An analysis of citizen participation in service delivery in Zimbabwe's small towns. A case study of Chiredzi Town Council.

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<u>ABSTRACT</u>

Over the years, there have been complaints of poor service delivery in Zimbabwe's Urban Councils. Newspapers in Zimbabwe have been filled with stories of poor service delivery and citizen grievances. Existing literature on service delivery has focused on the causes of poor service delivery, blaming them solely on the local government authorities. The literature has blamed poor service delivery in Zimbabwe on corruption, polarisation, politicisation, and incapacitation amongst other things. What is not highlighted is the role that citizens play and their responsibility in ensuring that there is proper service delivery. This thesis discusses the ways in which citizens participate in local government service delivery in Chiredzi which is an urban Council in Zimbabwe. To establish citizen participation in Chiredzi, this theory draws upon the social capital theory focusing on its trust, network, and norms aspect. Social capital facilitates an analysis of citizen participation and service delivery in Chiredzi. For this study,a qualitative research methodology was used. This methodology consisted of semi-structured telephone interviews with participants together with relevant documents. It was concluded that there is a need to educate citizens on their roles and responsibilities in local government to improve the state of service delivery.

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ACRONYMS

CLGF   Commonwealth Local Government Forum

CSOs   Civil Society Organisations

GoZ   Government of Zimbabwe

MDC   Movement for Democratic Change

RDCA   Rural District Council Act

UCA   Urban Councils Act

ZANU PF   Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Orthodox development theories in the 1960's failed to address poverty which was rife at the time. This failure brought about the needs for transformation in the developing world (Penderis, 2012:2). The transformation included the adoption of participatory approaches that are people-centred to develop the third world. These participatory approaches would enable citizens to influence and control activities that are essential to their development through interaction with officials and agencies (Burkey, 1993)

Zimbabwe as a democratic state has adopted a people-centred approach through enacting legislation and institutional initiatives. These aimed to involve people in local government affairs in a bid to improve service delivery. Local government in Zimbabwe is established under section 14 of Zimbabwe's Constitution of 2013. The Constitution affords local government authorities rights and powers to govern themselves and local affairs of people within its jurisdiction though they must do so within the bounds of national and regional laws (Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No. 20, 2013). Local government authorities in Zimbabwe are tasked with the provision of basic services such as water, refuse collection and servicing of roads. However, there have been complaints of poor service delivery by citizens over the years (Marumahoko, 2011:18). Several reasons have been brought forward to explain the root cause of poor service delivery.The reasons given include rampant corruption in the Local Councils, lack of cooperation between Local Councils and citizens, inadequate funds, and council negligence (Muchadenyika, 2014:1374).

As Zimbabwe's 2013 Constitution provides for a new governance culture premised on active participation and responsive public institutions, a variety of instruments had to be put in place (Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No. 20, 2013). These instruments are aimed at encouraging citizens to participate in local government affairs. Instruments used include public notices at local authority offices, objections in newspapers, ward development committees and attendance council meetings by citizens (Chikerema, 2013:89). Additionally, social networks designed to facilitate the sharing of information on citizen participation to address service delivery issues have been established. These social networks include civil society organisations and residents' associations. Citizens can also take part in budget consultations to ensure that council budgets are aligned with their needs (Chikerema, 2013:89).

The Urban Councils Act (UCA) of Zimbabwe (2006) makes provision for participatory budgeting citing that it promotes civic interest and participation to promote accountability and transparency in local public finance institutions. There is also room for citizen   political participation where one votes for a councillor of their choice that they can interact with to represent them at ward level.

The issue, now, becomes that of establishing whether citizens make use of these instruments and whether local government authorities are promoting and enabling citizen participation. Local government authorities and citizens are supposed to have a reciprocal relationship in which the other pays for services and the other receives the services. Over the years, there have been reports on corruption of local authorities which puts a strain on the trust between the two parties (Mandiyanike *et al*, 2017:37). Local authorities have blamed citizens for poor service delivery stating that there has been a rise in consumer debts which has left fiscal deficits which then leads to poor service delivery (Mandiyanike *et al*, 2017:38). There have also been allegations of the politicisation of council affairs and engagement processes and polarization in Zimbabwe's local government (Dewa *et al*., 2014). It has been said that ward committee meetings are turned into political squabbles and political campaigns as such, nothing productive comes from them (Dewa *et al*., 2014).

This research analyses citizen participation in service delivery in Zimbabwe's small town using the Chiredzi Town Council as a case study. Available literature on service delivery and citizen participation, and social capital theory has been reviewed. Data collected from residents was analysed using these theoretical underpinnings. The results establish how citizen participation in Chiredzi can contribute to enhance service delivery.

1.2. Theoretical Underpinnings

This study made use of social capital to understand the possibilities and limitations of citizen participation in Chiredzi. According to Putman (1995), social capital relates to the civic engagement created through participation in voluntary associations. Social capital is premised on the notion of co-operation between individuals to achieve a common goal. As a theory, social capital captures sociological concepts such as integration and social cohesion, thus it is a useful concept in capturing resources that are embedded in social structures and networks (Putman,1995).

Social capital speaks to people's actions and behavioural patterns in a group or society through the notion of social norms (Mann,2011). As put across by Mann (2011), the way people act is influenced by the type of norms that are present in certain structures and rules. Trust is also an important aspect in group and social dynamics and this trust is based on the notion of reciprocity. Trust is one's belief that others will not knowingly or unwilling cause him harm, rather, they will act in his interest (Newton, 2001:202). Where there is trust, it is easier for people to work together and build long lasting networks. These networks link people to each other and their communities and societies (Newton,2001:202). In this thesis, social capital's norms, trust and network aspects are used to analyse citizen participation in Chiredzi as they determine levels of co-operation between citizens and Chiredzi town Council.

1.3. Research Objectives and Research Question

The main objective of this study was to *get a deeper understanding of citizen participation in Zimbabwe's small towns using Chiredzi Town Council as a case study.*

The subsidiary objectives are:

a)   Understanding existing participatory structures in Chiredzi,

b)   Understanding the different forms of participation in Chiredzi,

c) Understanding the possibilities and limitations of participation in Chiredzi,

d) Explaining how Chiredzi Town Council and citizens can cooperate to improve service delivery.

This study aims to answer the research question: "how can the Chiredzi town council and its residents work together towards improving service delivery for the residents of Chiredzi"

1.4. Research Design

The following section discusses the qualitative research design used. The main purpose of this design was to answer the research question, and address the objectives as laid out in 1.3.

1.4.1 Qualitative Research Design

Research design refers to the plan and procedures used in conducting research and it involves strategies of inquiry such as research methodologies (Creswell,2005:5). In conducting this

research, I adopted a qualitative research design to understand the state of service delivery in Chiredzi town council and how citizens are participating to improve service delivery in the Town Council. Qualitative research seeks to answer questions that emphasize how social experience is created and given meaning (Norman et al, 2005:10). It helps one to obtain a realistic view of the lived world which cannot be understood in numerical data and statistical analysis (Claire, 2010:7). Furthermore, a qualitative research design allows the researcher to describe existing phenomena and current situations (Claire, 2010:7). In this light, talking to the residents of Chiredzi through qualitative interviews helped me as the researcher to understand their lived experiences.

1.4.2. Constructivist Research Paradigm

A research paradigm alludes to the researcher's worldview that is his or her perspective and shared beliefs that will shape the meaning of the gathered research data (Kivunja and Kuyin, 2017:26). In conducting this research, I adopted the constructivist paradigm which seeks to understand the lived experiences of people in the world and how they construct reality for themselves (Kivunja and Kuyin, 2017:33). In this instance, the paradigm helped me to understand the lived experiences of the people in Chiredzi and how they have been participating to better their lived experiences. This paradigm helped me as a researcher to gather data from different people since it holds that the world cannot be fully understood through the lens of one person.

1.4.3. Qualitative Case Study Research Methodology

Research Methodology refers to the process and procedures of research (Ponterotto, 2005:132). It is a means through which we understand the research process that is the context, the philosophical assumptions, and the political impact of the new knowledge from the research enterprise (Neuman, 2014:2). In conducting this research, I adopted a qualitative case study research methodology. Gerring (2007:37) defines a case study as an extensive study of a single unit or a small number of units for the purposes of understanding a larger class or similar units. In this research, I studied two cases, which were the Chiredzi Town Council and residents of Chiredzi. The case study was an explanatory case study as I attempted to explain why there is a problem with service delivery in Chiredzi town council and how citizens participate to improve the situation (Yin, 2003:47). In conducting this research, I used qualitative research

methods which are mostly descriptive in nature (Walliman, 2011:73). I used mostly interviews, documentaries, texts and newspaper articles. (Walliman, 2011:73).

To check the validity and reliability of my qualitative research, I consulted a variety of sources of data relating to local government and citizen participation through what is known as triangulation (Walliman, 2011:73)

1.4.4. Qualitative Sampling

Qualitative sampling requires one to select a few participants from the population and these few helped provide clarity and understanding of the issues taking place within in the whole. (Neuman, 2014: 248). I adopted a convenient sampling method which allowed me to select participants that are easy to reach for example residents, members of civil society groups and political office bearers (Neuman, 2014:248). I sampled ten (10) people who are residents of Chiredzi Town Council mainly because they were readily available and willing to participate in the research. I sampled 10 people to get insight on the   subject matter, so the number was not of importance but the insight I got from the people. Participants were contacted and recruited through word of mouth, recommendations, and personal relationships. Convenience sampling allows one to select participants that are readily available (Neuman, 2014) thus it served as an advantage for me as I did not have to travel to look for participants thereby saving time and costs.

The ten (10) people that were selected to participate in this research were: one ward councillor from Chiredzi Local Council, one official from Chiredzi Local Council, one member of civil society, and seven (7) residents of Chiredzi. These people helped to understand participation as they had different expertise and had different social networks.

1.5 Data Collection Methods: Document analysis and Interviews

1.5.1. Document Analysis

Document analysis basically refers to the use of text as a primary source of data (O'Leary, 2017:177). I looked at data that has been previously gathered be it in census, historical archives, articles, and newspaper articles. In this research, I focused on newspaper articles and research articles that have information on service delivery and citizen participation in Chiredzi Town Council. I chose to use document analysis to supplement semi-structured interviews.

Document analysis was very useful because my research coincided with the prevailing Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.The pandemic prevented me from seeing participants face-to-face or traveling.

1.5.2. Semi-structured Telephone Interviews

In this research, I used telephonic semi-structured interviews to collect empirical data (O'Leary, 2017:164). The interviews were conducted telephonically to minimize contact between the researcher and the participants to minimize the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic . The interviews were semi-structured which means that I had a set of questions which initiated the discussion and further questions which came up from the discussion (Rule & John, 2011:65). Using semi-structured interviews allows the interview to be more of a natural conversation that brings out more information to the researcher (Brinkmann, 2008:29). Each interview lasted between 20-35 minutes depending on how much information the participant had to offer. To ensure that there was no breakdown in communication, the interviews were conducted in English and Shona which are all recognised languages in Zimbabwe. To record the interviews, the telephone was put on loudspeaker to enable recording with another device. Consent to record the interview was granted by the participant. Telephone interviews had the advantage of being cost efficient for me as I did not incur any transport costs to meet with people. I also had better opportunities for interviewing people who live far away from me given that I could not travel due to the Covid-19 lockdown   .

1.6. Qualitative Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the process through which a researcher goes through several operations in the raw data to see what the data says about the research problem and interpret and give theoretical meaning to the findings (Neuman, 2014:393). In this research, I followed a qualitative data analysis. I transcribed the data before processing it through editing, coding, and classifying it. After transcribing and processing the data, it was then easier to qualitatively analyse the data.

1.7. Ethics Considerations

The researcher applied and was granted Ethical Clearance by the Rhodes University Ethics Standard Committee (RUESC). Please see the ethics clearance certificate attached as appendix

A. The research followed the research ethical principles and protocols of Rhodes University to reduce the risks associated with this type of research which include emotional or social unrest and insecurity of the human participants in the study. The researcher ensured that psuedonyms were used throughout the thesis to maintain anonymity and confidentiality bearing in mind the research topic still stands as one of the most sensitive subjects in Zimbabwe.

1.8. Thesis Chapter Outline

This thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter one is the introductory chapter which outlines the background of the study, the research objectives, the research methodology and a bit of the study theory. In chapter two, the research, different literature on citizen participation in service delivery in Zimbabwe is discussed and a full outline of the study theory is laid out. Chapter three of the research analyses citizen participation in Chiredzi town Council such that it answers the research question and addresses the research objectives. In chapter four, the research is concluded. The chapter summarises the discussion of the whole thesis to address the research objectives.

CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, SERVICE DELIVERY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL.

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on citizen participation in relation to the provision of basic services.In this review the following three themes will be discussed: 1) citizen participation in local government service delivery with a focus on the forms of citizen participation, 2) channels of participation, challenges, and 3) the benefits of citizen participation in local government service delivery. Additionally, the challenges faced by the municipalities and local town councils in delivering basic services and whether or how citizen participation contributes to addressing these challenges will also be discussed.

Literature from Zimbabwe will also be reviewed to ascertain citizen participation and the state of basic services delivered by the Chiredzi Town Council. Furthermore, the study draws from social capital as a theoretical lens to understand and analyse citizen participation in local government service delivery. The focus will be on how social capital helps to explain citizen participation or lack thereof in-service delivery issues based on the notion of trust, reciprocity, and social networks.

2.1.2. Origins of Citizen Participation in Governance

Citizen participation refers to "the engagement and decision-making process that occurs between civil society stakeholders and various democratic structures and institutions of the state, particularly at the local level" (Penderis, 2012:3). Rowe and Frewer (2004:512) further hold that citizen   participation is viewed as "consulting and involving members of the public in the agenda setting, decision making and policy forming activities of organizations or institutions responsible for policy development". For this research, I have used the definition given by Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (1973:5) which states that citizens participation is It is assumed that decisions made by people on their own behalf will often be better than   those made for them by other people because people know what they need in their own lives thus the need to include them in decision making (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation:1973: 6). From these definitions, one can see that citizen participation relates to citizens being involved and consulted in decision making of policies or institutions that have to do with development. The definitions have also shown that citizen participation is a way of promoting participatory democracy and allowing people to make decisions on issues that affect them.

The failure of orthodox development theories to address poverty issues in the world in the 1960s brought a need for transformation in the developing world (Penderis, 2012:2). There had to be a shift from economic to social dimensions of development that included participatory approaches (Penderis, 2012:2). The 1970s and 80s saw the promotion of people-centred development, grassroots development, and participatory democracy (Penderis, 2012:2). These participatory approaches were seen as enabling citizens to influence, implement and control activities which are essential to their development through interaction with agencies, officials, and technical consultants (Burkey,1993). The need to address poverty in the world thus led to the inclusion of citizens in decision making.

