social movements

collaboration

public

solidarity

voting

community

mobilisation

elections

RETHINKING

government

rural

civil society

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CITIZENS AND

group

local

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DEMOCRACY

engagement

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trade unions

protests

co-creation

associations

Tendai Murisa

Rethinking Citizens And Democracy

Tendai Murisa

SIVI PUBLISHING

9 781779 298614

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INTRODUCTION: CITIZENS AND DEMOCRACY

"It is citizens - ordinary men and women, determined to forge their own future -- who throughout history have sparked all the great change and progress."

– Barack Obama

1.1 INTRODUCTION

What makes a democracy? In many instances, democracy has been framed as consisting of competition for public office. Based on this line of thinking the process of democratisation has mostly focused on carrying out reforms to ensure an equal playing field leading to free and fair elections. Indeed, the holding of 'free and fair elections' at regular intervals has become the standard for democracy across the entire globe. Significant resources have been devoted towards holding elections and at times without the intention to do so, our citizens have also been led to thinking that their only role in a democracy is to elect into office, public officials and wait for them to perform. I call this messianic politics. But what if there is another way of looking at democracy. Elections are without a doubt an important aspect of our democracy but is that adequate for citizens? The argument presented in this collection of essays is 'elections are a necessary but not sufficient condition for the attainment of democracy'. Then the question that follows naturally is, "what makes up the other part of democracy?" I propose that we consider the different forms of actions that citizens engage in with each other on a daily basis. The different forms of engagement entailing protests, mutal support, and various other acts of solidarity play an important role in improving prospects for wellbeing, enhancing security and providing a sense of identity.

The discussion presented here provides a basis for thinking through how civic capacities emerge, how they are nurtured and the actual forms that they take using case study materials from Zimbabwe. The study intends to challenge, (i) the limited way we have understood democracy; (ii) the ways in which we have studied citizens' actions as peripheral to democracy whilst they are the incubators of democratic processes and (iii), the assumptions about what it takes to create such networks - many within urban spaces have not adequately created such forms of cooperation for a variety of reasons including an expectation that these should be funded. There are very few studies that have focused on what citizens do with each other, for each other and what they do with institutions, especially in urban settings.

The recasting of what citizens do with each other as part of democracy entails a new and urgent agenda to revisit where and how citizens cooperate with each other. The literature (see for instance Krishnaswami,

1970; Kaswan, 2014) on associations, networks, unions is vast but few of those studies focus on or create a relationship between these voluntary mechanisms and democracy. For instance (Krishnaswami, 1970) found that cooperation among the politically weak such as farmers and consumers is a powerful tool for resisting control, influence and exploitation by stronger groups such as traders and moneylenders. When such weak groups rally around their common issues, they become the owners of their groups and can protect themselves against economic exploitation. More recently Kaswan (2014) studied the role of cooperatives in stimulating democracy among the poor. The author highlights the challenges such as power differentials, internal dynamics and the strain between internal and external dynamics as affecting the democracy among impoverished communities. In the main, the focus has mostly been on what formal institutions do (either the state or NGOs). However the more we look at the broader political and systemic convulsions that have taken place since the Arab Spring we realize that the core actors or agents of change are not necessarily NGOs or related institutions but ordinary people working at times within recently set-up formations that leverage technology for raising attention to the issues at hand or they could be actors from either business or even the NGO space but will move out of the confines or stated missions of their organisations to work alongside other citizens sharing similar concerns.

The civic capacities under study are highly fluid - in one instance they may manifest as membership-based associations, in another, they could just be an ad-hoc network of concerned citizens and in another, we could find an NGO at the centre of the organizing. We do not have a definite model on how they are established and through this study, we will seek to gain a more in-depth knowledge of the different trends within these spaces. There is evidence from within Zimbabwe and elsewhere of the re-awakening of citizen-based processes and politics.

1.2 CITIZENS WITH EACH OTHER

Citizens do a lot with each other and for each other. This long-established practice of lives lived in solidarity and mutuality are the most decisive indicator of 'new inclusive governance arrangements'. Democracy,

in such daily practices of life, humanity, and citizenship, is a process in which citizens take responsibility for most of what happens around them. Capturing this reality and reflecting its core ethos defines the contours of inclusive approaches to governance that harness local socio-cultural realities. Democratic governance can and should be viewed as a process, a way of life, rather, in which citizens take responsibility for as much as possible of what happens around them' (Ostrom, 1993:7). The existing frameworks of governance are necessary, but insufficient, to capture the reality of human interactions in the governance of their daily lives and development. There is a need for a more holistic approach that pays as much attention to the 'People Area'[1] and how leadership happens in this area as opposed to using the State area as the premise of analysis. What would such a framework of governance look like? In 2009 UNCTAD produced a report on 'Development Governance' where they suggested that:

- The relationship between the governed and the governors should be founded on four factors:

    i.   rules that define the power-map.

    ii.   rights that limit discretion and power.

    iii. obligations that define the mandate of the governors and

    iv.   values that set parameters for both vertical and horizontal relationships.

- That the State acts only in the interests of its citizens and acts together with the citizens to co-create development and governance solutions,

- That representation is not a substitution of Agency, but delegation on that aspect of agency that requires specialized skill and attention (e.g. law-making). That even in such instances the Legislature and executive will first determine objectively and subjectively the

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1   The People Area is an emerging description of spaces that are mostly dominated by initiatives established and led by people. These vary from loose adhoc initiatives of survival to more long-term and structured associational platforms responsive for cohering solidarity, welfare and even production.

interest of citizens,

- That policy must be informed by evidence and only evolved to provide development solutions that are consensually determined.

