other things compels accounting authorities to establish and maintain a system of internal audit under the control and direction of an audit committee.

In section 81, the Public Finance Management Act provides that the Comptroller and Auditor General shall audit or cause to be audited the financial statements of all accounting officers, receivers of revenues, statutory funds, designated or specific public entities and constitutional entities. Specific to local governments, the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29: 15) contains important provisions governing against corruption and seeking to promote public integrity. In sections 97 and 98, the act provides that every council shall appoint an audit committee which among other things ascertains whether funds and assets of the council are applied to the purposes intended and are consistent with any regulations and standing orders issued by the council or the Minister as the case may be.

Critically, section 114 of the Urban Councils Act gives the MLGRUD powers to dismiss and suspend a councillor who has contravened any provision of the Prevention of Corruption Act,

has committed an offense involving dishonesty in connection with the funds or other property of council, or has been responsible for loss of council property or funds through negligence or gross mismanagement. This has however been problematic as the minister is appointed by the ruling ZANU-PF party, and he has not hesitated to use these provisions to suspend councillors from opposition parties for political reasons. However, despite the existence of these legislative provisions governing public integrity and seeking to redress and prevent corruption and promote SA, evidence on the ground suggests that more needs to be done to enhance anti-corruption efforts especially in Bulawayo.

#### **8.4.3 Corruption, Public Integrity and SA in Bulawayo**

As expected, the effects of corruption on the governance of Bulawayo have been predominantly negative resulting in poor service delivery, stifling of development and leading to regressions in democratic governance. Corruption in the city has promoted socio-economic problems such as poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy. In addition to impacting negatively on service delivery, corruption has undermined the credibility of democratic institutions and counteracted good governance efforts, while at the same time reducing citizen confidence in democratic governance processes and institutions. This happens because corruption usually proliferates in an environment of patronage politics whereby politicians use vote buying to influence people, as opposed to performing well on their mandate. As Oxford economist, Paul Collier, puts it, “big corrupt money is likely to undermine the political process, enabling the strategy of patronage to triumph over honest politics (Collier 2005: 138). This is devastating for development because, where bribery and vote buying can take the place of honest work, politicians have no incentive to promote equitable development. This seems to be common practice in the governance of Bulawayo’s affairs and, subsequent to that, SA interventions and their value are invariably undercut by such practices. This results in poor service delivery and ineffective public resource management, causing a sort of vicious cycle whereby corruption causes poor service delivery and poor governance, while weak governance institutions fuel further corruption and poor SA.

Corruption is also problematic in that it diverts resources away from poverty eradication efforts and provision of public services (Bonga et al. 2015). In the most basic sense, this happens because through corruption, top public officials are capable of, say, diverting funds budgeted for services such as healthcare, education or refuse collection towards salaries and allowances for themselves (and indeed this has been common practice in Bulawayo). The knock-on effect, in



relation to SA, is that confusion is created as planning and budgeting processes meant to ensure that adequately informed choices are made, do not justify such choices, as budget lines are moved without citizen input in relation to citizen's priorities. The awarding of unreasonably huge salaries and perks to town clerks and senior council officials in Bulawayo at a time when service delivery is suffering may be a case in point. But diversion of resources also happens in other sophisticated ways. For instance, scarce resources have sometimes found their way into the pockets of public officials through corrupt activities in tender processes, a case in point being the Deputy Mayor's issue.

The study further established that, due to weaknesses in tender processes, influential people like Bulawayo's Deputy Mayor are able to manipulate bidding to ensure that companies that have paid them kickbacks or bribes are awarded contracts, regardless of their track record or capacities (Robert et al. 1991, cited in Sithole 2013). In this way, corruption has made it difficult for the BCC to progressively realise provision of socio-economic rights and provide critical services because the projects that suffer from corruption may include roads, clinics, dam pipelines or other infrastructure projects. This is very harmful in poor countries such as Zimbabwe where resources are scarce and local governments are struggling to raise their revenues.

Proliferation of corruption has reduced the effectiveness of local authority administrative staff that requires bribes to carry out their day to day work. More often than not, ordinary citizens find themselves in a prisoners' dilemma whereby its either they do not get access to services due to them, or they face very long delays, or they capitulate and pay a bribe. As Sithole (2013:103) writes, "in Zimbabwe, people are often told to 'sit down while we try to sort out your problem' and they are made to wait until business closes down, and then they are told to come back on the next day and the day after that. The waiting only ends after a bribe has been paid." For this reason, corruption makes access to services even more difficult for the poorest of the poor who cannot afford to pay bribes, thus it exacerbates inequalities in society. This lack of access further curtails the participation of citizens in SA processes as there is no real incentive seen in participation due to the effects of corruption, further compromising SA efforts in Bulawayo. Corruption, in this context, then leads to erosion of the social and moral fibre of society, rewarding dishonest conduct while punishing honesty (Mukonza 2013).

Other scholars contend that corruption leads to loss of tax revenues and loss of skilled labour (Bonga et al., 2015). In the context of the BCC, this would include loss of revenues from

rates paid by citizens, and nepotism in hiring of employees that result in hiring of workers of poor calibre and limited skill. In either case, this seriously undermines the ability of local authorities to perform on their mandate, that is, service provision. An example of how local authorities lose tax revenues is when public officials corruptly reduce the prices of residential stands being sold to one of their own like in the case of Bulawayo.

## **8.5 Conclusion**

This chapter provided an analysis and understanding of the influence of normative socio-cultural dynamics which influence SA and its interaction with urban governance in Bulawayo. This chapter offered a vivid picture of the prevalent and dominant socio-cultural constructs in Bulawayo and how these pattern SA. The chapter, based on a broad survey of Bulawayo's wards, tries to highlight the general characteristics of Bulawayo's SA attitudes and perception using both supply and demand actors. It explains what the socio-cultural norms and values are, where they emanate from, how they impact SA, what they mean to citizen participation and their general experience of life in the local governance of Bulawayo.

It further analyses the emerging actors, institutional forms, social spaces and gender relations. The chapter offers a more connected background to the preceding chapters which go into detail on various political and economic discussions by placing emphasis on socio-cultural strands and institutionalisation in relation to Bulawayo's wards. To understand how these concepts operate in practice, we have to know the type of people and community in which they appear.