According to Jennings (2001:1), participation moves beyond representation in electoral processes and its ideology is driven by "a belief in the importance of entrusting citizens with the responsibility to shape their own future". The notion of participation not only enhances development and improves service delivery, but it also contributes to deepening the democratic process. Participation promotes more responsive governance by enabling citizens to participate in local level decision making (Harbers, 2007). Where citizens are not involved, governance becomes authoritative as decisions are made at the top in most cases not considering what the citizens would desire (Harbes,2007). This means that decisions can be imposed on the citizens and they will have no say whatever on issues that affect them directly and this creates room for the manipulation of citizens. Having looked at the origins of citizen participation in governance, the following sections seek   to unpack global debates on citizen participation.

2.1. 3. Key Global Debates on Citizen Participation

 The establishment of democracies around the world have been met with concerns around the extent to which citizens participate in public decisions (Krishna, 2002:437). The limited participation of citizens has marred the strength of these democracies thus the need to engage citizens in the making of public decisions (Khrishna, 2002:437). The more people are drawn into the democratic processes through participation, the more the democracy becomes legitimized across a wider domain (Khrishma, 2002:438).

Citizen participation is an accepted foundation of democracy (Nabatchi, 2011: 9). This means that citizen participation allows citizens to take the lead in discussing issues that affect their lives on a day-to-day basis. These issues include but are not limited to the provision of services such as water, housing, education, and employment (Nabatchi,2011:9). Holdar and Zakharchenko (2002: 5) have noted at the core of democratic development in Central and

Eastern Europe is the need for people to believe that the politicians they elect to represent them have best interests in improving the welfare, quality of life, and best for the local community. One can argue that the politicians elected to office by residents should be educated formally or informally through workshops for example on their roles and responsibilities such that they are able to fulfil that which they are elected for. It is important especially at local government level where the "effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery is more acute and where the lack of accessibility of citizens and transparent decision making fuels corruption, inhibits good governance and decreases the likelihood for social and economic improvements" (Holdar and Zakharchenko, 2002: 5).This means that where citizens are not involved through participating and keeping officials accountable, there is bound to be high levels of corruption and inefficiency by public officials.

For there to be effective and efficient local government service delivery, there is a need for local government bodies (i.e. local councils and municipalities) and representatives of civil society to take active approaches towards implementing citizen participation mechanisms (Holdar and Zakharchenko, 2002:5). These participation mechanisms can be direct or indirect as long they include citizens in decision making about policies, plans and programmes in which they have an interest in (Quick and Bryson, 2016:1). Indirect participation involves "a community-based process, where citizens organize themselves and their goals at the grassroots level and work together through non-governmental community organizations to influence the decision-making process" (Quick and Bryson,2016:1). Direct participation "occurs when citizens are personally and actively engaged in decision-making" (Nabatchi, 2011: 8). These two forms of participation are not divorced from each other thus they work hand in hand (Nabatchi, 2011:8).

2.1.4. Typologies of Participation

Typologies of participation are relevant in that they help in differentiating types of citizen participation. The type of participation adopted depends on the needs of the local people and the prevailing conditions in a particular place (ASALSP, 2004:2). For example, this means that the prevailing social, economic, and political conditions in Zimbabwe and South Africa might be different as such the way citizens participate in these two countries might also be different. The prevailing conditions of the two countries might be the same but the priorities might be different. One can also argue that the needs of people in developed countries and

those of people in developing countries might also be different which then leads to differences in participation.

Arnstein (1969) tries to differentiate the levels of participation through what is known as the Arnstein's ladder of participation. In this ladder she draws a distinction between citizen power which includes citizen control, delegated power, and partnership (Cornwall, 2008:270). Arnstein also includes in her ladder 'tokenism' which relates to consultation, informing and placation (Cornwall, 2008:270). Consultation would then mean that citizens participate through legitimizing already taken decisions as such there is no guarantee that citizen responses would be considered (Cornwall, 2008:270). There is also no guarantee that the decision-making board through consultation will reflect on the view in their final decision.

The most advanced forms of participation on the ladder which are partnership, delegated power and citizen control reflect cases where the views of the citizens influence the outcome in decision making (ASALSP, 2004:8). This research focuses on participation that allows citizens to have a say in issues that will affect their livelihoods and have their views taken into consideration when decisions are made. This ensures that service delivery will be aligned with the needs of the citizens as the council would have asked the community what they need thereby responding to their needs (ASALSP, 2004: 8). It will also increase the council's credibility if it takes the community's opinions into account (ASALSP, 2004:8). One can also argue that, taking seriously the views of the community will also save municipalities and councils a lot of money in that money is channelled towards the real needs of the people, not what they think are the needs of the people. Arnstein thus sees participation from the perspectives of those at the receiving end which are the citizens. One can then argue that although allowing citizens to contribute more as suggested by Arnstein's typology will ensure that the needs of the people are met, it is important to note that without the cooperation of those in authority, citizen participation becomes a farce.

Pretty's (1995:1247-1263) in his typology of participation looks at the bad forms of participation. According to him, the inclusion of token representatives with no real power produces what is termed manipulative participation and passive participation. Manipulative and passive participation is where citizens are merely informed about a subject or a decision that has already been made (ASALSP, 2004:7). One can argue that this form of participation does not echo the democracy aspect that citizen participation seeks to achieve and that is to involve citizens in decision making processes by allowing them to have a voice thus they

become a sort of "dictatorship". Pretty thus, advocates for better forms of participation such as "functional participation" in which people engage in arguments effectively to meet project objectives and to reduce costs after the main decisions have been made by external agents (Pretty, 1995).

According Pretty (1995), the goal is to achieve what is known as 'interactive participation' which is described as "a learning process through which local groups take control over decisions, thereby gaining structures and resources" (Cornwall, 2008:271). He also talks of 'self-mobilisation" in which people participate through taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. The people develop contacts with the external institutions for resources and technical support but retain control over how resources are used (Cornawall, 2008:272). Self- mobilisation is important in that it brings different stakeholders together and collectively participates with the goal of standing up to local government institutions. For example, demanding better service delivery. The type of participation that citizens are participating in will in the long run condition how their participation might be evaluated, and different purposes will demand different forms of engagement by different kinds of participants (Cornwall, 2008:273). Having looked at the typologies of participation, the next section will discuss civil society organisations participation in service delivery issues.

2.1.5. The Participation of Civil Society Organisations on Service Delivery Issues

Citizen participation in service delivery can be fostered by civil society organisations such as non-governmental organisations. Civil society organisations have a major role to play in local government by making the local government institutions accountable to the public they serve (Chirisa and Kawadza, 2011:60). Civil society includes a wide range of organisations which vary in their capacity and willingness to engage with local governments with regards to service delivery (Grant, 2002:11). These civil society organisations are also mandated to ensure that citizens develop and that they understand their value as citizens "so that the overall outcome in this space is the upholding of the principle of good governance, good life and good ethics" (Chirisa and Kawadza, 2011:60). This means that civil society organisations ensure that the expected benefits of society should be administered by local government institutions are fulfilled in a transparent and trustworthy manner. This brings need for citizens to be actively involved in local government and service delivery (Chirisa and Kawadza, 2011:60).

Civil society organisations also offer an important resource in issues relating to local governance and service delivery. These resources come in the form of providing labour, financial contributions, identifying problems and possible solutions which are useful in addressing service delivery issues (Grant, 2002:11). Chakaipa (2010:57) holds that civil society organizations have played positive roles in development, advocacy issues on democracy and governance, policy and advocate issues thus they are very important drivers of citizen participation. These organisations are important partners of local governance through their provision of technical expertise and financial resources (Chakaipa, 2010:57). This can be said to mean that civil society organizations do not only hold the local authorities accountable, but they also contribute to the success of local governance through contributing financially or technically.

One of the most common civil society organizations that have a role to play in local government has been the Residents and Ratepayers Associations. These associations are mostly common in urban governance (Mapuva, 2011:1). Residents associations have over the years pressured elected officials to play their part in ensuring improvements in service delivery through pointing out where there have been service slippages and resource wastage (Mapuva, 2011:1). They have also advocated for transparency, accountability, and integrity in the operations of local government. It is important to note that many urban councils have actively engaged with these associations especially in participatory budgeting to improve on transparency and resource utilisation thereby increasing the budget yield (Chatiza, 2010:58).

Residents associations have been criticised for diverting from more pressing issues by blowing issues out of proportion using the media or staging destructive demonstrations (Chatiza, 2010:58). Irvin and Stansbury (2005) argue that residents associations are usually dominated by those who are economically well-off to attend meetings whilst the poor cannot attend as they will be striving to provide for their families. However, Mapuva (2010:21), counter-argued that some residents associations are populated by poverty-stricken citizens in urban areas who are not only concerned with improved service delivery but the restoration of democratic institutions in the country. This goes to show that active participation in residents associations is subjective thus we cannot generalise them. The role of civil society in local government systems is not strong because of the nature and political history of the organisations and the lack of experience of engagement with local government (Grant, 2002:11).

According to the World Bank (2000: 56), citizen participation functions best when human rights are observed, democratic structures are in place and the constitution is upheld. One can then conclude that where human rights are not observed, it is difficult for citizens to fully participate due to the fear of repression by those in authority. This section has discussed how Civil Society Organisations participate in service delivery. The following section will   look at participatory budgeting as a way in which citizens can participate in service delivery.

2.1.6. Participatory Budgeting and Service Delivery

Chikerema (2013: 89) holds that citizens can participate in service delivery and local governance through participatory budgeting. Participatory budgeting is an "innovative tool that creates opportunities to build bridges between local government, civil society and the private sector thereby ensuring accountability" (Chirisa and Kawadza, 2011:61). Accountability in this instance refers to the "imperative that makes public officials answerable for their behaviour while implementing development activities and providing services to the community" (Ackerman, 2004:448). Accountability prevents local government authorities from abusing power and makes them perform their job in a more efficient and effective people centred manner (Lindberg, 2013). The UCA in Zimbabwe (2006) provides that participatory budgeting promotes civic interest and participation to promote accountability and transparency in local public finance and budgeting. The ACPP (2002: 3) further states that citizens need to be involved in the production of local and national budgets and in the examination of public accounts, they have a right to decide how their levies and taxes will be used. As noted by Chirisa and Kawadza   (2011), citizens and taxpayers have the right to know how their money is being used. Participatory budgeting will, therefore, help with ensuring transparency form the local government institutions as citizens will have access to comprehensive, accurate and useful information on how their finances are used or are to be used.

Because participatory budgeting is said to improve transparency and good governance, it has been reinforced by organisations such as the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). (Chirisa and Kawadza, 2011:61). Participation in budget reviews gives citizens the opportunity to formulate the budget in a way that suits their best interests. In 2006 for example, the Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA) held that the budget that had been formulated by the Harare City Council did not have the best interests of residents. Participation by the association amplified the negative aspects on the budget which included large increases in rates and service charges

(Kamete, 2009:67). The resident's association then drafted a letter of objection to the budget and encouraged other residents not to pay their rates until the budget had been rectified to suit the interests of the people (Kamete, 2009:68).

The skills required to participate in budgets are complex and most citizens do not possess these skills thus lack of these skills hinder the participation of citizens as a majority do not have these skills. For example, a study conducted in North Carolina on effective citizen participation, showed that a majority of municipality staff were of the view that citizens in general are not able to understand the complex and technical nature of budgets as a result only a few are able to review budget allocation decisions (Berner *et al*., 2011:145). The citizens agreed with this stating that the budgets were indeed difficult to read and comprehend as a result they did not bother attending the budget reviews. They suggested that a separate budget summary should be made for the citizens (Berner, *et al*., 2011:149). This shows that even though citizens are willing to participate, they can be hindered by lack of skills necessary to participate. Participatory budgeting, however, does not guarantee that the contents discussed will be implemented. Implementation of the budget might fail due to rampant corruption within Municipalities and Town Councils such that citizens might end up not participating at all (Mapuva & Muyengwa, 2012: 125). Having discussed how participatory budgeting works, the following section will look at political participation to determine how citizens use it to participate is service delivery.

2.1.7. Political Participation in Service Delivery

Citizen participation in local government service delivery also takes place through political participation. Political participation has been defined as "legal activities by private citizens that are directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and the actions they take" (Gaventa and Valderrama,1999:3). It entails citizens voting for their representatives in government. For example, voting for a ward councillor that will represent you at local government level. It is thus a form of indirect participation (Gaventa and Valderrama,1999: 3). According to the ACPD (2004:3), citizens should choose councillors who represent their local interests rather than a political faction and desist from voting because they are politically aligned to their party. This is still the case even in recent years as shown by Sachikonye's research of citizen participation in Glenview Harare, where a participant noted that they only voted for their councillor because he belongs to their political party (Sachikonye, 2018:57).

Widespread voter education is needed to precede free and fair local elections and the imposition of leaders by political parties, vote rigging, vote buying and the use of violence during election campaigns should be banned (ACPD, 2004:3). There is supposed to be a two-way communication between the representatives and the electorate to ensure that the voice of the electorate is fully heard (Grant, 2002:8). This two-way communication entails that councillors should communicate with residents. For example, councillors should   meet with citizens and give them feedback from council meetings and get information from the residents to present it at local government meetings (ActionAid, 2014:16).

Political participation is made possible where there is proper voter education and workshops enhancing the awareness of rights and responsibilities of citizens. This is aimed at developing a more informed citizenry that can hold elected representatives accountable (Gaventa and Valderrama,1993: 3). As noted by Vigoda (2002), in democracies, communities exercise their voting rights to elect their representatives who, in turn hold the bureaucracy accountable for implementing decisions that affect the welfare of local communities. This traditional model of democratic governance is argued to have failed to meet people's needs across the globe as many amongst citizens are not aware of their rights and privileges (Waheduzzaman and As-Saber, 2015 :132). It is important to note that "participation moves beyond representation in electoral processes and its ideology is driven by the belief in the importance of entrusting citizens with the responsibility to shape their own future (Jennings, 2001:1). This then means that, even though citizens participate through elections, their participation should move beyond and ensure that the electorates hold the elected officers into account.

Political participation does not guarantee that democracy will flourish (Khrishna,2000:438). In this case, political participation does not guarantee that service delivery will improve as people might have voted for incompetent people, however, it can help in ensuring that local government authorities are held to account, ensure that individuals and communities demands are better presented and ensure that citizens fully exercise their constitutionally guaranteed rights (Khrishna, 2000: 438). The economic, social and political rights of citizens should be actively promoted including the right to freedom of expression and association and citizens should have regular meetings with their elected representatives (ACPD, 2004:3). Carreira, et al. (2016) also notes that high citizen participation (having many people participating) especially in political issues is not a guarantee for a healthy democracy This is because there are three different types of citizens who participate in political issues - , namely active, standby/monitors and passive. Active citizens promote healthy communities and generate

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communal empowerment, passive citizens are disempowered, alienated from public life and disappointed with politicians and standby citizens are not active, but are well informed about public policy and ready to participate if needed" (Carreira *et al*, 2016:9).