The above suggests the need for a fundamental rethinking of how citizens are viewed, a shift from consumer citizen to value-creating citizen. There is a significant amount of evidence in the literature which provides insights into the capacities of citizens, what they can do on their own and identifies areas where they need support from the government.

For the purpose of this collection, we consider a citizen as 'one who shares in governing and being governed, in the best state he is the one who is best able and chooses to be governed and to govern with a view to the life of excellence' (Aristotle-edited by Everson 1988). In his treatise on the Social Contract, French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau (1754) observed that individuals surrender their ungoverned individual liberty for collective political power, and this to realise individual freedom-that lies at the heart of democracy. There is a need to find a way of re-connecting with this thinking especially when we are re-imagining governance frameworks that are inclusive and democratic.

The re-imagining of the public space (where citizens gather and interact with each other and officeholders) should include a new understanding of democracy itself to capture what others such as Mkandawire (2000, 2011) have called developmental democracy. Essentially developmental democracy whilst acknowledging the importance of civil and political freedoms such as the right to vote, participation and freedom of association also accords equal weight to the socio-economic imperatives for equitable development within the country. Such a position can potentially lead to a more comprehensive political contract between the governors (officeholders) and the governed (citizens). It also potentially raises the bar of performance amongst public officials.

Citizens that are value-creating[2] of necessity cooperate with each other and the State in ways that constitute inclusive ways of governing life in common. What citizens do within their organizations, unions and associations is an

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2   Value creation in this instance is understood as the public problem solving work done by individuals.

integral part of what democracy and governance are. This transcends the fixation with what formal institutions of state or civil society do for citizens. Inclusive governance is fundamentally about how livelihoods are created and sustained. In this regard, the key actors, and agents of socio-economic and political transformation in Zimbabwe are not necessarily NGOs or external interlocutors, but rather ordinary people working in partnership with each other or acting in solidarity within local associations of varying sizes." Others, such as colleagues at The Kettering Foundation have for over three decades been pre-occupied with the question 'what makes democracy work as it should?'. In answering that question, they have mostly focused on what citizens do with each other in their communities in resolving public problems. This is not some post-modern thinking that imagines an existence outside of the state, but rather a quest to understand how 'a diverse body of citizens joined together in ever changing alliances to make choices about how to advance their common well-being' (Mathews 1999:1). Theirs is an attempt at developing a democracy that integrates two forces that have been in conflict ever since the emergence of electoral-based democracy. The two contending forces can be described as (i) power is in representative government and (ii) power comes from direct citizen action. The kind of democracy being envisaged is broader than the narrow framing around elections. It can thrive only when communities of citizens take responsibility for what happens and who can make sound decisions about their future. In other words, there is a need for an engaged citizenry.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Experiences from the field and practice aptly demonstrate a growing need to rethink governance processes, democracy and even development itself (see Murisa, 2020). There is a need to go beyond state-building and the pre-occupation with the nature, typology, and performance of formal institutions of governance to harnessing the intangible values of nation-building. This shift constitutes a more holistic conception of governance that privileges the value and importance of the spaces occupied by people (civil society) in shaping the processes and outcomes of development governance. It provides an opportunity to re-imagine governance as

a human development imperative. Concepts of identity, sovereignty, legitimacy, and ownership constitute a complex intangible currency in community and citizen daily interactions and conversations across the country. Many have sought to understand why despite years of economic crises Zimbabwe has not degenerated into a much deeper political crisis or chaos. The answer may lie in these intangible variables and forms of interaction referred to above. These intangibles do not create an alibi for State inaction or shortcomings, but they place a new premium on what happens amongst citizens in spite of and despite state or formal institutions inadequacies. The discussion in this and the following chapters suggests that this is an opportune time to begin to display these 'intangibles' in a quest for re-understanding factors underpinning the current crisis and crafting solutions for a way out.

The human elements within the people area enable us to re-imagine new measures of governance as a human development imperative. These human elements enable a critical and overdue departure from a pre-occupation with regime typology, the State area, and formal institutions.

Some of the questions to be answered in this book include,

i.   How do citizens come together to recreate livelihoods in an era of socio-economic and political crisis?

ii. How do citizens confront and engage power?

iii. What are the different roles that citizen-focused formations serve?

iv. How do these formations interface with existing official processes of governance?

Such a discussion requires a deep understanding of, on the one hand, the global zeitgeist around citizens and governance and, on the other, a comprehensive understanding of the Zimbabwean socio-economic and political context. It is within these contexts that citizens are engaged in an ongoing process of negotiations, framing, and shaping livelihoods through various forms of collective action. Whilst formal institutions and processes are important, these are often inadequate to address the nature and manifestations of crises that communities encounter in high distressed economic contexts. The alternatives that citizens create to address the shortcomings, inadequacies and excesses of formal institutions are central

to a holistic understanding of development governance and sustainable development in the Zimbabwean context.