The social and historical experiences of people in Bulawayo have shaped the interaction they have with institutions, policies and processes in general. These experiences have contributed to the outcomes of SA in Bulawayo's communities. All these experiences and others have determined the level of inclusion, exclusion and involvement of Bulawayo's residents in shaping SA discourse and local governance policies. Relationships and social spaces have been created within the local governance arena. The main aim of the thesis is to understand how the socio-cultural context drives SA through the appreciation socio-cultural values and norms that include ethnic relations, public integrity, corruption, gender and entitlement in Bulawayo's communities made up of such a diverse collection of people from contrasting backgrounds, ages, beliefs and gender.

## **CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION**

### **9.1 Introduction**

Social accountability, urban governance and citizen participation are concepts fraught with contesting and competing understandings in which their interrelationships are based not only on each other but social, political and economic considerations and contextual drivers as well. The fact that the political economy of national and urban spaces matters to any meaningful development, including around service delivery, is commonly known and this study brings into perspective key issues about SA initiatives and outcomes with regard to development in Bulawayo. The potential of SA in bringing about improved service delivery, good governance and reduced urban poverty is undeniable. However, this potential remains elusive in Bulawayo as questions arise when numerous interventions are directed towards SA but with few positive democratic development outcomes. In this context, preceding chapters have highlighted themes around the modes of ruler-ship in existence in Zimbabwe generally and Bulawayo specifically, in large part by tracing the historical origins of state governance up until the current period and the varying relationships between the state and the city. This has involved interrogating how the modes of ruler-ship at different spatial levels, and the contestations characterising these, have affected democratic procedures and SA in an attempt to underline the importance of understanding the contextual drivers of SA and related outcomes. All this helps in appreciating the ways in which SA manifests itself when and if key contextual factors are not adequately considered, and if and when SA initiatives continue to focus on symptomatic and not systemic causes of poor governance and service delivery.

This concluding chapter brings these and other arguments together to illuminate a conceptual way of understanding SA by first of all detailing the summary of chapters and discussions pursued in the study. Secondly, the chapter provides a discussion around primary and secondary objectives and how these were achieved by way of the thesis. Thirdly, I outline the original contribution of this thesis to conceptual debates on SA and how my thesis adds new dimensions to our understanding of contemporary SA processes. Lastly, I suggest areas for further research and inquiry with regards social accountability and urban governance in developing

countries like Zimbabwe. Before doing this, as indicated, I briefly remind the reader of key points from preceding thesis chapters.

## **9.2 Summary of Chapters**

The first chapter grounded the important questions driving the thesis focus and objectives, and set out the methodological approach and research methods embodied in the thesis process.

In the second chapter, I focused on the theoretical underpinnings of this research – notably how this study is influenced by the concept of SA. In particular, the chapter identified and addressed the ways in which SA is shaped by the character of urban governance and citizen participation and how its continued existence relies on these.

From chapters three to four, the thesis traced the history of urban governance and citizen participation in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe, and in Bulawayo more specifically. These chapters analysed how urban governance and citizen participation (or absence thereof) have evolved from the colonial administration into the independence period, including the explosive contest for power and hegemony from early 2000. I interrogated for instance how urban governance has been used by both the colonial and post-colonial governments as a mechanism to entrench power, even at times under the guise of social development and inclusion. The use of the urban metropolis as a platform for rule and power ultimately often reduced the city of Bulawayo to an area for contestation between those with power and hegemony, and those aspiring to enact power as a counter-hegemonic force.

The following three chapters, chapters six to eight, are the main empirical chapters of the thesis focusing on Bulawayo. Chapter six provided an outline of state-city/society relations concentrating on the formation, taxonomy and impact of SA with reference to Bulawayo, with an emphasis on both formal and informal modes of state-society engagement. The chapter gave a thematic presentation noting how internal and external forces and actors configured interactions between state and society, and the ways in which certain institutions, actors and practices entailed continuities from the colonial past. Relationships between state-society, SA and service delivery were also brought to the fore. The chapter examined the influence of patronage, party and state interests and incentives, and the rule of law in shaping social accountability outcomes. At the same time, the chapter questioned the implications of constitutional provisions for opportunities and constraints with respect to the devolution of power and social accountability in general. The chapter further established that, in Bulawayo, state, city and society relations tend to be reliant on

rule by coercion on the part of the central state, along with the abuse of state power by local authorities (including patronage) and the lack of a binding social contract. These factors lead to a disabling environment for SA and improved citizen participation in service delivery and public resource management.

Chapter seven provided an analysis of the contextual drivers of SA in Bulawayo, with a special focus on political and social will, state commitment, state and civil society capacity, the character of key political institutions and the significant compartmentalisation of SA efforts by state and non-state actors. The chapter showed that political institutions are involved in a myriad of roles and functions of relevance to the SA system in Bulawayo. This implies a close interplay between local level politics and politics on the one hand, and the possibilities and practices of SA in Bulawayo on the other. The chapter also looked at the operating environment and how this plays a significant role in shaping SA outcomes. The perceptions and attitudes of state and non-state actors, and the ways in which their practices interfaced (despite compartmentalisation), are also crucial in examining SA processes.

Chapter eight provided an analysis of the influence of normative socio-cultural dynamics on urban governance and SA in Bulawayo. This chapter thus offered an examination of the predominant socio-cultural ideas and practices in Bulawayo and how these shape SA. This involved considering the origins of socio-cultural norms and values in Bulawayo, how they impact on SA, and what they mean to citizens' participation and their general experiences of the local governance system in Bulawayo. In addition, the chapter examined social status (class, ethnicity and gender) and how these lead to differentiation and heterogeneity within the population of Bulawayo. The significance of this lies in the fact that the various social and historical experiences of people in Bulawayo, as structured by status, have shaped their interactions with political institutions, policies and actors in Bulawayo, with knock-on effects in terms of involvement in SA processes.

### **9.3 Thesis Objectives**

The study traced the history of urban governance in Bulawayo from a socio-political lens as a basis for understanding the origins and form of urban governance. The major intention of this approach was to understand the basis for the continuities and discontinuities in urban governance in general and Bulawayo in particular. The analysis and discussions on the socio-historical context of urban governance is done from chapters one to three. Tracing the trends and patterns of urban governance

in Bulawayo, from the colonial period into the post-colonial period, was done through an analysis of the actors, institutions and practices associated with urban governance. In respect of that, the study analysed the relevant Zimbabwean literature on urban governance; however, unlike the socio-political approach in this thesis, the prevailing literature adopts a political economy approach to urban governance.