This can explain why some regions have more effective democracies than others and there is a need to realise the participation culture that is specific to the area under study (Sachikonye, 2018:28).

A Commonwealth Local Government Forum study in 2016 which focused on capacity building in Zimbabwe's local government institutions, found that citizens lacked adequate knowledge of Zimbabwe's 2013 Constitution. They did not understand the rights contained in it which then led to limited citizen awareness of their roles and responsibilities and that of local government authorities (Commonwealth Local Government Forum, 2016). This then led to a lack of common vision and service delivery priorities between local authorities and different stakeholders. According to Cuthill (2003: 382), when there is lack of high level political bureaucratic support, lack of a consultative culture and inadequate coordination, the potential for citizen participation is restricted. For example, in Australia, citizens felt alienated from decision making as officials would make decisions without consulting them thus they lost trust in their governments and showed no willingness for future involvement (Cuthill, 2003:382). What this means is that when local councils constantly exclude citizens from decision making or other projects. Conversely, it could suggest that citizens refrain from participating even when they are needed as they feel that they are not an important factor in decision making. Now, the next section looks at the state of service delivery in Zimbabwe and how Zimbabwean citizens participate in service delivery issues to ascertain whether they are viewed as important role players or not.

2.1.8. The state of service delivery in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, local governance is defined as:

"the creation of participatory and democratically elected structures that can identify with the needs of the people at grassroots level and ensure the translation of those needs into actual provision and maintenance of essential services and infrastructure on a sustainable basis" (Chatiza, 2010:32).

Chigwata and De Visser (2017:166) note that the responsibilities of local governments vary from country to country, however, the unifying factor is that they are all centred on the wellbeing of the citizens. Because their functions affect the wellbeing of citizens, local government institutions must exercise a certain level of autonomy. Their autonomy allows

them to maximise the potential they must realise improved service delivery and deepen democracy (Chigwata, 2015:442).

Local government institutions are generally tasked with the provision of services at affordable costs to local communities in a more responsive and efficient manner (Meyer,1999). They are responsible for the promotion of public participation in government as a means of enabling and encouraging people to exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Additionally, local governments are responsible for the regulation of the conduct of individuals and organizations in areas of their jurisdiction (Meyer,1999). According to a report by the Development Governance Institute (DGI) (2014), Zimbabwe's local government system is generally an established one, however, it has been heavily stressed by political and economic crises. Zimbabwe's local government, through local councils, is responsible for the provision of basic services such as water, electricity, refuse collection and servicing of roads at an affordable cost (Chakaipa, 2010: 32). There have been complaints of poor infrastructure, and service delivery demonstrated through a growth in service delivery protests in Zimbabwe (Marumahoko,2020:86). In this way, citizens have shown dissatisfaction because of the lack of basic services provided to them such as water, poor lack of housing (Marumahoko, 2011:18).

The government of Zimbabwe in 2011 noted that service delivery conditions in the country were less than desirable. They cited that the causes were financial non-viability, outdated billing and accounting packages, obsolete equipment, ageing onsite infrastructure and non-compliance with internal planning (DGI, 2014:3). Additionally, poor service delivery in the country has been a result of changes in population distribution, structure and economic performance, the socio-political culture and heightened urbanization (DGI, 2014: 3). As noted by the Government of Zimbabwe's Economic blueprint, "the major impetus retarding efficient delivery of services is failure by local authorities to find the right proportion of workforce expenses and service delivery expenditure, outdated billing systems and accounting packages, decaying service infrastructure and non-compliance to internal planning, and monitoring systems (MEPIP,2011; DGI, 2014:3). At the end of the 2018 financial year, in their parliamentary address the Auditor General noted that the towns and cities depict a poor picture of service delivery (Chiri, 2019: 5). The state of service delivery was characterised as a massive strain on livelihoods as there is poor and non- existent water provision, poor refuse collection and dilapidated service delivery infrastructure (Chiri, 2019: 5).

The Portfolio Committee on Local Government Rural and Urban Development Report on the state of service delivery on municipalities of Harare, Chitungwiza and Norton, noted that there were perpetual challenges in the three local authorities (Muchadenyika, 2014:1374). It noted that the challenges were brought about by council negligence, inconsiderate private developers, systematic corruption and political and government interference in council business, abuse of office by council officials and inadequate funds (Muchadenyika, 2014: 1374). This shows that for citizen participation to be thoroughly effective, there is a need for local government entities to fix their systems from within such that citizen's efforts are not futile. One can argue that to deal with the inadequacy of funds, it is imperative that power and resources are distributed fairly between national and local government and between local government and communities (ACPD, 2004:3). To illustrate systematic corruption that takes place in local authorities, the Harare Council investigation into land deals in 2010 is an example. The investigation committee found that there was a lack of adherence to legal provisions on the allocation of land to ZANU PF surrogates (Harare City Council, 2010). There was also said to have been fraudulent allocation of contracts especially in the construction of the airport road and fraudulent appointments of council senior staff to bolster corruption syndicates (City of Harare, 2010).

Although economic challenges and lack of resources have led to poor service delivery, Mathekga (2006:11) has argued that the problems are perpetuated by the lack of community participation and engagement at local government level. For example, citizens should be involved in the production of local and national budgets and examining of public accounts. This would ensure that their interests are fully provided for and to hold their leaders accountable. It is on this basis that this research seeks to get a deeper understanding of poor service delivery in Zimbabwe and how citizens have been or can participate in service delivery to improve service delivery.

Almost all towns in Zimbabwe have been struggling to raise enough funds for capital and current expenditures especially the period 2000 to 2010 (Jonga and Chirisa, 2009:167). In the period 2000-2010 multilateral and bilateral institutions stopped funding Zimbabwean urban councils due to political tensions in the country (Jonga and Chirisa, 2009:167). The international community stopped due to challenges brought about by the land reform programme and political intolerance of the opposition (Jonga and Chirisa, 2009:167). The economic crisis across the globe and the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe had   also led local

authorities having to be content with the shortage of resources to provide services in communities (Mapuva, 2011:6).

The government of Zimbabwe and World Bank report has shown that grant transfers from central government to local authorities have remained low at about 2% of local authorities' revenue in the years 2011-2014 which then results in local authorities having not had sufficient revenue to render services (Mandiyanike *et al*, 2017:38). There has also been a rise in consumer debts as local authorities fail to collect all fees for the services they would have rendered which then leads to fiscal deficits in local authorities (Mandiyanike *et al*, 2017:38). Although the deterioration in the provision of basic services has been blamed solely on economic meltdowns and the lack of cash flow, poor service delivery has been a result of high rates in corruption by office bearers, gross abuse of council property and staff turnovers (Mabika, 2015:1). There has also been a lack of appreciation of the scale of problems be it technical, financial, and administrative that have affected local authorities and the unwillingness by residents to pay council rates and fees (Mandiyanike *et al*, 2017:33). Having looked at the state of service delivery in Zimbabwe and how citizens participate, the following section will look at the legislative provisions in place regarding citizen participation.

2.1.9. Legislative Provisions on Citizen Participation in Zimbabwe

Local government in Zimbabwe is established under section 14 of the Zimbabwean Constitution of 2013. The Constitution holds that local authorities have the rights and powers to govern their own initiatives and the local affairs of the people within the area for which it has been established (Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment No. 20, 2013). The 2013 Constitution grants a certain level of autonomy to local authorities through the devolution of powers, responsibilities and giving resources at a local level (s276 (1). This, however, does not mean that the local authorities have the freedom to make whatever decisions they deem fit (Chigwata and De Visser, 2017:166). They must exercise a level of discretion in adopting policies and laws and they do so within a framework of national or regional laws (Chigwata and De Visser, 2017:167). Prior to that, local government in Zimbabwe had been guided by acts of parliaments mainly the Urban Councils Act and the Rural District Councils Act. The legal frameworks could easily be manipulated by any contestations by members of parliament and they left local authorities at the mercy of the Minister. Before the 2013 Constitution, subnational Urban Councils were decentralised entities of central government such that they derived their authority from the Ministry of Local Government (Marumahoko, 2020:3).

Under the 2013 Constitution, local and provincial councils are mandated to and obliged to raise their own funds through rates, deliver services and include residents in decision making (Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment.No 20, 2013). Their powers are from a type of decentralisation called devolution which gives them autonomy to manage their activities in their areas of jurisdiction. Local government through local councils have a sole duty of providing services, however, the extent to which they can do so is highly politicized depending on the administrative mechanisms in place (Jonga and Chirisa, 2009: 170). At local government level in Zimbabwe, authorities are supposed to address critical issues relating to service delivery. Local authorities, however, have failed to provide water, sanitation, and housing services to citizens (Muchadenyika, 2017: 0179). From the time the 2013 Constitution was implemented, there has not been any changes to the UCA which gives excessive power to the ministry of local government. Chakunda, (2015) states that the Minister still holds the power to appoint 'special councillors' and local government board members with no formal electoral process. The town clerk is also appointed by the local government board under the ultimate control of the minister and he also 'overrides councillors and runs a council' (Muchadenyika, 2014). This therefore undermines the voice of the citizens in the electoral processes. This section has established the legislative provisions regarding citizen participation in Zimbabwe which then leads us to discussing citizen participation in Zimbabwe's local government service delivery in the following section.

2.1.10. Citizen Participation in Local Government Service Delivery in Zimbabwe

Because local authorities have failed to provide basic services, it has become important for citizens to collectively act in a bid to solve the state of service delivery (Muchadenyika, 2017:0179). It is important to note that citizen participation alone cannot solve the issue of service delivery, however, citizen participation is likely to lead to improvements in some areas. Citizen participation is, however, not easy to achieve. It requires a complex process and demanding attitudes such as courage, openness, humility, and dedication (ACPD, 2004:4). To ensure that citizens actively participate in issues that affect them, post-independence Zimbabwe, in 1984, made a requirement to have participatory structures established from the grassroots to promote community development (UNDP,2017:1).Though participatory structures such as district development committees were established, citizen participation in local government remained fragmented at that time (UNDP,2017). This then led to the inclusion of citizen participation in Zimbabwe's Constitution adopted in 2013 which provides

a new governance culture which is premised on active citizen participation and responsive public institutions (Muchadenyika, 2017:0179). This is also in accordance with Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human and Peoples Rights which states that, every citizen shall have the right to participate freely in the government of his country either directly or through freely chosen representatives in accordance with the law (Universal Declaration of Human Rights,1948: 5). This affirms the notion that citizens must participate in local government affairs including service delivery at large (Mapuva, 2011:2).

Citizen participation is also in line with the principles of participatory democracy which hold that citizens must be actively involved in matters that affect them by demanding accountability from the state and ensuring government responsiveness to service delivery and societal needs (Jones and Weale, 1999: 91). Not only should citizens participate by holding the authorities accountable, but citizens should also be held accountable for their actions. Local authorities in Zimbabwe have cited that there is lack of cooperation by citizens in terms of service delivery as they do not pay their rates citing that they cannot afford and in turn expect the authorities to provide services they have not paid for (Chidakwa,2020:1). Holding the authorities accountable to the public is to some extent a matter of institutional design and internal checks and balances but ultimately, it is the people whom the government supposedly serves who are responsible for monitoring its performance and demanding responsive behaviour (Fukuyana, 2004:40). In Zimbabwe, civil society organisations have focused on three things that will help in their effort to promote transparency and accountability in local government authorities (Muchadenyika, 2017:9). These are basic service delivery monitoring, community-based planning, and budgeting (Muchadenyika,2017:9). It has been argued that by doing this, civil society organisations are trying to build citizen coalitions that engage with local authorities on service delivery issues (Muchadenyika, 2017:10).

Citizen participation acts as a means through which better goals and objectives can be achieved. It also acts as an end in that it allows people to develop and strengthen their capability to directly intervene in or to control service delivery initiatives (Grant, 2002:8). Mandiyanike *et al* (2017:30) further holds that citizens play a central role in financing and sustaining local authorities and determining how the resources they put into local authorities are translated into services and how they are accounted for. Citizen participation thus "serves as a platform to increase awareness of local authorities' activities, improve relations and enable the public's ability to influence local authorities to deliver quality and equitable services" (Mandiyanike *et*

al, 2017:30). As we have discussed citizen participation, the next section will determine the citizen participatory structures in Zimbabwe's local government.

2.1.11. Citizen Participatory Structures in Zimbabwe's Local Government

Local government in Zimbabwe uses a variety of instruments to encourage citizens to participate such as government gazette, notices calling for objections in the newspapers, public notices at local authority's offices, ward development committees and gives the citizens the right to attend council meetings (Mapuva, 2011: 9). However, these instruments do not cater for all citizens in society as not all citizens are privileged enough to access them especially in terms of being literate. This result in the need to have a social network for sharing information and ideas on how citizens can participate in local government to address issues relating to service delivery. These social networks include civil society organizations as well as development committees within local communities (Chikerema, 2013:88). These development committees include the Village Development Committees (VIDCO), Ward Development Committees (WADCO) and the Provincial Development Committees (PDC) (Chikerema, 2013:88). It has, however, been noted that meetings that take place within these development committees in communities tend to be organised along political lines which then distracts those that are not politically inclined to the councillor's party for example (Mandiyanike *et al*, 2017:39).

Ward committees serve as a very important channel of communication for informing municipalities about the needs, preferences, and problems in their communities (Gaventa, 2004:8). They have a duty to facilitate substantive grassroot participation in the development process of municipalities including budgeting and municipal management processes (Gaventa, 2004:8). As such, they are supposed to be non- partisan and advance the interest of the ward collectively. The effectiveness of ward committees dependent on the ward councillor voted into office by the residents themselves thus if the councillor slacks, citizen participation in that ward will also be less efficient (Cornwall, 2004:8). Local officials must then ensure that citizens have ways to participate actively and meaningfully in local affairs thereby fostering the aspect of democracy within the system (Chikerema, 2013: 89).

Holdar and Zakharchenko (2002) noted that citizen participation in the set structures can be met with several challenges including lack of commitment, fear of backfire, focusing on minor

issues, lack of information (particularly political information) and lack of interest. These challenges can, however, be avoided through improving engagement skills, public education, and free flow of information. Citizens are often reluctant to participate because they are not sure of themselves, they are not used to it and they are not able to understand the political process and the decision-making issues, whilst the government officials may not be skilful enough to facilitate participatory initiatives (Fourie, 2001: 222). The following section will discuss the limitations to citizen participation in local government service delivery in Zimbabwe.