1.4 Understanding the moment - citizens and the new global zeitgeist

Way back in 2015, Helga Nowotny in The Cunning of Uncertainty suggested that we live in what is called a risk society that is characterized by pervasive risks which emerge because of modernity, and these are restructuring how politics is being conducted and livelihoods are being generated. She argued that uncertainty is 'written into the script of life'. There are several uncertain conditions that states, and citizens have to engage with. Since the collapse of the cold war the assumptions around the 'end of history' have been overtaken by a 'clash of civilisations' and in Africa's case, it is the ongoing class-based wars/struggles on the distribution of the national cake. The rise of China as a global superpower and the attendant shifts, especially amongst the developed countries from globalist positions towards narrow nationalism (America First, Brexit) and the general rise of far-right movements suggest a new post-cold war order but not necessarily a consensus. Foreign policies of major donor countries are also constantly shifting in responses to a global political environment that is in flux. All these have created uncertainties, especially for global South countries.

It was suggested that when conditions are uncertain approaches to governance must also change. In this case, governance is understood as the ways in which power, authority and influence are deployed to affect public policies. There is a difference between uncertainty and risks. In many instances, conventional development work and even generic managerial and technocratic construct challenges as risks - where the probabilities of future outcomes are known, or at least can be estimated (Scoones, 2019). In this regard, practitioners have developed and deployed a paraphernalia of risk assessment and management tools that are mostly derived from engineering approaches. However, the adequacy of these is mostly limited to some challenges such as the designing of a bridge or a road. A risk-focused/avoidance approach implies that the future is controllable and that

a modernist vision of progress is achievable if only effective science and technocratic institutional control is applied.

However, there is another school of thought-which starts by asking what happens when in a crisis like Zimbabwe and future outcomes are not known, there are disputes about what outcomes are desired and when indeterminacy prevails in complex, interconnected systems then such approaches become redundant. Indeed, in many instances, citizens are caught in the trap of resolving complex and multifaceted problems with no clear formula. Others (see for instance Yankelovich, 1974) have called these "wicked problems". A problem is wicked when the diagnosis or definition is unclear, the location or cause is uncertain, and any effective action to deal with it requires narrowing the gap between what is and what ought to be, in the face of disagreement about the latter. Wicked problems are more human than technical and are so deeply embedded in the social fabric that they never completely go away. They are as tricky as they are aggressive. Each symptom exposes another problem in a never-ending chain. Given these characteristics, conventional strategies of goal setting, planning, and evaluation are not enough to overcome wicked problems. When problems are wicked, a shared understanding of the approximate nature of what people are confronting is more important than an immediate solution. Furthermore, the outcome, even after engaging the problem, remains highly uncertain.

Very few acknowledge the condition of uncertainty and the greater humility and vigilance required. Instead as Stirling (2019) states:

> Across technology, health, environment and global economies, loud voices on all sides vie to express messily unknown subjective uncertainties as if these were neatly quantified objective risks. However they are seen, the stakes are very high. Huge forces are pressuring for a state of uncertainty denial. What all this means, is that the drive for ostensibly objective probabilities is not innocent. Even if inadvertently, it helps shape reassuring policy storylines. And to those interested in 'business as usual', the apparent authority and clarity of simple number can offer a precious sense of stability.

Instead, there is an increased fascination with risk. An assumption/ preoccupation with the 'risk management of everything' when in fact attention to unknowns is more imperative. The consequences of such denialism can be devastating when events which individuals and institutions are not prepared for unfold, whether in the form of a financial crisis or a sudden repeat in climate change-induced droughts. Others (see for instance Nowotny, 2015; Scoones, 2019) have suggested that uncertainty defines our times. Every media headline seems to assert that things are uncertain and increasingly so (Scoones, 2019:5). The following figure is an attempt at demonstrating the uncertainties at play for citizens in Zimbabwe.
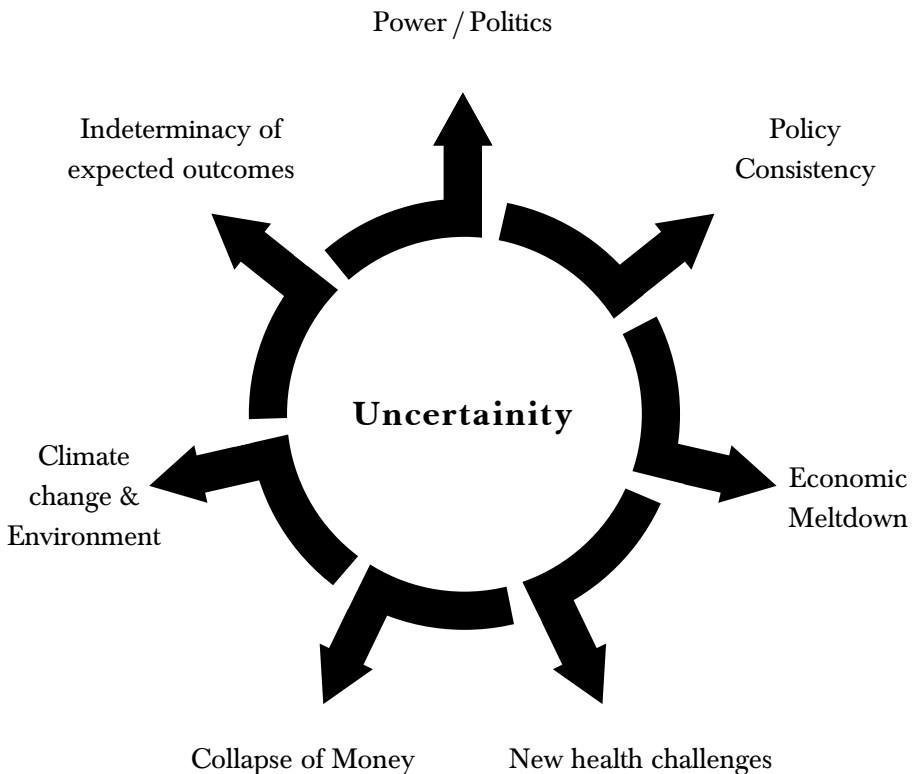
Figure 1-1- Uncertainty in Zimbabwe