Given that social accountability is a relatively new discipline in Zimbabwe, there was need to understand how urban governance and the forms it takes interrelate with social accountability; such discussions, in the thesis, were covered in chapters four and five. This required an analysis of the relationship between the central state and Bulawayo local authority, including prevailing tensions, and the effects of this relationship on SA mechanisms in urban governance in Bulawayo. Thus, the thesis traced, using a literature review, the roots of urban governance in Bulawayo and key historical development in the colonial and post-colonial periods, in order to establish the shifting relations in urban governance and how these interactions impacted on social accountability and citizen participation thereof.

Through a juxtaposition of the colonial and post-colonial periods (through discussions in chapters three to five), emerging issues highlighted in the reviewed literature pointed to the fact that citizen participation in urban governance, a key component of social accountability, was largely exclusionary. In the case of the colonial period, exclusion was in large part based on racial grounds. During the post-colonial period, political party machinations and patronage have been critical to fomenting exclusion. In addition, the literature reviewed noted the use of political and legal powers by the state, both colonial and post-colonial, in controlling and patterning who participates in civic spaces and to what end. In most cases, such approaches perpetuated injustice and marginalisation. In all this, the study interrogated the importance of social accountability in improving citizen participation and service delivery through an understanding of the correlation between urban governance and its interaction with social accountability. This indeed was the main objective of the thesis. The main objective incorporated subsidiary objectives which, in being addressed, contributed to the pursuit of the main objective, as detailed below.

The study sought to examine the enabling and disabling factors which promote and inhibit SA mechanisms in Bulawayo. Through the analysis of the context and operating environment (in chapters six, seven and eight), and using existing primary and secondary literature coupled with original fieldwork, the study was able to interrogate and analyse critical issues pertaining the extent

to which the context, in Zimbabwe and Bulawayo specifically, was enabling or enervating in allowing social accountability to take place. By analysing the key factors and relationship between actors (both state and non-state), such as political/social will, history and patronage for example, the study was able to establish a more nuanced understanding of the context and how it patterned social accountability outcomes. A further analysis interrogated the lived experiences of grassroots communities in terms of how the country and city's polity became manifested in social accountability, urban governance and citizen participation through everyday lives on the ground.

In an attempt to examine the specific forms which SA takes in urban governance in Bulawayo, the study (in chapters six and seven) queried the existence and effectiveness of accountability institutions, actors and laws and how these were shaped by the politics of patronage and political will in relation to social accountability in general. In addition, as a further complicating factor, the study established that social accountability as an approach to citizen participation was driven, and largely so, by CSOs through donor funded projects; hence, there was an overreliance on external forces and lack of sustainability in most social accountability interventions. The study further demonstrated, in chapter eight, that while social accountability generally seeks to be more inclusive, the tools and approaches used (especially community scorecards and budget analysis tools) were exclusionary to some extent and perpetuated already existing inequalities and disparities. The influence of donor-funded CSOs is important in this regard.

The study established that social accountability draws its strength from amicable relationships between different spheres of the state, and between the state and non-state actors, for its success. As such, political tensions between the state and the city of Bulawayo, as espoused in chapter five, blurred accountability lines and created parallel processes and institutions that compromised vertical and horizontal accountability. Part of the study also sought to analyse the relationship between urban authorities in Bulawayo and citizens of Bulawayo, including cooperation and tensions, and the effects of these relationships on SA mechanisms in urban governance in Bulawayo. This was achieved through an interrogation of the changing social relationships between citizens and duty bearers, as discussed in chapter seven. By tracing the origins of citizen-state relations and how these have changed over time, the study reviewed critical literature on the subject of urban governance and citizen participation in Zimbabwe. This was coupled with critical discussions with civil society opinion leaders and community members. The

significance of relations to social accountability is therefore strongly tied to existing interactions between the state and citizens which in turn informs political will, or lack of it, as enhanced by incentives for elites.

Closely tied to this, the research examined internal relations within the Bulawayo local authority (in chapters six and seven), notably between elected councils and state administration, and how these relations affected urban governance and social accountability in Bulawayo. This was achieved through a series of KIIs with city council technocrats who indicated the impact of existing tensions between the state and opposition run local authorities and how these stifled the potential for social accountability, service delivery and urban governance. To further elaborate on the importance of relations, the study sought to understand urban governance and social accountability in Bulawayo with reference to national party politics and how these played out within Bulawayo. The centralisation of power and decision making at the national level, through the MLGRUD and the UCA, and its impact on decision making at local level revealed existing tensions between central government and local authorities in Bulawayo. In addition, the lack of cohesion and collaboration between the state and local authorities created fissures in lines of accountability as the BCC was always in resistance to government directives due to the authoritative nature of state power. As such, the fact that the state was ZANU-PF run and the BCC was MDC run created longstanding tensions between the two actors, inhibiting the potential of social accountability to enhance citizen participation and urban governance.

#### **9.4 Contribution to Debates on Social Accountability**

This thesis has sought to offer a number of insights into SA borne out of an analysis of urban governance and citizen participation in Bulawayo. This involved insights into various dimensions and questions around SA including: can SA be seen as a possible building block in the empowerment of citizens in decision making processes? What aspects of the broader political, economic and cultural context need to be in place for SA to be effective? What processes and mechanisms of SA are in fact put in place within governance institutions? What are the forms of articulation and potential for coalescence between horizontal and vertical accountability processes? How do local contextual drivers of SA relate to larger national drivers of change?

Despite the optimism around the potential of SA in initiating good governance and strengthening weak institutions (Grandvoinnet 2016), I have shown that SA should not be viewed as a silver bullet to governance challenges particularly in urban Africa. SA remains though as a –



potentially – valuable tool in ushering in inclusive developmental initiatives in urban governance policy and practice. The discussion below indicates how the potential of SA is reliant and dependent upon a range of external factors which act as key determinants of SA outcomes and how so-called best practice does not necessarily mean best fit, as SA has conditional relationships with other context-specific derivatives. These contextual issues exist during highly disputed processes of governance characterised by fluid relations of cooperation, confrontation and contestation between the state, local authorities and citizens. This helps in understanding, as indicated earlier, the ways in which SA manifests itself if key contextual factors are not adequately considered, and if SA initiatives continue to focus on symptomatic and not systemic causes of poor governance and service delivery.