2.1.12. The limits to citizen participation in local government service delivery in Zimbabwe

Citizen participation does not always produce the desired results rather, it can be met with several challenges. These challenges include lack of commitment by the citizens themselves and the government officials, focusing on minor issues for example political differences, lack of information on the rights and responsibilities of citizens in local government and lack of interest to participate (Holdar & Zakharchenko, 2002:9). In the case of Zimbabwe, service is jeopardized due to the deeply politicised character of urban councils as councillors focus on their differences as well as mismanagement of funds and nepotism (Dewa *et al.*, 2014). As noted by the centre for community development in Zimbabwe (2009:7), there is infighting between elected political authorities and administrative authorities within urban councils and this infighting makes it difficult for citizens to participate as they are caught in between.

Mvumvuma (2016) argues that citizens can also be lacking the material conditions for participation, local government institutions might also be weak in that they lack the necessary tools to support participation or the practice of participation can be rare due to the continuation of the top-down approach (ACPD, 2004:4). These challenges can, however, be avoided through improving citizen engagement skills, public education on the benefits of participating and ensuring the free flow of information to all citizens such that no one is left behind   (Holdar & Zakharchenko, 2002:9). To ensure that citizens are educated, there is a need for collaboration between the recipients, and administrators of various government policies, and reforms. Initiatives to ensure that citizens are aware of the policies and to ensure their effective implementation are also essential (McNeil, 2017:2).

As noted by Rueschemeyer (2009: 168), "collective action may not lead to the results expected and hoped for". This is mainly because individuals have different interests and priorities which makes it hard for the authorities to address and combine all those different interests. As a result,

citizens are likely to weigh the probabilities of their individual benefits being met and at what costs, then decide whether to participate. This is the case in Zimbabwe where citizens are mainly concerned with bread-and-butter issues as such they are most likely to participate where there are direct financial benefits (Mataruse, 2012: 25). Collective action for service delivery in Zimbabwe is also marred by the fact that there is a lack of community cohesion when engaging with local authority leadership including councillors (Mataruse, 2012:27). This then causes participation to be individualistic in nature thereby limiting the effectiveness of public participation.

It is also important to note that citizens can at times be distrustful, cynical, and not comfortable with collaborating with the government at any level (Holzer and Kloby 2005: 2). In the case of Zimbabwe, this distrust is a result of environments with untrustworthy people or an individual not possessing trust as a virtue. Many a times, citizens do not participate at the same level and degrees of frequency rather they tend to participate at various levels and degrees of frequency depending on their different societal beliefs, economic status, and household responsibilities for example (Mandiyanike *et al*, 2017:36).

Participation can also be hindered by language barriers which is the case in Zimbabwe. According to Sachikonye (2018:70), citizens sometimes do not understand the language used in meetings as such they tend to shy away from the meetings. Citizens in general are also participating   only when they are directly affected by local government changes for example rates and levy increases (Mandiyanike *et al,* 2017:36). A few who choose to participate even if they are directly affected or not are in most cases not a representative of the population as such citizen participation can be captured by the elite and hijacked by the local notables (Mandiyanike *et al*, 2017:36). It is also important to note that participation raises expectations which can be frustrating as those with power and resources lack participation by ordinary citizens as they find it threatening (ACPD, 2004:4). Limits to citizen participation can negatively impact the state of service delivery as citizens cannot fully engage and contribute to issues affecting them. This then leads us to discuss the current state of service delivery in Chiredzi in the next section.

2.1.13. The current state of service delivery in the town of Chiredzi

The Chiredzi town has had to deal with the problem of poor waste and wastewater management. Population explosions due to natural increase and rural-urban migration have led to an increase in the amount of waste being generated in urban areas (Hobwana *et al.*, 2018: 69). Because of

the shortage of houses, informal settlements mushroom everywhere which makes it difficult for local authorities to manage the waste (Sinthumele and Mkumbuzi, 2019:1). Local municipalities, Chiredzi town council included, have failed to deal with waste management properly due to financial constraints and the absence of required professional personnel (Hobwana *et al.*, 2018: 69). It has always been seen as the responsibility of local authorities alone to deal with waste management such that people tend to not cooperate, instead they have adopted the "we dump, they collect" mantra (Sinthumele and Mkumbuzi, 2019:2).

The Chiredzi Town Council has also blamed the shortage of fuel for worsening service delivery in terms of poor waste management (Tell Zim, 5 February: 2019). The Council chairperson is quoted to have said "we would like to apologize to our beloved residents that we are facing challenges in accessing fuel and this has resulted in poor responses to emergencies such as sewage blockages and burst water pipes". (Tell Zim, 5 February: 2019). There has also been poor public awareness on the dangers of poor waste management as a result citizens resort to the creation of illegal dumpsites particularly in residential areas that have not yet been developed (Hobwana, *et al.*, 2018: 69).

In Zimbabwe, the Chiredzi Town Council has also been struggling to meet the housing needs of Chiredzi's growing population (Chazovachii, 2011: 2). According to the Council's Statistics Office (2010), only 1300 high density stands had been allocated since 2007 yet the Council had 4500 people on its waiting list. In 2019, the Council reported that it had started servicing 1000 medium density residential stands as it moves to reduce the town's housing backlog (Tell Zim, 2019). The town has over 20 000 people on its waiting list (Tell Zim, 2019). The shortage of housing has led to people living in overcrowded conditions and the growth of shanties (Chazovachii, 2011: 2). According to the United Nations Healthcare report, lack of housing can compromise most basic needs of water and sanitation which has been the case for Chiredzi. The growth of shanties in towns will also cause environmental problems as there are no designated places for disposal of refuse and people can defecate anywhere which also leads to the spread of diseases. It is, however, to be noted that literature has not shown how the residents have reacted to these issues as such, this research hopes to establish this in Chapter 3 when unpacks findings and conducts data analysis.

It is to be noted that the housing shortage is not only affecting Chiredzi residents and the Chiredzi town council, but also a nationwide problem. The failure of local authorities to provide decent housing across Zimbabwe's urban areas, resulted in the infamous

Murambatsvina (Move the Rubbish) which left many people homeless (Muchadenyika, 2014:1377). The second national convention suggested that the official national estimate of housing backlog in 2010 was given at 1.2 million units (Government of Zimbabwe, 2010). The housing situation can be said to have been caused by local authority's weak housing financing, rigid town planning standards and outdated model building by laws amongst other factors (Muchadenyika, 2014:1377). Shortage of housing has also been linked to increased urbanisation, the argument being that increased urbanisation is putting a strain on housing services and infrastructure and this is happening against a backdrop of stranded economic growth (Kamete, 2002). This then leads most local authorities to shelve low-cost housing targeted to the urban poor (Kamate, 2002).

Citizens have not remained silent. In February 2019, the Zimbabwe human rights lawyers threatened to sue Chiredzi Town Council for billing residents for services it did not render (Newsday, 2019). It demanded that the town council remove accumulated refuse collection and water bills from statements and accounts for services that it did not render (Newsday, 2019). Makondo extension residents for example, had gone for 11 months without water, no sewerage system but still accumulated bills for these untendered services (Newsday, 2019). Inadequate water supply is a problem in the country's urban areas. This inadequate supply of water has led to a situation in which urban dwellers are prone to serious health risks caused by people drawing water from substitute water supplies that are unsafe (Marumahoko, 2020:4). The severity of these water shortages is evident during the period 2018 to early 2020 where the neglect of water infrastructure was a major cause of the outbreak in water borne diseases in Harare, Gweru and other major towns and cities (Marumahoko, 2020:4). The Chiredzi Town Council is not the only council that has been threatened with a lawsuit. Norton legislator Temba Mliswa took the Norton Town Council to court over poor service delivery. Mliswa is quoted in an online news agency known as Pindula saying "you have to make court applications as it is the language they can understand. How can they continue collecting rates when they are not providing water or the requisite service delivery" (Pindula, 2019:1)?

This then shows that the council has been failing to supply water to most of its residents and has also been failing in sewerage systems. Having looked at what service delivery entails and ways in which citizens can participate, this research uses the following theory of Social Capital as a lens to understand citizen participation in service delivery in Chiredzi town.

2.2. Theoretical Framework: Social Capital

This research draws from the theory of social capital to understand citizen participation on service delivery issues in the town of Chiredzi. Putman (1995) explains social capital as a civic engagement created through participation in voluntary association whilst Ostrom (1994) views it as a social fabric that creates a willingness to cooperate in societal development. Coleman (1988) holds that social capital is an aspect of social structure that facilitates forms of action and cooperation. As noted by Portes (1998:7) "whereas economic capital is in people's bank accounts and human capital is inside their heads, social capital inherits in the structure of their relationships". This suggests that social capital is premised on the notion of cooperation between individuals or groups to achieve a certain goal. In this case, we are looking at the cooperation between Chiredzi town council and the citizens of Chiredzi to improve service delivery in that town.

Social capital as a theory captures many sociological concepts such as social integration and social cohesion. Social capital is thus a useful framework when one tries to capture the elements of resources embedded in social structures and networks (Lin, Cook et al, 2008: Preface). As put forward by Putnam (1995:65), governance especially in democracies is determined by the existence or the absence of civic engagements which results in the need to examine existing social networks and how they coordinate for development or growth. This means that social capital is crucial in understanding citizen participation in Chiredzi town council, the networks that exist to foster the participation and the effects of participation or lack thereof.

High levels of social capital in communities are said to provide social, economic, and democratic outcomes which will in the long run contribute to the wellbeing of a community or society (Cuthill, 2003: 375). This is in line with Putman's (1993:37) idea that "social capital embedded in norms and networks of civic engagement seems to be a precondition for economic development as well as for economic government". Social capital will thus help to understand the different networks taking place in Chiredzi and the relationship between the town council and citizen participation and how it has affected service delivery.

Social capital is created through patterns of inter-dependence and social interactions that occur within a population (La Due Lake and Huckfeldt, 1998: 567). It is also produced by the intentional activities of individuals who are connected to one another by ongoing networks of

social relationships (La Due Lake and Huckfeldt,1998: 569). The relationship between individuals must be durable and subjectively felt as such there must be rules and obligations to be followed (Bourdieu,1983: 249). In this case we have established that there is a relationship between Chiredzi town council and the residents of Chiredzi and this relationship is based on the fact that one is obliged to render a service to the other (Chiredzi town council renders services to the residents) whilst the other pays its rates and levies in order to receive a service (Chiredzi residents pay the town council). The relationship between Chiredzi Town Council and its citizens must exist and be long lasting. To ensure that there is a functional relationship, and both parties must adhere to set rules and adhere to their obligations within the relationship.

Since social capital is premised on the idea of interaction, it cannot be built unless opportunities for interaction are provided (Falk *et al*, 2000;105). It has been noted that "the provision of opportunities for interaction of the necessary quality to occur implicates an attention to collective processes for communities-of-common-purpose that is often ignored" (Falk *et al,*2000:105). This means that social capital can be fully realized where there are participatory structures put in place to ensure that citizens fully interact with each other. In this case, the Chiredzi town council, the residents and civil society organisations for example, are supposed to find ways and means through which interaction can be fully realized (i.e. participation). This shows that, even in   the social capital discourse, different parties are required to cooperate and participate for the purposes of attaining a common goal.

According to Galabuzi & Teelucksingh (2010), social capital has two aspects which are the heterogeneous and the homogenous. Heterogeneous dimensions are the ties or networks that cut across boundaries such as ethnicity, race or status thereby acting as bridging social capital whilst homogeneous dimensions are the ties and partnerships amongst those of similar background, i.e., bonding social capital (Galabuzi & Teelucksingh,2010). This means that social networks in some instances cuts across all divides be it race; ethnicity and sometimes social networks can be amongst those of familiar backgrounds only. Because of this one can say that social capital can either lead to positive outcomes through bonding and bridging or it can lead to negative outcomes such as social exclusion through its absence or the existence of non-inclusive social networks. The following section will then lead us to discuss the norms aspect of social capital.

2.2.1. Social Capital and Norms

According to Maan (2011), the way people act is influenced by the type of norms that are present in certain structures and rules. These norms lead to different forms of trust which then determines the level and type of reciprocity among individuals of the same community. Gavac *et al*. (2014: 34) defines norms as "the boundaries of what is appropriate and expected in a situation or a group". These sets of standards govern the lives of the individuals in a group or situation and can either be written or not written. Written norms can be in the form of laws whilst the other ones are not written but individuals just find themselves conforming to them. Gavac *et al*. (2014) further claim that in group dynamics where people in a group have common interests and they conform to the norms of the group to which they belong. This is such that if the group increases or becomes the strongest it can therefore set the standard norms for a community. This means that if a certain practice is practised by a majority of people in a community be it good or bad, it is likely to become the standard procedure and eventually the norm in that community. One can argue that those who choose not to conform to the common practice or rather the norms will be seen as a threat by others in society which then leads to them being treated as outcasts. To give an example, if the community decides that they are not going to pay their rates to the municipality for example and person B decides that they will pay their rates, they will be going against the majority stance thus they will be seen as a threat.

Norms result in collective action through the establishment of 'brave reciprocity' (Siisiainen, 2000). According to Portes (1998), in a community there are different groupings due to the inclination of people to identify and thus form a group with others of common interest. Each resulting group acts   as a 'motivational force". These groups and associations are formed out of reciprocity, trust and norms. Welch *et al.* (2005) notes that trust within a society leads to moral obligation and reciprocity which in turn leads to the formation of norms and networks. These may be weak, strong, informal or formal. Social norms will help to ascertain existing participatory norms in the provision of services in Chiredzi. In the following section, we will discuss the social networks aspect of social capital.

2.2.2. Social Capital and Social Networks

Social networks refer to groups of people that are connected to each other by a specific thing (Smith *et al*., 2009:123). Social networks work as channels and tools through which norms

generated from the trust levels in a society are shared. These networks include family ties, friends, informal associations and formal group memberships and political networks through political parties (Young, 2014; 39). Social capital thrives on social networks. Social networks help in understanding or explaining relations between individuals in a community. In the proposed study, social networks include the town council and Chiredzi residents who are bound by the same goal of achieving proper service delivery. However, individuals are complex thus their attitudes and behaviours are bound to change over time usually due to circumstances and interests which can affect the shared goal of attaining proper service delivery (Smith *et al*., 2009:123).