Society in the 21st century has put faith in expert knowledge, more science and technology. It is assumed that more science, clearer insights, better plans may lead to a better set of solutions for today's problems. However, humanity faces a unique and bigger challenge. We often do not know that we do not know. In such situations, conventional current approaches to planning for the future, innovations, development, and notions of the economy become even more problematic and misleading.

Despite the evident weakness with the way things/institutions are run and decisions are made, things have not fallen apart globally and even at the national level. Grabel (2018) argues that there is a range of unsung people who hold things together. Rarely appreciated in the dominant frame of linear planning and thinking are the things that citizens do. In many countries, including Zimbabwe, citizens must deal/negotiate with multiple dimensions of uncertainty. In such circumstances, citizens navigate the world by deploying diverse sources of knowledge which are inclusive of formal technical knowledge and practical wisdom rooted in context-dependent experiential knowledge linked to values and practices. Combining these approaches and affirming local or what is generically referred to as indigenous knowledge is seen as part of an ongoing attempt to make sense of an uncertain world. Acting in an uncertain world requires enlisting a range of people and things. Could this be the moment for a shift from expert-based, top-down frameworks of governance towards more inclusive and just frameworks that are informed by what citizens are already doing?

1.5 Citizens in a Tenuous Public Sphere

The public sphere is subject to many interpretations. Odugbemi (2008) provides a more succinct description. He describes it thus.

> At the centre of this idea is the agora-the main political, civic religious and commercial centre of the ancient Greek city. It was here that citizens traded goods, information, concepts, and ideas to try to better their situations and impact the powers that governed them (Odugbemi, 2008:17).

In modern political philosophy the agora takes on many names including the public arena, public realm, public domain or public sphere. It represents that space between the state and the household where free and equal citizens come together to share information, to debate, to discuss or to deliberate on common concerns. The public space is thus the arena of interaction over the definition of public goods such as justice, values, morality and constant thinking about the best way of allocating public goods and ensuring social reproduction. One of the central questions in this discussion is how citizens affect the values of the public sphere. Borrowing from Alexander (2003) we observe that the premise of the public sphere is that society is not governed by power alone, rather, feelings for others matter and they are structured by the boundaries of solidarity. The critical issues for every social order are the manners in which solidarity (within the public space) is structured, governed, how far it extends and what it is composed of.

The ideal of a democratic governance framework can only be achieved through a complex arrangement of state and non-state institutions that seek to ensure that the political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights of all citizens are protected. The governance framework under discussion depends on an ecosystem of civic alliances, inclusive of local government processes, social norms, and deliberative practices that have an organic rather than an institutional quality. The availability or non-availability of these arrangements centrally shapes the quality of the democratic governance ecosystem. The ecosystem is sustained by an engaged citizenry through participatory processes and this sort of provides the lifeblood of democracy itself.

1.6 CITIZENS, POLITICS AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Democracy is a social rather than a political term to refer to a society marked by equality of social conditions with no ascriptive aristocracy, and all careers open to all citizens including the opportunities to be in government (Tocqueville, 1835). Democracy was about learning together.

The current conceptualization of democracy has mostly dwelt on the

rules of taking-over power, legitimation of rule, arrangement of governance systems and rarely does it talk about citizen politics. Instead, national legislation has devoted attention to qualifying what citizens can do by focusing on voting rights, rights of assembly, freedom of expression and speech in a prescriptive manner (see Box Text 1-1). These official processes are not adequately equipped to tap into the pulse of how citizens are engaged. Notably, the central ideas in democracy across different cultural spaces have historically been about; recognition, representation, participation, and ownership of both decision-making processes and outcomes. The failure to acknowledge and centre the role of citizens as co-creators of development and governance solutions to their daily existential challenges limits the potential of democracy as a system of governance.

What Are "Governing" Institutions?

Governing, at its most basic, can be thought of as the organization of collective efforts for collective well-being. The institutions that do the governing range from the local to the national level. They are the three branches of government, and they must also include nongovernment organizations, which are educational institutions, foundations, and civic associations. And these are not all the governing institutions. Whatever form they take, many of them suffer from declining public confidence and support.

Text Box 1-1

The ideal governance framework should be based on balancing power, making trade-offs, and ensuring civil liberties and more importantly, making sure that citizens are engaged in solving problems. These roles cannot be dispensed by an invested political elite alone, there is a need for a broadening of our understanding of how democratic governance works. The state and formal institutions are necessary but inadequate intermediaries

in the development and practice of democracy. Besides not, all the change needs to happen within government or must be led by the government, but most of the work of democracy is the work of citizens. The challenge in Zimbabwe and indeed in many other countries is that the idea of citizens is restricted mostly to voting[3]. In many cases, citizens are mostly referred to as voters. Although voting is an important function within liberal democracy, it is not the only manifestation or expression of citizenship. The traditional framework of looking at this relationship is summarized in Figure 1-2 where citizens are mostly seen either as voters or clients of government.