#### **9.4.1 The Context as a Determinant of Social Accountability**

The uniqueness of Bulawayo's context embodies a particular and important aspect of understanding SA and citizen participation in urban governance. In many ways the context constitutes an important element in the success and failure of SA in service delivery, poverty reduction and good governance. These contextual drivers vary greatly in scale, size, effectiveness, democratic content, activities and degree of inclusiveness and exclusiveness. Such diversity makes it neither possible nor desirable for civil society actors to invoke unitary conceptions of SA in general. It also restrains us from idealising the potential of SA as a panacea for poor governance, citizen participation and weak institutions. The diversity of contextual factors and their influence on SA illustrate the existence of external factors which can make or break the effectiveness of SA initiatives.

The pursuit of SA in Bulawayo is curtailed by the absence of state actors interested in building alliances with civil society, of coalition-minded civil organisations (and citizens) which display interest in participating in governance mechanisms, and of governance design features that reduce the power of local and central government and promote SA. Demand-side driven SA interventions generally achieve greater success where they are able to forge synergies with top-down and/or horizontal accountability mechanisms, but prevailing state-society and state-city relations in Bulawayo dilute this potential as these are weak, fragile and characterised by contestation and rule by coercion. The success of SA initiatives is closely linked to levels of political and social will amongst state functionaries, with citizens being able to hold service

providers to account. This in turn is determined by the presence of an enabling environment where citizens have access to information and platforms to hold leaders accountable, a scenario that is absent in Bulawayo and Zimbabwe in general. In addition, the choice of public goods and services around which SA is grounded is also important, suggesting that a stronger ‘social contract’ should exist around some public goods, like water for instance.

There is a robust convergence between the findings reported in previous chapters and the growing emphasis on the politics of development shaping Bulawayo’s polity, particularly efforts focusing on the political and power norms which motivate and shape the performance of institutions and on the reputation of state-society/state-city relations. Basically, in the past, there was not a strong focus on the context of SA as the focus was on mobilising citizens un-contextually as if free agents. More so, this tests many of the important assumptions that have characterised conventional thinking and practice on SA over the past decade (World Bank 2004), within which the common emphasis and underpinnings of SA has been the mobilisation of citizens to demand accountability (Booth 2012). This, inadvertently, has seen the need to rethink and reconceptualise SA towards a more contextually and politically attuned theory of change to better understand SA dynamics.

Even though the specific arrangement of contextual factors critical to SA differ from place to place, and also over time, indications from this research suggest that the most important features can be classified by certain overarching dimensions comprised of the spheres of civil and political society and their power-infused relations. The fact that SA is relationship-based brings into play the importance of at least a minimum level of cordial relations between civic and political actors if any meaningful SA outcomes are to be realised. This study established that key to the success of SA initiatives is a good understanding of the commitments of, and the interrelationships between, key actors and spheres in appreciating the politics of SA in terms of the broader implications between states and citizens around the protection of rights and the provision of resources (Bukenya 2016).

At face value, the study’s key findings on the extent to which context matters for SA outcomes are mostly in agreement with other inquiries into SA. Thus Bukenya (2016) and O’Neill, Foresti and Hudson (2007) recognise the importance for SA of political contexts, prevailing power relations, the supporting environment and the form of the state and its institutions. Both Menocal and Sharma (2008) and Agarwal and Van Wicklin (2011) note as well the significance of capacity

and commitment on both sides of the state-society equation. Additionally, McGee and Gaventa (2011) highlight the significance of supply-led factors in ensuring SA success, particularly in terms of legitimate state authorities imposing sanctions on public officials for mismanagement. In most cases, civil society activism without reforms on the other side of the equation will fail to yield sustained results. However, these studies lacked the extended historical analysis of this thesis, and few have gone on to show how historical and social events and experiences have shaped and informed patterns of civic participation in SA processes.

#### **9.4.2 The Socio-Historical Construction of Social Accountability**

Existing literature and discourse on SA often assumes that people facing a common challenge will coalesce and work collectively towards a common solution, but this undermines the importance of heterogeneity based on different historical and societal experiences and how complex local relationships shape perceptions and attitudes at individual and community levels. These perceptions in turn can influence how people relate or do not relate, as a collective, to SA initiatives. Because of this general oversight, SA initiatives in Bulawayo at least tend not to deliver the anticipated impact desired from them. The incorrect assumption is that citizens will work inevitably towards collective-action solutions, given the development incentives for doing so. The interaction between socio-historical factors and experiences, and how these manifest themselves in citizen participation and SA in general, is not given due attention in SA initiatives and practices in Bulawayo.

The historical experiences of a community, city or country have an inherent relationship to the manner and form of participation exhibited by citizens. For SA initiatives to have a meaningful impact as a participatory approach to good governance, there is the need for a more nuanced understanding of historical experiences at local level, so as to understand the finer constructs of issues dealing with identity, citizenship and ethnicity which are critical in designing best fit approaches to SA. The starting point for SA literature and practice should be the nuancing of the diverse methods in which citizenship, marginality and accountability present themselves in different political contexts given that communities and citizens mimic and mirror what happens at the top. It is these nuances that reveal agency-based possibilities and that can help provide a better understanding of the ever changing discipline and practice of SA.

In existing scholarly literature, the term ‘ordinary citizen’ seems to assume and refer to a responsible and engaged ‘common man or woman’, as a potent political force in a democracy.

However, in the case of Zimbabwe, this term highlights the paternalistic orientation of the post-independence government. The objective of democracy under independence in Zimbabwe was for each member of society to be able to identify easily his or her suitable role in supporting the general good of the national community. But post-independence disturbances in Matabeleland and Bulawayo saw a significant shift in national and sub-national politics that were to shape the socio-historical experiences of Bulawayo citizens and this consequently shaped their stance towards public participation platforms and processes. Processes of exclusion of ordinary citizens in Bulawayo arose, almost as a political strategy, that the government used in order to manage the power of citizens particularly in perceived opposition territory which Bulawayo remains to date. This thesis however established that SA should be understood from the viewpoint of citizens who have experiences and exercise different forms of citizenship in different contexts, depending on the form of the state and its political and economic orientations at a particular time. This view takes the discussion to issues of citizenship as understood within power relations, from the perspectives of both the state and citizens.