Networks link people to each other and to their community and society (Falk, 2000:1). Communities endowed with a diverse stock of social networks and civic associations are in a stronger position to confront poverty and vulnerability through working together (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000:226). Rose (2007) claims that social networks can grow and increase in value when they create environments of compatible trustworthiness. This can be said to mean that the social networks that people create exist because of trust. It is unlikely that people will come together for a common cause when they do not trust each other. Bad networks promote interactions that are restricted, and they thrive on suppressing positive things in society while good networks are "build on the strength of their internal bonding ties and draws on an array of external knowledge and information resources" (Falk, 2000: 1). An example of these bad networks will be political networks that thrive on suppressing any positive thing that would have been implemented by an opposition political party.

Social networks are also formed based on the principles   of reciprocity. They exist because there is a mutual and reciprocal interaction that exists within a group (Sapiro, 2005:157). There is specific and general reciprocity. The former involves one doing something, others return the favour. The latter involves doing something regardless of what the other party has done or will do (Sapiro, 2005:158). Jackman and Miller (1998:49) note that "the effectiveness of regional governments hinges on patterns of social networks such as civic associations". This means that the success of local governments is also premised on the notion of reciprocity between the parties involved in this case, the reciprocity between Chiredzi Town Council and its residents. It is, however, important to note that according to Putnam (1995), there are factors that impinge on the social networks which can ultimately lead to the malfunctioning of a democracy. Lack of residential stability (house ownership), public policy and the rise of electronic services also "undermines the physical basis for civic engagements." This one can argue has changed as

people can now use electronic services such as social media to engage with each other especially during this Covid-19 pandemic where social distancing has become the social norm.

Lowndes & Wilson's (2001: 4) also assert that "governments (particularly at the local level) shape the conditions in which voluntary associations and social networks can or cannot thrive". This means that whether citizens can participate is also dependent on how welcoming the local council is, its policies and its level of engagement with citizens. Government constitutions, legal frameworks, structures, and culture can affect the prospects of social capital through the suppression of civil rights, press freedoms and civic education (Lowndes & Wilson, 2001). How constitutions are framed determines the rights and freedoms given to citizens such that when the laws are repressive, citizens will refrain from participating. In the next section, we will discuss the social trust aspect of social capital.

2.2.3. Social Capital and Social Trust

Social capital has two aspects to it, and these are the structure aspect which facilitates certain actions of individuals within a structure and the value aspect which looks at how the social structure can become the resource that actors can use to realize their interests and an example of these resources is trust (Coleman,1990:302). Trust in the words of Falk *et al* (2000:104) "Inheres in the situated, observable and accountable reciprocity of every micro interaction". They argue that when local interactions between community members, visible in the conversational interactions are closely analysed, the fundamental nature of trust is revealed as the observable and accountable reciprocity of each interaction. If for example, a resident of Chiredzi pays their rates to the town council, there has to be some level of trust that guarantees that payment of rates will bring about proper service delivery and this trust is brought about by repeated interaction. When that trust does not exist, it will be difficult for the citizen or the resident to do so. Trust creates the basis for reciprocity, trustworthiness, solidarity, social relations, social networks, and familiarity (Siisiainen, 2000; Welch *et al.,* 2005). Trust is "the actor's belief that, at worst, others will not knowingly or willingly do him harm, and at best, that they will act in his interests" (Newton, 2001: 202). This means that the relationship between Chiredzi town council and its residents should be reciprocal and based on trust which makes it easier to work together. Residents should trust the town council to deliver services they pay for and the town council should trust residents to pay for the services they receive.

To give a clear picture of the trust aspect, Sides (1999:3), gives an example of how a merchant's chances of making a sale increases as buyers come to perceive him trustworthy. Coleman (1990:305) argues that trust between individuals varies with the nature of interaction that is whether the interaction is repeated over time. This can be interpreted to mean that when one constantly pays their rates for example and has been continually disappointed with the lack of service delivery, they will in the long run desist from paying. High levels of trust have been linked to several positive outcomes and widespread social trust is a sign of solidarity and cohesion (Rahn and Transue, 1998). This means that when there is trust between the town council and the residents, it will be easier to collect rates from residents which then leads to the absence of debts and better provision of services in the long run. Trust may be formed through various sources such as encounters with citizens, professional education, media reports, family members, friends, art, and movies (Yang, 2006:). One can then argue that it   is not possible to gain the citizen's trust through one encounter, rather the town council for example, must continuously prove themselves trustworthy to the citizens by all means possible through doing away with corrupt activities for example.

As noted by Fukuyana (1995), the trust that individuals have in each other influences their actions. To unpack this, he uses the notion of 'high trust' and 'low trust'. Where there are low levels of trust, people are not likely going to cooperate with each other which then leads to individualism (Fukuyana,1995). Where there is individualism, there is likely to be an overall decline in socioeconomic development (Sachikonye,2018:20). This means that when citizens are divided in such a way that one cares only for themselves, it will be difficult to achieve desired results. High levels of trust are the   result of two variables. As noted by Rose (2007), an individual can decide to participate or associate with others in his or her community because of his own learned beliefs and moral tastes of trust whilst someone else's trust can be built on the trustworthiness of others surrounding them (Hardin, 2002; Rose, 2007). The fact that one can decide to participate because others in their community are participating emphasizes the importance of social networks in explaining citizen participation. In chapter 3, trust as an aspect of social capital between Chiredzi residents and the Towns Council will be evaluated. Like any other theory, there are advantages and disadvantages to social capital. The following section will highlight the highs and lows of social capital as a theory.

2.2.4. The highs and short falls of social capital

Social capital is in danger of being hijacked by politics (Schuurman,2003). Socio-politically, social capital means that people can boycott citizen participation based on political affiliations for example, having a Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) councillors in the town council can lead to the ZANU PF supporters not wanting to cooperate with the town council thereby undermining the concept of social capital and in this case interfering with citizen participation in local government service delivery.

Social capital has been criticised for perpetuating inequalities in societies. This is because the volume of social capital possessed by a person depends on the size of their network and connections which then creates a huge gap between the have and the have nots in society (Adkins, 2005:197). Those who have can create powerful networks to their advantage while those who do not have continue to receive bad services. Social capital is also embedded in group relations and associations thus it takes away individual preferences and upholds group decisions (Sato, 2013: 3). Taking away individual preferences due to the strength of groups will in the long run create inequalities as the views and preferences of the minority are not taken into consideration. According to Buress-Jordan (2015:16), this opens society to "situations of sectarianism, ethnocentrism, and corruption where influence and relationships are used for narrow self-interests sometimes opposite to the public good". For example, the rise of technology including social media (in recent years) has eroded the virtue of association because "we are now provided with 'virtual reality' helmets in order to be entertained and edified in isolation" (Putnam 1995:77). This has led to people neglecting gatherings thereby undermining the channels of participation that require people to meet as a community for example debates and meetings.

2.2.5 Conclusion

Having looked at different views from different authors on citizen participation in local government service delivery one can conclude that citizen participation is a necessity as it upholds the principles of democracy. This chapter showed that there are various ways in which citizens can participate and these range from political participation, participation through different CSO's, meetings and budget reviews. It has also been shown that though there are mechanisms put in place to facilitate citizen participation, they are faced with challenges such

as political interference, lack of knowledge on participation, corruption, and economic difficulties on the side of both the local government institutions and the citizens and sometimes, the unwillingness to participate by citizens. There is therefore a need to educate citizens on their roles and responsibilities in local government such that they fully understand why they are called to participate. There is also a need to educate politicians on their roles to ensure that meetings at ward levels or meetings with the council are not turned into political squabbles.

This section has also shown that there are various networks at play when it comes to participation and service delivery. There are networks of people who belong to the same political party, networks of people with the same social and economic standing and networks between residents and the council who are united by a common goal for example. For these networks to work together, there must be an element of trust that is based on the notion of reciprocity. The trust element can, however, be strained by some social norms such as corruption as corruption is fast becoming an accepted thing. Social norms also bring people with the same values and norms together thereby creating partnerships of those bound by the same beliefs. Having looked at the literature and theory, the next chapter will unpack the findings of this research. It will then analyse and interpret the data to answer the research question which asks how citizens in Chiredzi have been participating to improve service delivery in the town.

CHAPTER 3: EVIDENCE, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN CHIREDZI TOWN COUNCIL AFFAIRS.

3.1. Introduction

This chapter serves as a presentation, analysis and interpretation of findings obtained from the town of Chiredzi on citizen participation in the affairs of the Chiredzi Town Council. Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data (i.e. findings) (Marshall and Roseman, 1999:150). Data interpretation refers to the analysis of data (i.e. findings) through assigning meaning to the collected information and determining conclusions, significance, and implications of the finding (Marshall &Rossman, 1999:150).

Chiredzi is a small town in Masvingo province in the South-Eastern part of Zimbabwe. Chiredzi Town Council services a population of about 30,448 people as of 2012 (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2012). Chiredzi is divided into the urban and rural side. This research focused on the urban side thus data was collected from residents of Chiredzi Urban who are serviced by Chiredzi Town Council. The participants were drawn from politicians, members of CSOs and residents. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part (3.2 to 3.9) is a descriptive presentation of the findings. The last part 3.10 is the discussion of the findings in relation to the reviewed literature and theoretical framework of the study.

The analysis and interpretation of data should produce results that answer the main research problem. In this instance the research problem that had to be addressed was that of poor service delivery by Chiredzi town council in terms of provision of water, poor roads, inadequate housing, and waste management which makes the day-to-day living of the residents difficult. The data collected also had to answer the research question, "how can the Chiredzi town council and its residents work together towards improving service delivery for the residents of Chiredzi". The findings also attempt to address the research aim which was to get a deeper understanding of how stakeholder participation between the Chiredzi town council and its citizens contribute to enhance service delivery for the citizens of Chiredzi. It also had to address the research objectives which are centred on (1) Understanding existing participatory structures in Chiredzi (2) Understanding the different forms of participation in Chiredzi (3). Understanding the possibilities and limitations of citizen participation specifically in Chiredzi (4) Explaining how the Town Council and the citizens can cooperate to improve service delivery.

To be able to address the research question, the aims, and the objectives, I interviewed ten people from different sectors of all of whom are Chiredzi residents. Of the ten participants, seven took part as ordinary citizens whilst the remaining three were drawn from political office bearers, civil society organisations and senior government officials in local government. I also used newspaper articles that speak of Chiredzi town council to supplement the data received from the ten participants. From this study, several themes were generated from the data analysis as explained in chapter one. These themes include (1) Citizen perceptions of the roles and obligations of the town council (2) Resource management and execution of duties (3) Citizens participation and council relations (4) Polarisation and politicisation (4) Civil society and council relations. To get a better understanding of the themes, I will discuss them and show how they relate to the study objectives.

3.1.2. Citizen Perceptions of the roles and responsibilities of the Chiredzi Town Council

The residents of Chiredzi that took place in this study indicated that they knew what the roles and responsibilities of the Chiredzi Town Council were, however, not all of them could list the responsibilities and the roles. For instance, Tawanda and Mufudzi noted that they knew however, when asked to further explain they could not expand. Tawanda noted that the roles and responsibilities of the town council were "*to provide services to Chiredzi residents*". Lisbet saw the role and responsibility of the Town Council as limited to "*provide clean water and ensure continuous waste removal in the residential areas in particular*". According to Linda, the roles and responsibilities of the   are "*to maintain roads, good public relations, clinics, housing, development and removing litter*". Vincent went on to say that the roles and responsibilities of the Town council included the provision of "clean water" not just water, refuse collection, sewer reticulation and housing. The response by Vincent included a security element in which he purports the council is responsible for ensuring that residents are staying in safe environments which was not noted by other respondents. This is what Vincent had to say: "*the roles and responsibilities of the town council were the provision of clean water, removal of waste material bins, maintenance of roads in and around town centre and residential areas and assurance of security to town residents.*"

Residents of Chiredzi thus see the role and responsibility of the town council as that of providing services such as clean water, refuse collection, maintaining good roads, security and providing houses for the residents of Chiredzi. This theme relates to the research objective that seeks to understand if the council and the residents can cooperate   to improve service delivery

since provision the roles and responsibilities of the council require co-operation from the residents.

3.1.3 Has the Town Council been able to execute these roles and responsibilities?

All the respondents indicated that the Chiredzi Town Council has not been able to fully execute its roles and responsibilities. As noted by Tawanda, *"it has not fully executed its duties because in most parts of our town we still have water challenges and with the increase in population in our town, they have not so far facilitated the establishment of more schools and clinics to cater for these growing numbers"*. Mufudzi was of the view that the council has not fully executed its roles and responsibilities, and this is evidenced by the total lack of water in some areas and roads that are not being serviced. Lisbet said: *"to some extent, the Council has tried to fulfil these obligations with shortfalls here and there. One collection truck cannot serve the whole town in fact, waste collection is one of the poorest services in Chiredzi town"*. According to Musa, the council has not tried but has failed due to corruption within the rank and file that is the leaders and the workers of the Council, incompetence and an inflation eroded budget. Whilst Linda noted that the council has no resource to fully execute these duties, Vincent noted that *"the Council has not fully met its obligations and functions to the standards of a town. Roads are in bad state. Supply of water is erratic, and security is compromised as evidenced by many break ins by thieves"*. Baloyi noted that *"the Council tries but there is still room for improvement. The quality of services is commensurate to what people pay to access the services"*.

The participants however, noted that in some areas the council has been responsive. According to Lisbet, the Council has been able to drill boreholes in *Tshovani* location to address the challenges of water, however, the boreholes are slowly becoming a health hazard as they harbour diseases such as cholera and typhoid. Mufudzi noted that in *West and Warth* road, the Council has been collecting refuse whilst Chifamba noted that the council has been able to restore lights along *Lion Drive*. Chifamba also noted that *"the servicing of stands at Melbourne exhibit the Council's drive towards effective service delivery"*.

Baloyi said: *"to a larger extent, Councils in Zimbabwe have been able to execute their mandates. However, resource constraints have been a major setback. There is general lack of commitment to pay by residents citing lack of disposable income and yet they expect the local authority to provide all the services"*. Baloyi went on to note that another hindrance   that affected the Council's ability to fully execute   their duties are that of too much interference

by government in the affairs of Urban Councils. He noted that "*local government in Zimbabwe is heavily polarized, with Urban Councils being viewed as opposition MDC strongholds while Rural Councils are aligned with the ruling ZANU PF party. For the Urban Councils, most of what they do is viewed by government in negative connotations. Mayors and officials are suspended and dismissed in suspicious circumstances and issues of corruption have also been levelled against council officials*".

From the findings, residents seem to agree that the council has been fulfilling its duties though it is to a lesser extent since other areas such as the provision of water and the servicing of roads are still lagging. Some have blamed corruption within the leadership as the reason behind poor services whilst others have argued that the quality of services provided by the council are a direct reflection of what people pay to access the services. This also speaks to how the council and the citizens can cooperate to improve service delivery. Having asked the residents about the state of service delivery in Chiredzi and if the council had been able fulfil its duties, it was crucial to understand their participation as residents of Chiredzi in improving service delivery.