1

VOTERS
Articulate preference through elections

2

ELECTED OFFICIALS
Make decisions about level and type of government service

3

HEAD OF AGENCIES (Local and Central Govt)
Manage a professional agency so as to produce goods and services at most efficient level

4

STREET LEVEL PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
Produce local goods and services

5

CLIENTS
Receive goods and services produced by government

Based on Ostrom 1993

Figure 1-2: One Way Relationships Among Participants in Local Governance

3   See for example Logan, C., and Bratton, M., "Voters but not yet Citizens: The Weak Demand for Vertical Accountability in Africa's Unclaimed Democracies" Afrobarometer Working Paper No. 63., September 2006 https://afrobarometer.org/publications/wp63-voters-not-yet-citizens-weak-demand-vertical-acountability-africas-unclaimed

When not reduced to 'voters' in other instances, citizens have been equated to the work done by non-state actor institutions such as NGOs, human rights groups or associations, and unions.

Others (see, for instance, Briggs 2008:32-35) suggest that democracy owes an important debt to the theory and practice of local governance. This tradition distinguishes governance that consists of the set of norms, institutions, and practices for managing collective life from government– the official apparatus authorized and steered by popular will in democratic societies. Governance, which encompasses government as well as business and civil society roles and alliances, opens up a much wider range of possibilities for civic action. In Briggs' formulation democracy is about problem-solving, and we should focus on the arrangements that allow for vibrant governance systems.

The argument presented in this collection of essays does not seek to diminish the importance of elections, but instead, to broaden our appreciation of other processes that are necessary for democracy to thrive. Then the question one asks is 'what makes up the other part of democracy? We propose that we delve a bit more into what citizens actually do outside of voting once every five years or so. Following the pattern established by Ostrom (1993:7), we also consider the different forms of cooperation that citizens forge with each other on an everyday basis and, using Briggs' formulation, consider this cooperation as part of problem-solving that contributes significantly to the texture of a democracy.

1.7 Invigorating Citizenship

An essential challenge to the ideal democratic governance framework is that citizens may feel powerless or do not see the need to exercise control over their communities' and national futures. An inclusive society is only enabled if there is an acceptance of a common good justice. It is to the 'common good' that appeals to justice and equity must be made if they are to have resonance. The dominant approaches in our politics have created a schism between the rulers and the ruled. The rulers have over the years either made concessions on what citizens can do or have curtailed processes of broader citizen mobilisation. In the long run, this has created

an environment of uncertainty on what is permissible. However, we must take cognisance of the fact that citizens regardless of class, race and gender should be at the centre of our political process in a more significant way than the five minutes of voting accorded to them by the political class after every four or five years. Policy making should no longer be purely a technocratic top-down process but rather it should entail negotiation between the experts and targeted beneficiaries through platforms of co-production. Users must be centrally located within the decision-making matrix.

We have to start by acknowledging that most human life happens within local communities 4 and that democracy can only be nurtured at this level of sociability. It is worth reiterating that the efforts to transform the state as well as to strengthen civil society cannot be fully accomplished in the absence of the development and fostering in the population of a culture of responsible citizenry, which feeds both civil society as well as the governmental and political process (Doubon, 2007: 3). While some citizens can respond individually to changes in economic conditions, there is need to realise that in many instances of cooperation the sum of their collective action is greater than the sum of the different parts. The current political reforms have also missed out on the global zeitgeist, in 2002, the World Bank published a seminal three-volume study called Voices of the Poor, which for the first time explicitly recognized that their ultimate clients (the poor) did not only have needs, but they also had voices to express them. It would no longer be the job of the experts to assess and diagnose the needs of the poor; they would now be expected to listen to what the poor had to say. Outside assistance, therefore, would now shift toward helping the poor coordinate and articulate their voices more effectively so that they could design and carry out their initiatives (World Bank, 2002: 4).

1.8 Re-imagining Democracy

Political systems have evolved over time. Thomas Hobbes (1651) argued that in each of us can be found a representation of general humanity and that all acts are ultimately self-serving. That is, in a state of nature, humans would behave completely selfishly. He concludes that humanity's natural condition is a state of perpetual war, fear and amorality, and that

only government can hold a society together. He argued for the necessity and natural evolution of the social contract, a social construct in which individuals mutually unite into political societies, agreeing to abide by common rules and accept resultant duties to protect themselves and one another from whatever might come otherwise. His proposal however was not for a democratic order as we know it today but instead, he proposed a strong central government, one with the power of the biblical Leviathan (a sea creature), which would protect people from their own selfishness. Even though his prescription was not for a democratic order as we know it today, he acknowledged the need for cooperation within political societies.

Paleo-political anthropology studies[4] have demonstrated that long before their kingdoms and nation states were established our ancestors had found ways to cooperate for human survival whether as hunter-gatherers or as settled agriculturalists. It is these forms of cooperation that precede Greek philosophers who are said to have discovered democracy (see Mathews forthcoming). Fukuyama[5] writes,

> "Human beings never existed in a pre-social state. The idea that human beings at one time existed as isolated individuals, who interacted either through anarchic violence (Hobbes) or in pacific ignorance of one another (Rousseau), is not correct".

The kind of democracy under discussion is the one which assumes that there is no one of us that will make the best decision for others. We have to figure it all out for ourselves. In other words, democracy is about learning together. It is also based on balancing power, making trade-offs, and ensuring civil liberties. More important, it is about making sure that citizens are engaged in solving problems. These roles cannot be dispensed

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4   I was introduced to this great body of research by colleagues at the Kettering Foundation.