#### **9.4.3 Social Accountability, Gender, Ethnicity and Class**

Identity is at the core of belonging and an important marker of who is and who is not a citizen of Bulawayo or Zimbabwe in general. As such, gender, ethnicity and class configurations, and their intersections, are important in understanding how various people engage with urban governance and SA processes. Everyday interaction with regards to SA, citizen participation and urban governance is shaped by identities which are constantly contested and under negotiation. Such identities delineate inclusivity and exclusivity when it comes to group formation and belonging as well as involvement in SA practices and citizen participation. While SA discourse places emphasis on collective inclusion, there is often an oversight in the literature on the potential of SA to perpetuate exclusion and marginalisation along the lines of class, gender and ethnicity. Addressing this lacuna marks a crucial contribution to this thesis to the SA literature.

When trying to understand the situation and experiences of women, for example, in SA and citizen participation, we should be cautious not to generalise about them under the broad category as citizens, as women are marginalised in the public sphere (Crenshaw 1994). The patriarchal character of Zimbabwean society has perpetuated the overall marginalisation of women while ensuring that women, and issues relating specifically to them, are underrepresented and remain outside influential public decision-making processes. Women's representatives, even when

their numbers expand significantly, cannot be anticipated routinely to be illustrative of the empowerment of women. A female presence in SA processes and citizen participation is not comparable to a feminist one. Putting more women into decision-making positions and at the fore of SA processes is a worthy project from the point of view of social justice, but the real challenge is in institutionalising gender equity as a key component of SA. This entails moving beyond the numerical representation of women to focus on the strategic representation of women. Women in decision-making positions thus quite often fail to address specifically women's issues. They become representatives of (and in) the same SA systems and processes which continue to place women at the periphery of all important decisions. Hence, a mere increase in the number of women participating in SA initiatives is not the answer; rather, a systematic way has to be found to place their concerns and interests on the SA agenda.

Analysis of SA shows that the concept is gender blind and thus gender-sensitivity is crucial in offering an understanding into how institutions produce and reproduce gender inequalities. As Fox (2015) and Grandpoint (2015) argue, the insistent theme coming out from feminist writings is that SA is not gender innocent, neither in terms of its place in development discourse nor in its operational forms. Women appear deficient in their effective participation and representation in SA, but this is a result of discriminatory practices and institutions sustained through patriarchy, which limits women's access to spaces, platforms and institutional spheres. Women's participation in most SA interventions is often not recognised as anything but a pastime or a rubber-stamping process in order to validate the claim that women were included in the interventions, without any emphasis on substance and extent. Gender inequalities are systemic and are manifested in differential access to resources, power and rights. These structural inequalities are reinforced through SA by promoting male dominance in the public sphere and relegating women to the domestic realm. The category of 'woman' though is not an undifferentiated one, as women are stratified for instance along class lines. Because of their class position, some women (particularly entrepreneurial ones) are accessing more spaces to participate meaningfully in SA processes such as in residents' associations.

Gender alone then is inadequate in explaining the differing social, political and economic experiences of a city's population and its interaction with SA and participatory approaches to development. Class is another crucial and equally important aspect in understanding the politics of belonging and participation in Zimbabwe's SA landscape. It is an important determinant in the

inclusion and exclusion of people in specific platforms, processes and institutions, thereby providing differential access to a wide array of services. SA tools and frameworks are structured in such a way that there are distinct class differences and varying expectations between classes.

One example is how the use of SA tools like budget analysis, tracking tools, detailed citizen scorecards, petitions and social service charters require some level of capacity in the form of literacy for citizens to fully understand and utilise these. As such, the accessibility of information contained in the tools is not designed for low literacy communities and audiences, which means that – on this basis – those with limited education become relegated to the peripheries of SA interventions. This promotes a certain class at the expense of the collective inclusion of all class groupings existing in Bulawayo society. To further complicate the matrix in Bulawayo, participation in SA processes is informed by geographic location as residents from low to middle density suburbs do not participate significantly in SA activities and CSOs doing work around such issues do not prioritise the participation of such groups. This, in actual SA practices, participation in high density areas was more pronounced, largely due to income and class disparities, as most households in the low to medium density suburbs are more self-sufficient compared to high density areas. As such, social accountability potentially becomes easily accessible to the literate, in low density areas, where the need for social accountability outcomes are low, due to self-sufficiency. Simultaneously, in high density areas, where literacy is low, there is a high need for social accountability outcomes. However, regardless of participation, or the lack of it, all communities and groups benefit from the success of SA interventions and outcomes.

Furthermore, with most urban poor families being marginalised and relegated to the lower tiers of community power, their participation in SA initiatives is further curtailed by their class/position in society, meaning that their voices in SA processes are often muted. Evidence gathered during the study suggests that most urban poor citizens/communities are discontent with the fact that people of note were being elevated, by residents' associations, simply because of their 'class' and better household income. In the wards I researched, the community structure leadership of residents' associations comprised of residents with a comparatively higher income and better education than the rest of the community, and general community members were not amused by the alleged favouritism shown to such individuals. Thus, those who are literate and are of relatively higher income participated less in social accountability activities but, in cases where they participated, such higher income individuals were given positions of leadership especially in the

case of residents' associations. In this light, SA initiatives as understood from a class perspective, entailed processes of exclusion.