3.1.4. Citizen Participation and Chiredzi Town Council relations.

To establish citizen participation from their perspective, I first had to ask participants if they have ever been to the Chiredzi Town Council offices because this is where council meetings usually take place, complaints are usually made and payments of bills before the recent advance of mobile money transfers. Tawanda noted that he had never been to the Town Council since most services are done online. Chifamba, Mufudzi, Lisbet and Vincent have been there several times for payment of bills, processing of stand papers and other non-council business. Musa had an interesting focus as they noted that he "*went there several times attending meetings with councils, complaining on poor service delivery and payment of rates and services*".

I now had to establish whether the participants had ever attended any council meetings from the time they started residing in Chiredzi. Lisbet, a farmer, noted that she is always occupied thus they have no time to attend the meetings. Mufudzi indicated that he has never attended any and said that "*I would be lying if I say that I have a valid reason for not attending*" Chifamba echoed the same sentiments as Mufudzi. Linda, however, raised a point that I found to be rather interesting. In her words, Linda noted that "I *have never attended any council meeting before. I do not think that I am educated enough to be able say or contribute anything meaningful, so I opt to stay at home*". Musa has attended several meetings, as had Vincent.

Having noted citizen responses on whether they have or participate in improving service delivery, I asked Baloyi what he thinks should be done to improve citizen participation to improve service delivery. Baloyi had this to say "*education and awareness is critical so that we remove unnecessary suspicion when it comes to citizen participation. Both local authority and the citizenry need to be aware of the benefits of inclusivity in service delivery. Citizen participation is key when it comes to the ownership of the process. Informed citizens participate better and the product is shared by everybody. It enhances democracy and a sense of belonging and ownership, critical for development*".

In essence, some residents are frequent in the town Council offices and attend meetings whilst others have never attended any Council meeting for no valid reason at all. This theme speaks to the research objective that looks at understanding the different participatory structures in Chiredzi.

3.1.5. Citizen's role in improving service delivery.

The focus of this research is to understand citizen participation in Chiredzi thus, I had to ask residents of the role that they have been playing to improve service delivery in Chiredzi. Tawanda held that he has been paying his dues to the council without failure monthly which means he participates through rates paying. I must, however, emphasize there was no proof given to show that he pays his dues without failure. Musa also participates through paying rates and "*advocating for better service*" in meetings which is a form of protest. Vincent said: "when *the waste matter collection breaks down, I carry my bins to the dump site using my own vehicle. When I come across burst water pipes or sewer pipes, I make a report to the council regardless of whether it is in my yard or not*". Linda participates through paying her taxes and voting for the councillor. In Linda's words, she said that *"I have the right to vote for a councillor and to be in activities that take part in Chiredzi"*. Lisbet has participated through taking part in the national clean-up campaign. Mahungana who is a representative of Chiredzi Informal Sector Association (CHISA) which is a civil society organisation noted that the organisation participates by "*participating in council meeting, budgets, evaluation of project committees and working with local ward councillors. We also participate by communicating to council through e-mail as an organisation on issues such as water bills, sanitation, road maintenance etc*". Participant two also participates through paying their bills on time.

Residents have shown that they participate in different ways, some through paying their rates, disposing refuse, attending budget meetings, and advocating for better services. This speaks to the different forms of participation in Chiredzi.

3.1.6. Channels of Citizen Participation in Chiredzi Town Council

Since there are various channels of participation such as council meetings, ward development committees, notices, calls for objections in newspapers (Mandiyanike, 2017:39). It was necessary to ask residents about the platforms of participation they have been using. Tawanda noted that he participates through social media platforms that have been created by their ward councillor. In these social media platforms, they can air their views on different issues that affect their livelihoods, the community, and the nation at large. Mufudzi participates through WhatsApp whilst Lisbet rarely participates in any participation platforms. Mahungana, a representative of CHISA noted that as an organisation "*we use local residents associations when we engage citizens, the Chiredzi business development to engage council and we are invited as CHISA to council meetings workshops and this gives us the opportunity to engage council*". Musa shared the same sentiments with CHISA, noting that they "*participate through airing their views in resident associations and the business community of which I am part of*". Vincent noted that he participates through community monthly environment clean-ups and neighbourhood watch activities whilst Chifamba and Linda noted that they do not participate in any. Hwende, the Ward 1 Councillor noted that "*Soon after elections in 2018, I set up civic participation structures such as ward development committees which is responsible for spearheading ward development issues and service delivery issues. A total of 25 ward development meetings were held in ward 1 being chaired by the councillor. Residents also participate in quarterly budget performance reviews. We set up groups or platforms so that residents can raise issues concerning service delivery*".

Vincent was confident that his contribution in these platforms bring very significant changes to service delivery citing that his complaints about refuse collection have seen refuse collection improving where he resides whilst Musa noted that "*indeed my contributions are fruitful, but it depends on the implementers who do not act*".

Linda was of the view that their participation does not contribute much because the Council just takes their money but no sign of improvements. According to Lisbet, they have stopped participating because their participation was "*insignificant because we do not get to discuss issues that really matter and most of these channels end up being treated like political*

campaigns with little or nothing to contribute towards service delivery". Tawanda noted that his contribution was effective and has significantly helped although some issues cannot be understood and addressed. Citizen engagement in these platforms has many advantages, said Mr Hwende who is the Ward 1 Councillor. Mr Hwende said when citizens participate in these platforms it makes decision making easier. He noted that, "*it is easier for council to make decisions where citizens are actively involved, implementation of council programmes are easy when citizens are involved. Council budgets are funded by citizens, if they participate conflicts are minimized and as a result citizen support council programme. Citizen participation helps council to identify the needs of the residents and they should determine how resources in their localities should be used*". Mr Hwende noted that working with citizens resulted in the successful implementation of water conveyance systems in Makondo location and Magwaza. This theme speaks to the objective that seeks to understand different forms of participation in Chiredzi and the objective that seeks to explain how the council and citizens can cooperate   to improve service delivery in Chiredzi.

3.1.7. Engagement between the Town Council and Citizens

The Chiredzi Town Council must engage citizens if they are to build a working relationship. I had to find out from the residents if they think that the town council has tried to promote citizen participation. Mufudzi noted that the Council has utilised the SMS technology to advise citizens on various issues so that no one is left out. Tawanda says that Council has tried to improve communication between the Council and residents through using EcoCash which is a mobile application that allows one to pay their bills in the comfort of their homes. According to Chifamba "*Council holds meetings, mass mobilization through mobile campaigns, engaging UCHIRRA, which is an organ which represents citizens of Chiredzi*". Musa noted that the council has allowed resident associations to give their views on several service delivery matters, and it holds meetings with citizens from time to time.

Vincent notes that "*the council provides us with sanitary wear during clean up campaigns*". Lisbet indicated that the Council tries but people do not participate due to ignorance. Baloyi held that Town Councils do engage citizens and civil society organisations in service delivery matters. He noted that "*residents are usually organised into residents' associations for purposes of engaging the council as a united front. Most notable consultations do happen during budget consultations or development planning meetings. Ward meetings are also held as consultations by councillors*". Baloyi went on to say that the council benefits more from the

participation of citizens. He notes that "*citizen participation has brought about notable changes such as gender responsive budgets, better revenue collections as budget ownership improves, less strike action by ratepayers and improvements in council relations with stakeholders, general harmony and unity of purpose*".The council engages citizens through direct communication with their councillors or through residents' associations and in some instances, residents approach the district co-ordinator's office as a lobbying strategy, or they can use the Member of Parliament (MP) of their constituency to force the council to engage them and the council also invites residents to specific meetings like full councils so that the residents can get insight into council operations said Baloyi. He went on to say that though there are many platforms through which residents and the council can communicate, council also faces some challenges when engaging citizens.

Baloyi also noted that "*there is polarisation of council affairs. Some residents bring party politics into service delivery matters thereby tarnishing the engaging process. There is also a general apathy when it comes to participation in civic matters and there is domination by males when it comes to voicing matters as female residents tend to shy away from the participating fora. There is also a planning fatigue as some of the agreed plans are not implemented due to budget constraints. It would be pointless to continue budgeting for projects that will not be implemented and there is also limited knowledge on the role of residents in demanding services and accountability from council*". When asked how they have been dealing with polarisation and politicisation of service delivery, Mr Hwende noted that they are working with civic organisations and the office of the district administrator to help citizens understand that councillors represent their interests not the interests of political parties. Mr Hwende also noted that they are also engaging leadership structures and other political parties to cascade or emphasize to their lower structures the benefits of working with the councillor irrespective of political jackets on issues of service delivery.

The discussion under 3.1.7. speaks to the objective that seeks to understand the possibilities and limitations of participation specifically in Chiredzi and the objective that seeks to explain how the council and citizens can cooperate to improve service delivery.

3.1.8. Civil Society and Chiredzi Council Relations

In this research, I interviewed Mr Mahungana, the chairperson of the Chiredzi Informal Sector Association (CHISA). It is a group of small to medium business people who either own or rent properties in and around Chiredzi for business purposes. One of the objectives of the

organisation as noted by the member (Mr Mahungana) is to "*develop good and harmonious working relations with the local authority*". CHIRA also strives to promote and coordinate participation of members in the economic development of Chiredzi and the nation at large and to encourage good and ethical business practices and maintain standards of integrity. The organisation is an affiliate of the National Association of Small to Medium Enterprises (NASME) which is registered under the Ministry of Commerce and Trade.

When asked how the work CHIRA does relates to citizen participation for service delivery, Mr Mahungana noted that the organisation participates through attending council meetings, budgets, evaluation of project committees and working with local ward councillors. The organisation also participates by communicating to council through mail on issues such as water bills, sanitation, and road maintenance. Mr Mahungana further noted that the organisation participates because small to medium enterprises are key stakeholders in council matters and are invited to council meetings. These invitations to council meetings give them the opportunity to engage the Council. Mr Mahungana, "*Members of our association are invited to council meetings for deliberations," said Mahungana. Council takes proposals for projects that affect Small to Medium Enterprises from our association for implementation. Our association has also partnered with Chiredzi town council to construct toilets and a rank for the benefit of the people of Chiredzi. We have successfully lobbied for stands for our members and currently council has designated areas for SMEs because of our recommendations.*"

When asked on CHISA's relationship with the town council in terms of facilitating and advocating for civic engagement, Mr Mahungana noted that their relationship with the council is good. He held that "*council has an open-door policy and is supportive to local SME's*" as such, civic participation has yielded positive results in Chiredzi. In their own words "*Council has prioritised projects recommended by citizens such as the construction of bridge at Makondo extension and tarring West and Warth roads. Council has also bought a transformer used in pumping water to residents. Council has refurbished the old sewer system in Tshovani township*". Civil society organisation's participation in local governance service delivery is not without its challenges. Mr Mahungana went on to say that they face challenges such as interference of party politics, lack of information by ordinary citizens which then leads to less cooperation and lack of financial resources in mobilisation of citizens.

United Chiredzi Residents and Ratepayers Association (UCHIRRA) has also shown that it is actively involved in Council Affairs especially when it comes to holding the council accountable. They wrote to the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) asking for them to investigate alleged corruption by the town planner and the town clerk which saw the two being arrested on allegations of corruption (Tell Zim, 2020:1). UCHIRRA has also been participating in budgeting meetings in which they stand for the needs of residents and ensure that the budget aligns with what residents want. Recently, at a 2021 budget meeting, the council highlighted that they needed to purchase new vehicles for the council bosses to which UCHIRRA responded it would ensure that residents would not pay their rates anymore if the council went on to purchase these cars (The Mirror, 2020:1). The resident's association says with the prevailing economic conditions in the country, it is only wise that the council directs the funds to other pressing issues rather than use the money to purchase cars (The Mirror, 2020:1). This theme relates to the objective that looks at the existing participatory structures in Chiredzi.

3.1.9. Is the current national economic and political environment conducive for citizen participation at local council level?

Baloyi noted that every situation demands participation for those concerned thus the current environment can be no exception. If it involves service delivery, it must involve participation from those that consume the services. Musa was of the view that the current environment is polarised and politicized thereby not listening to reason. Mufudzi noted that the environment is not conducive because of the economic situation in the country which makes it difficult for citizens to pay their bills. Chifamba shared the same sentiments with Mufudzi citing that the environment is not conducive as most families are surviving below the poverty datum line whether they are employed or not which makes it difficult for them to pay bills.

Tawanda, however, was of the view that the current environment is conducive for citizen participation. In their own words, "with *the advent of technology, the current environment is conducive for citizen participation. If embraced well, the council can maintain an open channel of communication through several social media platforms available such as WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter etc. These do not require physical presence for one to participate and have no limitations in terms of time frames."* Lisbet on the other hand felt that the current environment is not conducive as one lives in the fear of being misinterpreted thereby resorting

to silence. Vincent, however, felt that one can do the little they can despite whatever the prevailing conditions as participation is for their own benefit.

In summary, the residents feel that the current environment makes it difficult to participate due to polarisation and politicization whilst others cite that the economic climate is not conducive since people have no money to pay the bills. Others, however, felt that one cannot blame whatever condition they feel is prevailing rather, they should find ways to participate for their own benefit. This theme speaks to the objective that seeks to understand the possibilities and limitations of participation specifically in Chiredzi.

3.2 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The first part of the chapter was a description of the findings. In this section, I will discuss the findings through linking them to the literature review, the theoretical framework, and the research objectives. This will help in the attempt to show how this study contributes to the existing literature on citizen participation in Zimbabwe and on Town Councils.

3.2.1. Understanding existing participatory structures in Chiredzi

The findings of this research found that most residents participate through the payment of rates to the council which is a participatory structure put in place by the Council as shown in section 2.5. As noted by Marumahoko (2020:3), under the 2013 Constitution, local and provincial councils are mandated to and obliged to raise their own funds through rates, deliver services and include residents in decision making. This means that the money that residents pay through their rates is supposed to be used for service delivery within their jurisdiction. Though Chiredzi residents have indicated that they pay their rates, they feel that the corruption within the rank and file, incompetence and inflation eroded budgets makes it difficult for their participation through rates payments to yield positive results. Residents, thus, feel that their rates are being channelled towards matters other than the provision of services and that in some instances their rates money is eroded by inflation.