5   Francis Fukuyama (2011) The Origins Of Political Order From Prehuman Times to the French Revolution

by an invested political elite alone; there is a need for a broadening of our understanding of how democracy actually works. Besides, not all the change needs to happen within the government or led by the government. Much of the work of democracy is the work of citizens. The challenge in Zimbabwe and, indeed, in many other countries, is that the idea of citizens is restricted mostly to voting, and in many cases, they are mostly referred to as voters. Voting is a necessary function within our democracy, but it is not the only function of citizens. In other instances, citizens have been equated to the work done by non-state actor institutions such as NGOs, human rights associations, unions, etc. Non-state actor institutions are at a preliminary level, indeed, an expression of citizens' interest, but over time, a disconnect can also occur in which citizens' interests remain at the periphery of what these institutions do.

The national frame of democracy needs updating. An electoral-based system of choosing leaders is, indeed, one of the most enduring innovations that has seen the majority of the countries across Africa transition from hereditary and predominantly authoritarian systems of power toward a more open system. Once we acknowledge that democracy is a human innovation, perfected by the Greeks, we should also be prepared for ongoing improvements and, at times, reconnecting with the original idea. We have limited the potential of democracy as a system of governance not only through the alleged rigging of elections but also through the failure to acknowledge and promote the role of citizens within the polity.

Furthermore, democracy cannot be adequately discussed without considering civil society and participation. Several formalized organisations working within civil society space have carved a niche as an alternative to an ineffective and corrupt state and a rapacious business sector and have positioned themselves as the unelected and un-legitimised voice of the citizens. They have not necessarily invested in developing the voices of the poor and bonds of trust that can be used to unleash community participation in local and national processes outside of the framework of the scope of a defined project. A supply of good institutions and organisations is evidently not enough. To create them by legislative edict does not make them work. Somehow people must be empowered to insist on good governance according to their own terms. But wanting it does not make it happen. Institutions will work when a public covenant builds around them

and demands that they work. A civic compact between formally established organisations and communities is what makes it sustainable, and it should begin at the level of communities. Only then can it be usefully facilitated by the well-placed civic investments of philanthropic donors. Civic values must emerge organically from the public life of communities.

Broad participation has been identified as a potential antidote to the unfettered expansion of expert-based approaches that exclude citizens. However, even when considerations of participation are made, it is usually in the form of inviting citizens into already designed processes and at times with spelt out results and expectations before the consultations. Participation of citizens is an ideal that many official processes have failed to achieve, and instead, they have created 'invited' spaces which in effect serve to constrain rather than unleash the civic capacities of citizens. Participation theorists such as Cornwall (2008), Gaventa (1993, 2005) and Chambers (1983) have contributed important insights into the dilemmas of effective participation. Eversole (2010:37) captures this dilemma very precisely when she observes that:

> ...the problem of participation is not that participation is impossible to achieve; but rather, that it is impossible to achieve for others ... Rather, the challenge of participation is about how to become participants in our own rights: choosing to move across institutional and knowledge terrains to create new spaces for communities and organisations to 'participate' together.

Current initiatives of participation are characterised by 'invited' spaces and managed projects, instead of what Cornwall (2008) terms spaces that people create for themselves. Gaventa (2005) weighs in by suggesting that for there to be effective participation, there is a need to work on participation from both sides of the equation: that is, to increase both the participation of communities and the responsiveness of government institutions. The challenge for Zimbabwe and, indeed for other emerging democracies,

is to remake participation through the reframing of interactions amongst communities, professionals, and institutions into a truly participatory space.

1.9 Citizens' and Associational Life

Citizens in Zimbabwe and across Africa have a long tradition of associational life. Associations and networks of various roles and sizes emerge to mitigate some of the challenges that communities face. These community-based initiatives mostly happen far away from the central state and even academic analysis. The things that citizens do with each other and for each other have been given many names such as social capital, solidarity, or agency[6]. The significance of this type of agency has not been adequately covered in terms of contribution towards national development, well-being, and community-level democracy. Others have referred to these as sites of micro-democracy where practices of co-production, conflict resolution and dialogue take place, and prepare citizens for the bigger stage. Even that argument is limited. These entities, as an end in themselves, play a huge role to foster democracy, enhance community development and national wellbeing. They potentially contribute towards a new way of thinking of relationships between government and citizens.

Zimbabwe, like the rest of Africa, has a long history of associationism and collective action. In a study carried out by Arnaiz (1998), one in four households in Shamva district belonged to an association. Several studies (see for instance Barr, 1994, Dekker, 2004, Moyo et al, 2009, Murisa, 2009, 2011 and Scoones et al 2010) of resettled communities in rural Zimbabwe found that one of the first things resettled households did was to establish some form of associational activity. These associations were mostly not established with the grand goal of 'promoting democracy' or 'enhancing governance' but instead always had to do with the socio-economic needs of those coming together (see Murisa 2020).

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6   'Agency' is about the individual's capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life even under the most extreme forms of scarcity, coercion and exploitation

There are various ways in which citizens act collectively but there are nine broad descriptions of associations,

    i.   mutual support networks;

    ii. welfare associations;

    iii. societies for resource mobilisation.

    iv. self-help organisations.

    v.   cooperatives.

    vi. non-governmental organisations.

    vii. farmer organisations.

    viii. secret societies; and

    ix. political organisations. In some instances, they are also called social movements, residents' associations, local savings groups, burial societies, community-based organisation, or peace groups etc.