Ethnicity and citizenship in SA cannot be taken as a given, as certain ethnic groups might possess the right to citizenship that is not available to others (Mamdani 1996). In this sense, citizenship is not a natural right but is ascribed by the state, and it can be given and taken away by the state on its own terms. This pertains, for example, to how resources and development programmes can be provided by the state in a discriminatory manner, though this is often contested by those discriminated against on ethnic grounds (Joshi and Houtzager 2012). This may dictate patterns of citizen inclusion or exclusion in SA processes. Bulawayo as a city is marked by this, with Ndebele particularism being traceable historically and well into the post-independence period. For example, during the SA public meetings I attended, non-Ndebele speakers, especially Shonas, were not given an audience as community members were quick to show dissent towards speakers using Shona in a largely Ndebele-speaking meeting. This Ndebele sense of difference and belonging must be understood in the context of the marginalisation of Matabeleland by the central state since independence and the ways in which Bulawayo as a city has been in regular conflict with the state lodged effectively in Harare. This marginalisation has involved elements of coercion and heavy-handed central state interference in the governance affairs of the rebel city. Thus, while SA seeks to provide space for citizens to coalesce and come up with collective actions to improve governance, it also provides space for ethnicised citizens to be excluded (by for instance the central state) and for citizens to exclude others because of ethnic differences, further promoting existing inequality and ethnic divisions. As with class and gender, ethnicity therefore can be a source of divisiveness and exclusion in SA processes and practices.

#### **9.4.4 The Cultural Specificity of Social Accountability**

The discussion so far about context and history as well as differentiation along class, gender and ethnicity highlights that SA in practice, and how SA should be pursued, must be firmly rooted in an understanding of concrete social conditions and experiences. Thus, critical analyses and programmatic interventions with reference to SA, and the state-citizen relationships pertinent to analysis and intervention, cannot be universalised. Broad and sweeping analyses and one-size-fits-all programmes need to be replaced by a sensitivity to the particularities of time and place, and all the context-specific conditions, characteristics and contingencies which come with this. In this way, SA processes can only be properly analysed and be of utility when grounded in the specific

socio-cultural contexts in which they occur. As such, civic acculturation and socially defined norms and values shape the manner in which citizens interact with institutions and actors of authority and power. Additionally, the institutional culture of state apparatuses at both national and local levels, as often embedded in well-established historical trajectories, need to be taken into serious consideration.

The current challenge with SA literature and discourse is that the international development community conceives it as a sometimes homogenous activity fixated on using the right citizen engagement tools (such as citizen report cards). As a result, the multiplicity of citizens' social experiences and the role these play in setting normative values and conceptions of SA are not adequately, if at all, explored. The emphasis tends to be on the silver bullet rooted in SA tools, rather than on observing and understanding the fundamental incentives for citizens to express their citizenship in one way and not another, with every day understandings of the state often mediating the form and extent of citizen involvement in SA practices. From a broader perspective, then, the prospects and practices of accountability are only one part of a complex web of relationships, dependent upon socio-cultural factors and how these inform and express citizenship and power.

Given the importance of socio-cultural norms and values and their impact on SA, there is a need to rethink the meaning and practice of SA in an African context, without suggesting the existence of an undifferentiated Africa. To emphasise, it becomes important to move away from thinking of the state in ahistorical and abstract terms by recognising that states have their own culturally-shaped institutional histories; and a similar claim is relevant to groupings of citizens as embedded in their own national and local histories (Fowler and Biekart 2013). In being subject to spatial and temporal variations, cultural arrangements are also dynamic. This means that SA analyses and programmes need to be aware of cultural change and to incorporate this change in advancing our conceptual understanding of SA and in enhancing the relevance of SA procedures and mechanisms.

## **9.5 Areas for Further Research**

Before concluding, I consider areas for further research in relation to the social and political dimensions of social accountability, and processes of inclusion and exclusion with reference to SA processes.



### **9.5.1 The Social and Political Dimensions of Social Accountability**

In large part, in this thesis, I have sought to broaden the understanding of SA through a sociological analysis of how such a discipline and discourse manifests itself in unfamiliar and untested territory. Tembo (2013) argues that the study of SA through a broadly-based conception of the social and political contextual basis of SA has tended to be neglected in academic literature as most studies have a narrower focus on the functionalist and instrumentalist aspects of SA, i.e. using the rights citizen engagement tools. The social class and other social categories that define the parameters of SA and the socio-political roots of SA are regularly downplayed if not ignored. The social base of SA processes and practices must be foregrounded in understandings and explanations of SA if analysts are to go beyond narrow and shallow technicist examinations of SA.

Socio-political society is critical to understanding SA outcomes (whether these are successful or not), including the political will and capacity of state actors and institutions, the role played by political parties in contesting for power, and the mobilisation of citizens in pursuance of democracy. Socio-political society is understood here, following Corbridge et al. (2005), as the arena within which citizens encounter and interface with the state on a daily basis and which produces and maintains different patterns of ruler-ship that shape the scope for citizenship empowerment. It is grounded in a flexible network of political parties, local political agents and councillors, public servants, institutions, cultural norms and citizen groups which bring together and link state and society in diverse and complex ways (Fox 2016). For Chatterjee (2004), the state and its power fundamentally shapes the lived experiences of citizenship (and even non-citizenship), and hence state institutions and practices must be central to analyses of SA. But this should not lead to a neglect of civil society actors as they also intervene in the state-society interface in seeking to bring about greater downward accountability. As such, further research can delve deeper into understanding the interactions between socio-political actors and institutions and how these influence social accountability as a social process, instead of focusing on social accountability outcomes.

The commitment of key political actors to SA, both in terms of bureaucrats and elected officials, has emerged as central to the analysis of SA in Bulawayo and this is also stressed in meta-reviews of SA (McGee and Gaventa 2011). Houtzager and Joshi (2007) highlight the essential role played by public sector officials in not only delivering on SA demands, but also pushing for related reforms. However, most studies in this field tend to place considerable

emphasis on duty bearers and their role in SA without understanding and appreciating their susceptibility to popular pressures, especially in a centralised system of governance like the one prevalent in urban Zimbabwe and Bulawayo more specifically. This, however, points to the need to explore options around ways of connecting SA interventions with systems of political accountability, mainly through making links to supply-led enforcement mechanisms and involving duty-bearers in the design of demand-side initiatives. In this vein, there is a further need to dissect the notion of political will and understand how it is shaped by political elites in raising valid concerns over the feasibility and applicability of SA interventions in Bulawayo and indeed elsewhere.