The continued corruption accusations within the Chiredzi town council puts a strain on the relationship that exists between the town council and the residents. From the lens of the social capital theory, the alleged corruption affects trust between the council and residents. It is difficult for one party to continuously pay their rates when the receiving party misuses the funds. As shown in the literature (Falk et al, 2000), when local interactions between community

members, visible in the conversational interactions are closely analysed, the fundamental nature of trust is revealed as the observable and accountable reciprocity of each interaction (Falk *et al*,2000:104). This means that interactions between people in society should be based on trust and reciprocity so is the interaction between the council and the residents of Chiredzi.

The findings have however, revealed in section 3.1.3 that citizens are not content with the services they are getting from the council. This shows that the amount of expected reciprocity is very low and because reciprocity is low, trust becomes minimum and where there is no trust, a relationship is strained. Although the findings of the research did not show that residents in Chiredzi are not paying their rates to the council, literature has shown that in some instances, it is the residents who do not play their part as such they should not expect any action from the town councils (Centre for Community Development in Zimbabwe,2009:5, Marumahoko *et al,* 2020). Similarly, Mandiyanike *et al.*, (2017:33) argues that on service delivery in Zimbabwe there is lack of appreciation of the scale of problems be it technical, financial, and administrative that have affected local authorities and the unwillingness of residents to pay council rates and fees. It is then sufficient to say that in some instances; the council withholds its services because it does not trust the residents to reciprocate the actions. As noted by Rahn and Transue (1998), high levels of trust have been linked to positive outcomes. If the town council and the residents trust each other in that the council is guaranteed that residents will pay their rates and the resident knows that the council will deliver services, there would be no complaints of poor service delivery and there would be no need for mistrust.

The findings in section 4.5 have also shown that residents of Chiredzi also participate in the improvement of service delivery through political representation by their councillors in the Council. They vote for their councillors to represent them and to air their grievances to the council. This is supported by the ACPD (2004:3), which holds citizens should choose councillors who represent their local interests rather than a political faction and desist from voting because they are politically aligned to their party. The councillor's job is to ensure that local government authorities are held accountable and to ensure that demands of both the individual and community are better presented (Khrishna, 2000:43). It is, however, evident from the findings that, political office bearers wind up time in meetings by causing political squabbles which then means that they dedicate very little time to holding the council accountable for the betterment of service delivery issues. In section 3.1.7. the findings have shown that sometimes it is the residents who are not willing to cooperate with their ward councillor mainly because they are not from the political party to which they belong thus the

need to work with civic organisations and the office of the district administrator to help citizens understand that councillors represent their interests not the interests of political parties.

This issue of representation by councillors fits well into the social capital networks narrative as people are brought together by their political affiliation. Social networks refer to groups of people that are connected to each other by a specific thing (Smith et al, 2009:123). From the findings of this research, I established that there are networks of politicians that belong to the same political party and residents that are aligned to different political parties also. Residents themselves can also be grouped into networks of those who agree with council decisions or are loyal to council and residents who do not side or trust the council to deliver anything. As put across by Young (2014:39), social networks work as channels and tools through which norms generated from trust levels in society are shared.

The polarization and politicization that Chiredzi residents speak of in section 3.1.7 is caused by differences in beliefs between networks of the people in the meetings. One is likely to side with individuals that are within their network thus residents are more likely to attend meetings that are initiated by a councillor from their political party than those chaired by a councillor from the opposition. The political network that one belongs to will in most cases determine who they will vote for as shown by Sachikonye's research of citizen participation in Glenview Harare where a participant noted that they only voted for their councillor because he belongs to their political party (Sachikonye, 2018:57, & ACPD, 2004). Social networks are also based on trust which then means that people from different networks might find it hard to trust each other. As a result of this mistrust, we have tensions which then cause misunderstanding and chaos at the expense of cooperation to achieve a common goal (Holdar & Zakharchenko, 2002:9). This shows that there is a greater need for citizen and politicians' education on participation for the improvement of service delivery such that they learn to put their political differences aside and build good networks which are built on the strength of their internal bonding ties and draws on an array of external knowledge and information resources (Falk, 2000:1). This education can be informal in which the politicians and the residents can participate in.

3.2.2. Unpacking the different channels of participation in Chiredzi.

From section 4.6, we have established that there are different channels of participation in Chiredzi and these are ward meetings, council meetings, budget consultations and social media. These channels are in line with Zimbabwe's local government directive which advocates for

the use of a variety of instruments to encourage citizens to participate such as government gazette, notices calling for objections in the newspapers, public notices at local authority's offices, ward development committees and gives the citizens the right to attend council meetings (Mapuva, 2011: 9). The findings have shown that some residents use these channels whilst others do not use any at all. Citizens have shown that they do use ward committee meetings, however, they tend to become more of political meetings rather than development meetings. This seems to be the case around Zimbabwe as noted by Mandiyanike *et al* (2017:39) who held that meetings that take place within these development committees in communities tend to be organised along political lines which then distracts those that are not politically inclined or opposed to a particular party. The organisation of meetings along political lines speaks of political networks that exist in society which then means that those from the same political party are likely to side with each other regardless of the matter at hand. Because of this, if one does not belong to the political party which the ward councillor belongs to, chances are they do not take interest in the meeting even though they reside in the same ward. Ward committees serve as a very important channel of communication for informing municipalities about the needs, preferences, and problems in their communities (Gaventa, 2004:8). If, however, residents do not cooperate because of their alignment to different networks, it will be impossible to produce positive results.

The UCA of Zimbabwe (2006) provides that participatory budgeting promotes civic interest and participation to promote accountability and transparency in local public finance and budgeting. As per the findings of this research in section 4.6, citizens fund the budget through their rates payments as such they should be able to have a say in what their money is used for. This supports the argument that citizens and taxpayers have the right to know how their money is being used. In this light, participatory budgeting will help with ensuring transparency from the local government institutions as citizens will have access to comprehensive, accurate and useful information on how their finances are used or are to be used ((ACPP, 2002 & Chirisa and Kawadza, 2011:60). Some Chiredzi residents have shown that they attend these budgets, however they do not see the usefulness of the budget meetings as the budget will most likely be eroded by inflation or is consumed by council by officials through corruption. Literature has also shown that indeed officials can be corrupt which then undermines budgets   (Mapuva & Muyengwa, 2012: 125, Muchadenyika, 2014 Mabika, 2015). It has been noted by Mapuva & Muyengwa (2012) that implementation of the budgets might fail due to rampant corruption

within municipalities and town Councils such that citizens might end up not participating at all.

One can argue that participatory budgeting is meant to build trust within the citizens and the council, however, from the findings, citizens do not fully trust that the council can use the budget to address their needs. The ACPP (2002: 3) stated that citizens need to be involved in the production of local and national budgets and examining of public accounts, they have a right to decide how their levies and taxes will be used. The findings of this research have revealed accusations of funds being diverted through corruption. Residents suggest that what their levies and taxes should be used for can be ignored thereby causing residents to give up on participating. This speaks to the social capital notion of trust in which the trust that individuals have in each other influences their actions (Fukuyana 1995). In this instance, when residents of Chiredzi do not trust the council to implement the said budget, they will not participate, but when they trust them to, they will participate in the drafting of the budget. This is supported by Fukuyana (1995) who notes that where there are low levels of trust, people are not likely going to cooperate with each other which then leads to individualism.

Findings have also shown that some Chiredzi residents participate through attending council meetings in section 4.6 whilst some have never attended a single meeting at the council. Attending council meetings is a right that every citizen in Zimbabwe has and a platform for participation where the councillors hold the administrative officials accountable publicly. However, Sachikonye's study on citizen participation in Glenview Harare showed that some citizens do not understand the language used in council meetings thus they tend to shy away from the meetings (Sachikonye, 2018: 70). This echoes the concerns of some of the citizens of Chiredzi who feel like they are not educated enough to attend and contribute to these meetings. If a lot of citizens feel this way, it means that only a few will actively participate, and the majority will beat the mercy of the decisions made on their behalf by the minority. The fact that some attend meetings whilst some do not already suggests that there is a division between the residents in Chiredzi and this divide can be based on educational backgrounds and social status. As shown in Chapter 2, an individual can decide to participate or associate with others in his or her community because of his own learned beliefs (Hardin, 2002; Rose, 2007). We thus have a network of the educated and a network of those who feel are not educated enough to attend meetings. Because of this, it is difficult to achieve a common goal as the networks are most likely to treat each other with suspicion (i.e. lack of trust). Communities endowed with a diverse stock of social networks and civic associations are in a stronger position to confront

poverty and vulnerability including service delivery through working together (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000:226). Because of the divide we have established from the findings, working together may be difficult as some shy away thereby making it difficult to work together to achieve a common goal.

3.2.3. Unpacking the possibilities and limitations of participation in Chiredzi.

From the findings in section 4.4, we have established that citizens do participate in one way or the other however, there are also limitations to participation that take place. The limitations to participation ranges from polarisation, politicisation, lack of understanding of budgets for example. In section 4.6, the findings have shown that ward committee's meetings and council meetings end up becoming like political campaigns which then frustrates some residents. This echoes the sentiments of Mandiyanike *et al.* (2017:39) who noted that, meetings that take place within these development committees in communities tend to be organised along political lines which distracts those that are not politically inclined to the councillor's political party. This limits the participation of some who are either not interested in politics or aligned with the said political party. These challenges can be avoided through improving citizen engagement skills, public education on the benefits of participating and ensuring the free flow of information to all citizens such that no one is left behind (Holdar & Zakharchenko, 2002:9).

Politicians also need to be educated on their roles and responsibilities as councillors such that their meetings with residents do not become political meetings as per the findings of this research. To ensure that citizens are educated, there is a need for collaboration between the recipients, and administrators of various government policies, reforms, and initiatives to ensure that citizens are aware of the policies and to ensure their effective implementation (McNeil, 2017:2). The continued politicisation of meetings speaks to the aspect of social norms as it is repeated. Though it is not written that ward and council meetings should become political playgrounds, individuals just find themselves conforming to the norm Gavac *et al* (2014). We have also established that some residents do not understand the Council language and how budgets are drafted and the calculation of rates. This means that they do not understand the dynamics behind budgets as such they do not see the need to attend budget meetings thereby limiting participation. The fact that some do not understand how rates are calculated also means that they might not see the need to pay the rates after all thereby limiting participation. Ensuring that all residents understand the budget will also help in mitigating the lack of trust between

the council and the residents in terms of the drafting of the budgets and its implementation thereby improving the working relationship.

The findings have also shown that there is corruption in council affairs and fatigue on the side of the residents which then leads to lack of trust between the parties. As noted by Khrishma (2000:438), democracy and its institutions can only flourish when citizens have trust in them. This trust is gained through interaction with the citizens and this interaction comes through allowing citizens to participate and contribute to issues that affect them. The more the people are drawn into the democratic processes through participation, the more the democracy becomes legitimized across a wider domain. Corruption, however, mars the trust that is between the citizens to an extent that there are low levels of trust. Where there are low levels of trust, it is difficult to attain a positive result (Rahn and Transue, 1998). Welch *et al.* (2005) also noted that the amount of trust inherent in actors of the same society such as trustworthy, solidarity and familiarity leads to moral obligation and reciprocity which then ultimately result in norms and networks whether weak, strong, formal or informal. This means that if the council continues to be corrupt, citizens will reciprocate by not being active and not paying their rates, however, if the council is trustworthy, it will gain the trust of citizens which then makes participation easier.

The findings have revealed that some residents do not pay their rates citing economic difficulties whilst some claim that the political atmosphere is not conducive for participation. There are some, however, who believe that the environment does not determine whether one participates or not, citing that one participates because they have a duty to do so. As argued by Irvin and Stansbury (2005) residents associations are usually dominated by those who are economically well-off to attend meetings whilst the poor cannot attend as they will be striving to provide for their families. This one can argue, speaks to the fact that some do not participate due to economic difficulties. Instead of channelling their money towards rates payment, one would rather use the little they have to feed their families. The economic crisis across the globe and the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe has also led local authorities to be content with the shortage of resources to provide services in communities (Mapuva, 2011:6). Because there is already an economic crisis in the country, failure to pay rates by the residents will further create a gap in the provision of services and the cycle of poor service delivery continues. There is therefore a need for the economic climate to be fixed so that all can afford to pay their rates and if officials desist from being corrupt, attain proper delivery of services. It noted that the

challenges that councils face are brought about by political and government interference in council business (Muchadenyika, 2014: 1374). The national government must thus grant the councils the autonomy that they have such that councils are not seen as political entities. When they are treated as political entities, citizens shy away from participating as per the findings.

Societal and religious norms also have a bearing on whether one will participate through attending council meetings for example or interact with other residents for the improvement of better service delivery. As put across by Gavac et al (2014), in group dynamics, people in a group have common interests and they conform to the norms of the group to which they belong such that if the group increases or becomes the strongest, it can set the standard for the community. In the findings of this research, we have established that some do not attend meetings because they fall on a Saturday which is their set day of worship. This means that, if there are many other residents whose beliefs do not allow them to attend meetings on a Saturday as it is a day set apart for their worshipping, we already have many people absent in meetings in which vital decisions would be made and decisions are made on their behalf without them putting their input. People with the same norms and values create their own networks which then means that whatever they agree on as a network can have a negative or positive impact on participation in service delivery issues.

3.2.4. How the council and the citizens can cooperate to improve service delivery in Chiredzi.

From the findings, we have established that there is to some extent participation and some cooperation   between the town council and the residents. The participation and cooperation is limited by factors such as the non-payment of rates, corruption, the inability to grasp concepts and politicisation of meetings. Under the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe, local and provincial councils are mandated to and obliged to raise their own funds through rates, deliver services and include residents in decision making. This means that for the council to function it needs money from residents. The fact that some residents are unwilling to pay their rates then limits the provision of services by the council. As under possibilities and limitations to participation, the unwillingness to pay rates also stems from the strained economic environment and the lack of trust between the town council and the residents. Trust in the words of Falk *et al* (2000:104) *"Inheres in the situated, observable and accountable reciprocity of every micro interaction."*

This means that there must be an element of reciprocity in the relationship between the town council and the residents and the absence of that reciprocity creates a strain in the relationship.

What then needs to happen is for both parties to find a way to work together to achieve a common goal which is that of attaining proper service delivery. Working together will require reciprocity as per social capital's trust aspect and partnership through social networks. A starting point would be educating the residents on citizen participation in local government service delivery. Other than awareness to hold officials accountable, workshops should also be held to strengthen citizen's knowledge of their rights and responsibilities under local government legislation (Grant, 2002:9). When residents are made aware of their rights and responsibilities under local government, it is then apparent that the council plays its role such that citizens build trust in them and when trust is built, participation is guaranteed.