The associative activities take the form of popular local organisations, and their proliferation is based on the real needs, interests and knowledge of the people involved. There is a wide range of associational forms in both the rural and urban settings, multi-purpose cooperatives, occupational groupings, farmers unions and, since the 1960s, rural-based NGOs. The leadership in these associations originates from amongst the concerned communities. In many instances these associations have four different roles as per Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 The Role of Associations

Role	Descriptions
Integrating	They provide citizens an opportunity to develop norms of enlightened self-interest and the skills and habits of cooperation. The method of integration is horizontal working through social networks among equals rather than relationships of dependency
Differentiating	They provide space for individuals to form associations with distinct interests and identities. Provide a sense of community even for those who hold beliefs that are not accepted by the majority-mediating the tyranny of the majority opinion
Capacity Building	Citizens learn the skills and habits of collective action and organize themselves to accomplish great deeds
Synergistic	Reciprocal actions of man upon one another. Citizens in a democracy can exert social and political power rather than relying upon the power of great individuals.

Adapted from Barker (2011:208)

How can these formations contribute towards deepening the process of citizen-centred democratic governance? Currently, these voluntary associational forms do not feature within the governance discourse especially around the big projects such as constitutional and governance reform and elections.

1.10 Conclusion: Towards Civic Agency as Public Work and Complementary Production

The preceding sections have demonstrated the inadequacy of a narrow model of government-led delivery of public goods. In many instances, democratic governance has been reduced to a formula that says

'governments (officeholders) make promises and citizens expect'. There is an urgent need to focus on how citizens can co-produce with both the local and national government structure. Could a shift from coproduction as suggested by Nobel Prize winner Professor Elinor Ostrom towards complementary acting as a practice in the delivery of public services in which citizens are involved in the creation of public policies and services be the antidote? Such a shift is contrasted with a transaction-based method of service delivery in which citizens consume public services which are conceived of and provided by governments. Co-production is possible in the private and non-profit sectors in addition to the public sector. In contrast with traditional citizen involvement, citizens are not only consulted but are part of the conception, design, steering, and management of services. As already stated, and will be discussed in more detail later citizens are actively engaged with one another in the production of economic goods and strengthening of livelihoods. These moments of agency take place either with the government or in the absence (because) of government intervention. Evidence suggests that the current silo and expert-based approaches towards public policy making, coupled with polarisation, have combined to yield an under-performing economy characterized by tensions, lack of trust in public institutions and processes and mutual suspicion from both state and non-state parties. For instance, a nationwide survey carried out by SIVIO Institute, a local think tank, found that very few citizens recall instances where they have been consulted about policy direction and most citizens have lost trust in government and financial institutions. These findings suggest the need for a more inclusive process that enhances the participation of Zimbabweans from all walks of life to engage in public processes and collective problem-solving.

The book makes suggestions on building a civic agency, built through ongoing collective work and citizens beginning to see themselves as cocreator of a new democratic governance framework. Expert forms of knowledge or what Harry Boyte terms the 'cult of the expert'- the best and the bright bringing solutions to those viewed as ignorant, passive, needy and pitiable. Dominant models of knowledge-making undercut the moral and civic authority of other forms of knowledge generated from wisdom passed down by cultural elders, spiritual insights, local and craft knowledge. The growing uncertainty discussed above suggests the need to deploy multiple

sources of knowledge and meaning to phenomena. These can only be achieved in moments such as the one we find ourselves in. Murisa (2008 & 2011) has argued that 'this is a period of systemic uncertainty, and the reconfiguring of the global economic architecture provides greater scope than hitherto available to pilot and embed new approaches' in thinking through development.

First, we must move beyond an over-reliance on experts but begin to tap into various forms of knowledge embedded within communities. Boyte (2009:3) argues that 'we have to get beyond expert cults if we want to develop civic agency, the capacities of people and communities to solve problems and to generate cultures that sustain such agency'. David Mathews (2019), writing in a context of waning trust in the representative state system suggests that maybe this could be the time to reconsider Abraham Lincoln's ideal of a government of, by, and for the people in the Gettysburg Address to include governing 'with' the people. According to Mathews a 'with' strategy encourages collaboration through mutually beneficial or reinforcing efforts between the citizenry and the government. It fosters collective work, not only among people who are alike or who like one another but among those who recognize they need one another to survive or to live the lives they want to live. In his formulation of the 'with' strategy which he describes as complementary production that fosters reciprocity between what citizens do and what governments do. The strategy is based on evidence that governments at any level cannot do their jobs as effectively without the complementary efforts of people working with people.[7] That is because some things can only be done by citizens or are best done by them. People are not the only ones who need people, democratic governments need working citizens. The instance of citizens' complementary production does not necessarily need to be organized through the state, but they produce public goods such as welfare, public safety, food security which are otherwise traditionally provided for by the state.

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7   Elinor Ostrom, "Covenanting, Co-Producing, and the Good Society," PEGS (Committee on the Political Economy of the Good Society) Newsletter 3, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 8.