Conversations around the elite, policy makers and politicians, at local government level, raises concerns on whether or not such actors are induced by self-interest or by genuine pursuance of SA outcomes. Literature on urban governance portrays elites negatively as prone to act exclusively out of self-interest (Booth et al. 2006), and that elites hardly propose policies and developmental actions that diminish their power and influence (Mooij 2003). In simpler terms, it is difficult for elites to do anything positive for citizens because this means depriving the rich and powerful of their positions (Moore and Putzel 2001). This debate brings to the fore the importance of incentives and how these interact with SA. In this regard, one can assume that incentives structure and guide elite behaviour towards SA (Booth 2012). This emphasis on elite interests and incentives links to a new wave of thinking around what forms the basis of the obligation of elites to SA.

The key inference here is that the commitment of elites to SA is strongly shaped by the conditions of the incentives placed before them to act in favour of certain interests over others. On the other side, there is equally extant literature which argues that there are mutual dependencies between the interests of the poor and those of elites (Kalebe-Nyamango 2010; Hossain and Moore 2002). In other words, elites, in SA, can act in the interests of citizens although their own self-interests are accommodated and guaranteed in development processes. A good case in point was the cancellation of all utility debts owed by residents to the BCC as an instruction by the MLGRD. The salient question raised here is to what extent SA, as a tool for poverty reduction, brings about potential for change without upsetting the balance of elite power and existing hegemony. Put differently, what are the perceptions of elites around SA and how does these views impact good urban governance. There is thus a critical need for research and studies to zero in on other issues

that shape social accountability through an analysis of the role of elites and their conception of incentives, and how this influences social accountability outcomes.

In general terms, the major challenge that SA processes and institutions in Zimbabwe face are characterised by lack of legitimacy; excessively powerful state structures that undermine citizen policy input; limited channels for citizen participation in SA (and where they exist, they are weak and cosmetic); lack of empirical research-informed SA designs and approaches; poor vertical and horizontal accountability linkages; and over-reliance on foreign best practice models of SA without thinking strategically about their transferability of such to unique contexts. As such, this study sought to bring to the fore the importance of adopting a socio-political understanding and contextualising SA challenges within the broader politics of development, policy making and urban governance in Zimbabwe in general and Bulawayo in particular. This framing of SA provides a strong basis for further studies in Zimbabwe and beyond.

### **9.5.2 Social Accountability and Equal Citizen Participation**

The impact of democratisation on attempts to ensure SA emerged as somewhat ambiguous. Certainly, in contexts like Bulawayo in Zimbabwe, the existence of particular constitutional rights and provisions have triggered movements for improved SA; however weak judiciaries, institutions and legal statutes have been critical in curtailing such movements for improved SA. NGOs and CSOs such as NYDT also relied heavily on constitutional guidelines to fuel citizen mobilisation and transparency initiatives, and they experienced at least partial success in semi-authoritarian contexts like Bulawayo. The study further established that participatory initiatives are often ineffective, particularly in areas where local governments lack resources and bureaucratic competence. Poor facilitation of citizen participation in local governance in Bulawayo, for example, has been linked to weak incentives for good performance, corruption, authoritarian tendencies by council and the inability of council to accommodate civil society views and voices.

The capacity, size, nature and form of CSOs and in particular the complexity, comprehensiveness and appeal of the relationships amongst CSOs, and between civil and political society, plays a crucial role in determining the success of SA. The accessibility of credible, legitimate and proficient civil society partners and a history of actual grassroots organisation emerged as particularly strong components within the successful SA interventions and contentious actions reviewed during the study. BPRA, for example, gained strength from activist experiences through continued dialogue and engagement between citizens and the local authority and from the

strategic bridging relationships available with international donors, activist organisations and trade unions with significant political influence. The opposite of this is that high levels of competitiveness exist between CSOs and these are undoubtedly linked to a highly donor dependent operating environment which has consequently contributed to failure, as this has tended to fragment collective action. The study further established that locations with high degrees of clientelism are also poor incubators of coalitional action (Goldfrank 2007), given that the vertical character of patron-client relations tend to undermine the emergence of horizontal forms of collective action (Mitlin 2013).

In addition, varying levels of inequality between and among citizens can limit the success of SA. Comparatively lower levels of income and education have a direct effect on citizen capabilities for participation, particularly in formal participatory spaces which are common in SA. Campbell et al. (2010) suggest that interventions can endeavour to alleviate these effects by integrating the provision of citizen education and capacity-building into SA initiatives. Studies of citizen based mobilisation in Bangladesh (Kabeer, Mahmud and Castro, 2010), and also, more recently, in Uganda (King, 2015), propose that fortifying the involvement and inclusion of poorer citizens in initiatives for social justice may perform better when linked integrated directly with potential livelihood and economic gains. Lastly, socially inferior groups sometimes depend upon informal approaches for extracting accountability, and this study suggested that these approaches are often pursued in environments where governance, and related institutions and actors, is weak and where civil society is deficient of the required capacity or inclination to hold civil servants to account (Hossain, 2010). There is an imperative to understand and investigate the impact of class and income and how these pattern participation particularly in developing countries, like Zimbabwe, where urban poverty is pronounced.

## **9.6 Conclusion**

SA in Zimbabwe is still a relatively novel form of citizen participation in urban governance, and thus it is a fluid and contentious approach in responding to a wide variety of social and citizen needs. SA forms a strong part of the citizen drive to democratise governance and ensure citizen voices are heard especially in a country like Zimbabwe where state-society relations often trigger a centralised system of government by political elites. The major question is whether SA can be a vehicle for social development, good governance and improved service delivery in Bulawayo. This research has shown that numerous contextual factors need to be taken into consideration in

developing an effective SA system and framework that will build more robust relations between state and non-state actors. While SA interventions seek to empower agency from the grassroots, it may also entrench class, ethnic and gender inequalities. SA was shown to be a mechanism by which inequalities are potentially reproduced and perpetuated. Social organisation and related institutions (for example, the composition of CSO community structures) at local level are often highly exclusive. The thesis also highlighted that non-state actor interventions remain compartmentalised, divided and contained within their respective donor funded projects, at local level, without increasing their scope and findings to national level state-actors and institutions. Ultimately SA will continue to evolve as citizens and CSOs in general create and recreate associations and networks in their everyday interaction. Only if such citizen mobilisation takes place, can there be a strong social foundation for democratic and effective SA processes and mechanisms.