From the findings, it is evident that there is corruption in the town council. The continued mention of corruption shows that corruption has been normalised as such it has become a norm. According to Gavac *et al.* (2014: 34), norms "define the boundaries of what is appropriate and expected in a situation or a group". For the council and the residents to work together, it is important that what had become the norm is reversed such that a harmonious relationship is created. Corruption destroys trust whereas that trust is needed if we are to have positive outcomes. The starting point to putting an end to corruption for the good of Chiredzi would be to hold the officials accountable. We have already found in section 4.8 that civil society organisations have been working to hold the council accountable and one would argue this is the first step to correcting corruption issues. This is in line with what Chirisa and Kawadza (2011:60) meant when they mentioned that citizen participation in service delivery can be fostered by civil society organisations such as non-governmental organisations which have a major role to play in local government by making the local government institutions accountable in their actions to the public they serve (Chirisa and Kawadza,2011:60). Although accountability on the side of officials is a good move, it can create tensions within political networks and the relationship between the council and the Civil society organisations. As shown in the literature, if one decides to go against what has been considered a norm, they are treated as a threat (Gavac *et al.*,2014). How the council views civil society organisations should not be a deterrent to holding them accountable for a good cause. One can argue that the fear of getting arrested might put the council officials on track such that they do away with corruption and work for a good cause. In this research, we have established that there is some

level of co-operation from the council and the citizens though there is still room for improvement from both parties.

3.2.5. Conclusion

The first section of this chapter was a discussion of the findings in which responses from the citizens were discussed before the data was interpreted. After discussing the findings, this chapter then went on to analyse the findings linking them to the research objectives. This section has been able to bring out resident's views on service delivery in Chiredzi and how they have been participating to improve service delivery. From the findings, the chapter highlighted that although citizens have cited their various ways of participating, they feel that the bulk of the issue remains with the Chiredzi town Council. Residents have blamed the council of corruption citing that their participation does not yield many results especially in the payment of rates as the funds will be diverted. Corruption has breached the trust between the residents of Chiredzi and the town Council and this lack of trust has made citizen participation difficult. Citizens have, however, through Civil Society Organisations (UCHIRRA) held Chiredzi officials accountable by reporting corruption to government authorities.

Others have blamed their lack of participation on politicisation of political meetings facilitated by ward councillors stating that the meetings are turned into political party meetings thereby excluding those who are not interested in party politics. Politicisation then leads to the need for proper education on the rights and responsibilities of both residents and political office bearers on their participation in local government service delivery as some see participation as an option and not a necessity. This chapter also highlighted that citizens view the current social, political, and economic conditions in Zimbabwe as not being conducive for citizen participation. Some participants noted that economic difficulties make it difficult to participate, others held that they fear being misinterpreted whilst others felt that the environment is highly politicised which makes participation difficult. Others have, however, noted that participation has nothing to do with the environment rather it is a   decision one makes for themselves and others. In summary, the findings have revealed that there is citizen participation, however, citizen participation is limited by politicisation of council affairs in ward committees, ignorance and lack of interest to participate on the part of the citizens, corruption which leads to lack of trust, inflation and lack of education on participation in local government service delivery.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

This research sought to answer the question "*how are Chiredzi residents participating to improve services delivered by the Chiredzi town Council*". The main objective of this research was to get a deeper understanding of citizen participation in Zimbabwe's small towns using Chiredzi town Council as a case study. The subsidiary objectives were (a) to understand existing participatory structures in Chiredzi (b) understand the different forms of participation in Chiredzi (c) understand the possibilities and limitations to citizen participation in Chiredzi (d) explain how Chiredzi town Council and citizens can cooperate to improve service delivery.

To answer the question and to address the objectives, the research adopted a qualitative research design. A qualitative research design helped me as the researcher to understand the lived experiences of Chiredzi residents and to describe the existing phenomena. I then adopted a constructivist research paradigm which helped to understand how Chiredzi residents construct reality for themselves and it also allowed me to gather data from different people as it holds that the world cannot be fully understood through the lens of one person. A qualitative case study research methodology was then adopted as it allows one to extensively study a single unit for the purposes of understanding a larger class. In this research, I studied two units which were Chiredzi Town Council and Chiredzi residents. The case study adopted was an explanatory one as I sought to explain why there are service delivery problems in Chiredzi and how citizens have been participating to improve the situation. To draw participants that would help to answer the research question and address the objectives, I qualitatively sampled participants using the convenient sampling method that allowed me to select participants that were readily available. 10 people were sampled from Chiredzi residents, CSO members and Officials to provide insight on how citizen participation can contribute to enhance service delivery. Different data collection methods were used in this research and these are semi-structured telephone interviews and document analysis. After collecting the raw data, I transcribed it, processed it through editing, coding and classified the codes to generate themes that became the key findings of the study.

4.1. Literature and Theoretical Underpinnings

Chapter 2 also showed the different types of participation and established that the type of participation adopted depends on the needs of local people and prevailing social, political, and economic conditions. It showed that there is a type of participation in which citizens have the driving force when it comes to decision making and that there is participation in which citizens

are given limited power in decision making whilst in some cases, citizens become partners with authorities. It has shown that there are also bad forms of participation which are manipulation and passive participation in which citizens are informed of readymade decisions This then moves from the democratic aspect of governance which citizen inclusion sought to strengthen and undermines citizen participation.

The literature review also showed that there are various ways in which citizens can participate in local government service delivery. These ways include participation through CSO's, participatory budgeting and political participation. CSO's play an important role in fostering citizen participation in service delivery. They have a mandate of ensuring that citizens understand their value as citizens such that the principles of good governance are upheld together with good ethics and good life. In other words, CSO's keep local government authorities accountable in their actions to the public they serve. CSO's have been accused of distracting council business by blowing issues out of proportion using social media. They are also said to be dominated by the economically well-off as the poor will be looking for ways to make means meet as such, they are mostly unable to attend meetings.

The literature showed that participatory budgeting which is another way in which citizens can participate in service delivery. In Zimbabwe, participatory budgeting is provided for in the Urban Councils Act of Zimbabwe 2006 which provides that participatory budgeting promotes civic interest and participation to promote accountability and transparency in local public finance and budgeting. Using the literature, the thesis argues that participatory budgeting is complex and demands different types of skills and knowledge which most citizens do not possess, thus the need to put in place mechanisms that will enable citizens to participate fully.

The literature revealed that citizens can also participate through political participation. Citizens vote for a representative in the form of a ward councillor thus it is a form of indirect participation. To ensure the effectiveness of political participation, widespread voter education is needed. Citizens should be educated on the need to vote for candidates that represent their interests rather than vote for someone only because they are aligned with their political party. Literature has also shown that citizens at times do not attend meetings at ward level as they are usually turned into political meetings and focus is diverted from the important issues to political differences. This makes some residents uncomfortable with attending meetings which   then calls for the need to educate councillors on their roles and responsibilities in their wards as representatives of citizens.

Chapter 2 further discussed the legislative provisions and institutional structures put in place to promote citizen participation in Zimbabwe's local government. It has shown that there are indeed participation structures put in place, but they are either not fully used or are sabotaged by political differences, ignorance, and polarization. It has also been highlighted that there is a need for citizens to be educated on their rights and responsibilities in service delivery in such.

From chapter 2 it was established that citizen participation has been widely adopted in the world's democracies to strengthen democratic institutions and to give citizens the driving force in issues that affect their livelihoods. Through citizen participation, service delivery can be improved as participation promotes transparency, accountability and ensures that there is proper sharing of power between citizens and authorities. The issue, however, has been that of ensuring that citizen's potential to participate is fully realised.

Chapter 2 also painted a picture of service delivery in Zimbabwe. From the literature, it was evident that there has been poor service delivery in Zimbabwe, Chiredzi included and this poor service delivery has been blamed solely on the local authorities, corruption, and polarisation, however, the role that citizens play in local government service delivery is hardly mentioned. This thesis wanted to find out what role citizens can play to contribute to improving service delivery. This thesis argued that citizen participation is important in the process of enhancing the provision of basic services in Zimbabwe.

The thesis used the social capital theory as a lens to analyse citizen participation. Social capital has three aspects to it, and these are networks, trust and norms. It is premised on the notion of co-operation between individuals and groups to achieve a common goal. These groups and individuals are brought together by social networks. In this research, the thesis has established from the literature that there are networks of the local authorities and citizens, political officials, and citizens and these are brought together by the need to achieve service delivery. These networks are made stronger by the trust aspect. This trust is made possible by the process of reciprocation. This means that citizens should trust local authorities to provide services whilst local authorities should trust citizens to pay their rates for example. Social capital is also premised on the idea that networks follow certain norms as such how the individuals and groups behave or   cooperate will be based on what has been widely accepted in these networks. The empirical findings were used to understand how networks, trust and norms affected or influence the provision of basic services by the Chiredzi Town Council.

4.2. Summary of the Empirical findings

Chapter 3 laid down the findings of the research and analysed   the findings to help answer the research question: how *are Chiredzi citizens participating to improve services delivered by Chiredzi Town council?*. The research found that citizens do participate though the bulk of participation is limited to the payments of rates. Very few of the participants noted that they use other participatory structures such as ward meetings and budget consultations with the majority citing that the meetings are politicized hence, they lose interest in them which then puts a strain on participation levels. Others have cited that they feel that they are not educated enough to attend budget consultations as such they shy away from participating. This then limits the input of citizens in service delivery issues.

The research also found that citizens do make use of resident's associations (UCHIRRA) and other civil society organisations (e.g. CHISA) to voice their concerns to the town Council. It has shown that civil society organisations are playing their part when it comes to holding officials accountable especially when it comes to issues relating to corruption and misuse of funds by reporting them to government authorities. It is not only civil society organisations that are playing their part, some councillors also. This research has established that some councillors are making use of the advance in technology to bring their ward residents together and to reduce the dangers of gatherings especially during Covid-19 pandemic. The findings have, however, shown that there is a need to educate citizens on how to handle political differences and focus on issues that are beneficial to all.

It was also established that there are indeed limitations to participation and some of these limitations have to do with the decline in trust levels between the residents and the council. Residents of Chiredzi have noted that there is rampant corruption in the council such that the money they pay as rates is used for other things. This makes it difficult for residents to trust that they will receive the services they pay for. The lack of trust also applies to the Town Council not trusting the residents to pay for the service they get as they cite incapacitation due to economic hardships. It has also been shown that there is a need to educate political office bearers on their roles and responsibilities such that they do not turn service delivery meetings into political meetings at the expense of progress. Societal norms and networks have also been said to affect the possibilities of participation as others cited that meetings usually take place on weekends when they have religious commitments as such they cannot participate in these meetings.

The findings have been able to address the research question and the objectives and shown that citizen participation exists, but better citizen participation is required to improve service delivery in Chiredzi.

4.3. Study Contribution

Much of the literature focuses more on the failures of local government authorities to provide basic services to its residents. This study contributes to the body of knowledge by providing additional insights on the role citizens can play to enhance local government service delivery using the town of Chiredzi as a case study.

4.4. Study Recommendations

I recommend that more research be done on the roles and responsibilities of citizens in service delivery to raise awareness and educate citizens. It was clear from the findings that most citizens still think that it is the sole duty of local authorities to provide services without them being involved.

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APPENDIX

Ethics clearance certificate

Human Ethics subcommittee
Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee
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RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

13/10/2020

Miss Blessing MATSILELE

Email: g16m5475@campus.ru.ac.za

Review Reference: 2020-1513-4727

Dear Mr Lungile Penxa

Title: An analysis of citizen participation in service delivery issues in Zimbabwe: A case study of Chiredzi town council.

Principal Investigator: Mr Lungile Penxa

Collaborators: Miss Blessing Matsilele,

This letter confirms that the above research proposal has been reviewed and **APPROVED** by the Rhodes University Human Ethics Committee (RU-HEC). Your
Approval number is: 2020-1513-4727

Approval has been granted for 1 year. An annual progress report will be required in order to renew approval for an additional period. You will receive an email notifying when the annual report is due.

Please ensure that the ethical standards committee is notified should any substantive change(s) be made, for whatever reason, during the research process. This includes changes in investigators. Please also ensure that a brief report is submitted to the ethics committee on the completion of the research. The purpose of this report is to indicate whether the research was conducted successfully, if any aspects could not be completed, or if any problems arose that the ethical standards committee should be aware of. If a thesis or dissertation arising from this research is submitted to the library's electronic theses and dissertations (ETD) repository, please notify the committee of the date of submission and/or any reference or cataloging number allocated. Sincerely,

Prof Arthur Webb

Chair: Rhodes University

Human Ethics Committee,

RU-HEC cc: Mr. Siyanda

Manqele - Ethics Coordinator

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview questions for Chiredzi Residents

-Do you know the role, obligations and functions of Chiredzi town council?

- Would you say the council has been able to fully execute these duties? If so, why do you say so? If not, why do you say so?

-In what ways can you say the council has been effective and responsive?

- Have you ever been to the town council before? If yes, to do what? If not, why not?

-Have you ever attended any council meeting?

-As a resident of chiredzi , what role have you been playing to improve service delivery?

-What are the major processes and mechanisms of citizen participation that you have encountered or participated in?

-How frequent do you interact with other citizens through these channels?

-Do you think your contribution to council affairs through these channels is significant enough to improve the services that the council provides?

- What hinders you from participating?

-What is your understanding of citizen participation in town council affairs?

-What has the council done to promote citizen participation in service delivery?

-Do you think the current national and local environment is conducive for citizen participation?

Researcher contact details: Blessinglee79@gmail.com
                                              0766 406 767

Supervisor contact details: L.Penxa@ru.ac.za.

Interview Questions for Civil Society Organisations

-Can you give an overview of your organisation' main objectives and its foundations.

- How does the work that you do relate to citizen participation for service delivery issues?

-Do you have any institutional and legal frameworks that bind and guide your organisation in fostering citizen participation in local council affairs?

-Are these frameworks effective enough to enhance your contribution to Citizen participation and the delivery of services?

-What are the major channels that you use to engage with the citizens and the town council?

-How best can you describe your relationship with the municipal council in terms of your role of facilitating and advocating for civic engagement?

-What are the major observable values or impacts achieved from civic participation in urban governance processes?

-What are the major challenges that you encounter in facilitating collaboration and partnership between the citizens and the town council.

-How best can citizen participation in urban governance processes be improved in order to positively impact on the services provided by the council?

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Interview Questions for Political Office Bearers

1.Which ward do you represent and what year were you elected to office?

2.From the day you were elected up to now, how have you ensured that residents are involved in service delivery issues?

3.Are there any benefits associated with citizen participation in council Affairs?

4. How best can you describe the relationship between politicians, the town council and civil society organisations in advancing citizen participation?

5. What have been the major challenges you have encountered in using the available mechanisms for citizen participation?

6. Are there any arrangements to address these challenges?

7. How many times do you meets with the residents to update them of service delivery issues or to engage with them on the various issues affecting them?

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