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## Appendix 1. Key Informant Interview Guide



### Key Informant Interview Guide DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation \_\_\_\_\_

Position of key informant \_\_\_\_\_

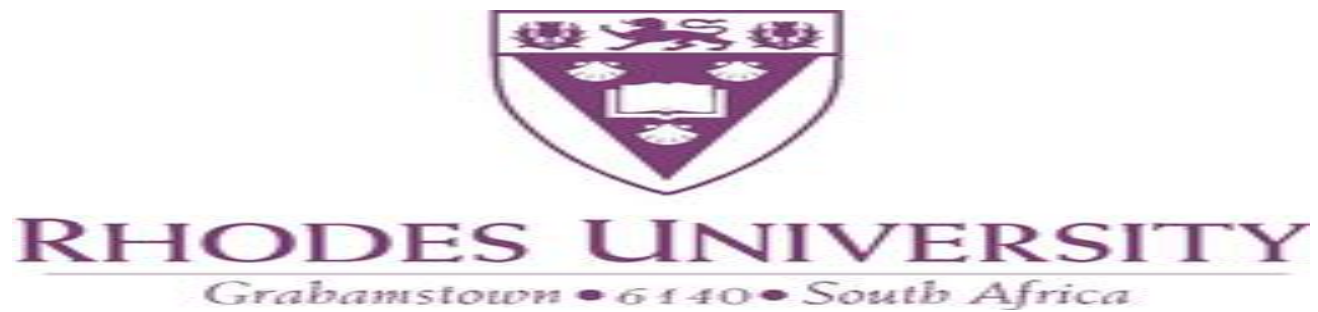
#### **A. Perceptions on Social Accountability and Urban Governance**

- i. What are the underlying incentives and key social, political, and economic factors that serve as enablers and barriers to social accountability and citizen participation in public decision-making and accountability processes?
- ii. How do opportunities and barriers for Social Accountability differ at various levels of society, including the community, sub-national (i.e. district or provincial), and national levels?
- iii. What blockages exist for forging connections across these levels social accountability?
- iv. What links exist between Social Accountability and urban governance
- v. What role do elite actors and institutions play in shaping Social Accountability and its interaction with urban governance
- vi. Do you value the participation, views, and interests of citizens in urban governance processes?
- vii. To what extent, in your view, does citizen input shape and pattern urban governance and Social Accountability outcomes?

#### **B. Social Accountability and Urban Governance institutions**

- i. What are the major institutional frameworks (by categories) that have impacted on Social Accountability and urban governance in Zimbabwe and Bulawayo in particular?
- ii. Do you think institutional frameworks have positively contributed to Social Accountability and urban governance?
- iii. What have been the major contributions?
- iv. What has been the role of non-state actors and institutions in the Social Accountability and urban governance matrix?

## Appendix 2. Focus Group Discussion Question Guide



### Focus Group Discussion Guide

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Ward Number \_\_\_\_\_

Density of Area \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Councillor \_\_\_\_\_

Group composition

<b>Males</b>	
<b>Females</b>	
<b>Youth</b>	
<b>Total</b>	

#### A. Understanding of Urban Governance

- i. What first comes to mind when you think of urban governance?
- ii. What tiers of government do you think influence urban governance
- iii. What local institutions and actors do you think influence urban governance in Bulawayo
- iv. Who are the key decision makers involved in urban governance?
- v. Why is good urban governance important?
- vi. What are some of the barriers to urban governance
- vii. Do you consider citizen input/participation in urban governance essential to local development?
- viii. How would you rate the importance of local councillors in representing citizen interest in urban governance?
- ix. What are some of the barriers inhibiting councillors from effectively executing their duties

#### B. Understanding Social Accountability and Citizen Participation

- i. What is your understanding of Social Accountability

- ii. What are the major Social Accountability tools and approaches you have encountered?
- iii. Through who have you interacted with social accountability activities/approaches?
- iv. Do you think Social Accountability has an impact on service delivery?
- v. Do you think Social Accountability makes a difference in poverty reduction?
- vi. Do you think your participation in Social Accountability matters?
- vii. What factors enable/disable you from participating in social accountability participation
- viii. What political, social and economic barriers to participation can you identify?

**C. Understanding the Context of Social Accountability**

- i. Would you consider the current operating environment to be conducive for social accountability, urban governance and citizen participation?
- ii. What factors adversely affect the socio-political context of social accountability?
- iii. To what extent is the current national, and local, leadership supportive of or hostile to social accountability? What models of accountability are they willing to support or tolerate
- iv. What factors serve to support or undermine civil society (including CSOs and CBOs) in engaging citizens in social accountability processes?
- v. What blockages exist for forging connections across horizontal and vertical levels of social accountability?

## Appendix 3. Semi-structured Interview Guide



Date\_\_\_\_\_

Ward Number \_\_\_\_\_

Density of Area \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Councillor\_\_\_\_\_

Sex of Participant.....

Age of Participant.....

### Sample Interview Questions

1. What are some of the benefits/values of participating in public process like Social Accountability for example?
2. What are some of the benefits experienced so far: Can you list the key achievements/milestones towards the achievement of Social Accountability outcomes as a result of your participation?
3. What are the observable changes/improvements in behavior, attitudes, policies and policy processes directly linked to Social Accountability interventions?
4. What are some of the challenges you have experienced in participating meaningfully in public processes such as Social Accountability and urban governance
5. How have these challenges/barriers impacted on your lived experiences in your respective communities

## **Appendix 4. Primary Documentation**

Bulawayo City Council Minutes 13 August 1986

Bulawayo City Council Minutes 16 May 2014

Bulawayo City Council Minutes 24 March 2016

Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association (2015). Controversies Surrounding Prepaid Water Meters Policy: The Case of Bulawayo: A Report contextualized within the framework of the National Water Policy in Zimbabwe

Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association (2016). Local Government Policy Review Series 2: A Social surgery of the Budget Making Process at Local Government Level: Bulawayo City Council in Perspective

Government of Zimbabwe (1999). Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15)

Government of Zimbabwe (2002). Prevention of Corruption Act (Chapter 9: 16)

Government of Zimbabwe (2009). Public Finance Management Act (Chapter 22:19)

Government of Zimbabwe (2013). Constitution of Zimbabwe

Government of Zimbabwe (2016). Local Government Laws Amendment Bill