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CHAPTER TWO

CITIZENS' MOBILIZATION BEYOND TRADE UNIONISM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Present-day Zimbabwe is a result of both her brutal colonial past and post-independence history. These historical moments have shaped in profound ways the manner in which not only accumulation, consumption and welfare are organized, but also the politics of the country. Studies of political behaviour in Zimbabwe are at crossroads. There is a realization that the high levels of informalization to the economy has negatively affected trade unions as sites of political mobilisation. Since 2000 the MDC (in its various shades) has occupied a central space as a countervailing force to ZANU (PF)'s march towards a defacto one-party state. Recent developments beginning with the demise of the founding leader of the MDC party, Morgan Tsvangirai, the July 2018 elections and

internal coups at Harvest house, where it seems everyone has the power to expel/suspend others from the party, have only served to dampen the mood and expectation of an MDC- led change process. Within ZANU (PF) the story remains the same, despite an election victory (rigged or otherwise), there is still no demonstration that the leadership has a firm grip on power. They just can't rise beyond internal factionalism to effectively address the national question. The economy has also proved stubborn. Which leaves the question, who or what is the class of citizens that will help fix the future of Zimbabwean politics? Should we remain beholden to charismatic/ messianic politics based on the gifted orator or do we need to think in other terms? Is there room for a new kind of politics that is grounded within the current socio-economic realities of Zimbabwe and based on citizenship and class?

2.2 Background

As already stated, Zimbabwean politics has been dominated by two political parties since the year 2000. The two parties also at a rhetorical represent two seemingly contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, ZANU (PF) initially positioned itself as a radical nationalist focused on resolving the outstanding colonial questions but has gradually moved towards the centre with its 'open for business mantra'. On the other hand, the MDC has repeatedly made calls for recognition of political and civil rights, re-insertion of Zimbabwe into the global map on more favourable terms. There are ongoing counteraccusations about 'abandoning the commitments/promises of the liberation struggle' on one hand and 'sell-out party' on the other. One must add that ZANU (PF) has always claimed the mantle of being left whilst it has vacillated from talking left and acting right to a radical populist movement. On the other hand, although the MDC has its roots in working-class politics it embraced a very neoliberal stance both from its alliances and also some of the programs it pushed whilst in the Government of National Unity (GNU) from 2009 until 2013. In this chapter, without primarily focusing on party politics we seek to raise a fundamental question on prospects for mobilization for political change outside of these two dominant political parties. The discussion that follows raises questions

on whether there is still a progressive working class in a context of de-industrialization where trade unions are shrinking in numbers and labour relations regimes in place serve the interests of the employers? Besides the legal regimes, what incentives do workers have to engage in public protests such as strikes given the threat that hangs over many of these enterprises? The chapter then proceeds to examine the potential of social movements.

2.3 The Working Class in Zimbabwe

Let us briefly revisit the historical assumptions regarding the emergence of the working class and juxtapose these assumptions with Zimbabwe's current economic situation. Historically, according to Marx, a pure working class was supposed to emerge after the total collapse of peasant agriculture through the industrial revolution and subsequent farm mechanization which would render peasant agriculture unviable. Dispossession of land and proletarianization of the peasantry were prescribed as a quick fix. Capitalism was viewed as an inevitable historically progressive process, which provided possibilities of a type of society materially more progressive with the unprecedented development of the material forces of production which would also lead to the creation of a 'progressive' proletariat class (Marx, 1976). Such a proletariat would be the first universal class capable of abolishing class society and the complete dismantling of capitalist ways of production and accumulation and the introduction of a class less society (Marx, 1976, Lenin, 1964 [1899] 1954).

Did we ever have such a class in Zimbabwe? In the 1970s into the early 1980s, Zimbabwe was the second most industrialised country after South Africa in Sub-Saharan Africa. We also had the second highest proportions of unionized workers in Sub-Saharan Africa. Others such as Gwisai (2014) argue that the unionized and disciplined working class is only supposed to be the core or nucleus of the broader working class-based struggle. Moyo and Yeros (2005) prefer the term semi-proletariats when referring to the majority of the working class and they argue that these are households that straddle both the urban and rural spaces in terms of social reproduction. Even a study commissioned by the ZCTU in the1990s tends to align with this position; in a sample of 1, 500 members of trade unions in textile, metal

workers, and food industry 75 per cent of the respondents maintained dual homes in the urban and rural areas (Peta et al., 1991). We have to remember that the period from 1980 up until maybe 1995 was economically much better than the post-2000 period and even then, we did not have a pure working-class solely dependent on a wage (based on the ZCTU).

The economic collapse that began with Structural Adjustment led to the massive retrenchment of workers initially within the textile industry when big employers such as Cone Textiles (Chitungwiza), David Whitehead (Kadoma) and Merlin (Bulawayo) either had to shut down or restructure. However, since 2000 company closures have become more common than new investments. The ZCTU has lost more than 60% of its members due to retrenchments, company closures and the formation of competing federations which are at times linked to the ruling party. It is also important not to romanticize the consciousness and mobilization of the working class for progressive change. For instance, firstly, at the peak of workers' struggles against the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), only 3000 out of a possible 25 000 heeded the ZCTU's call for a general strike which was also very short-lived. Secondly, we have to remember the alliance that was established in the late 1990s between the capitalist class and working class as they converged on the need to dislodge ZANU (PF) from power. In that alliance, the employers facilitated/encouraged worker stay-aways by locking their premises. Does such an alliance exist today?

2.4 Opportunities for Mobilization beyond a Workers' Perspective

Whilst, the 2003 Labour Relations Act is definitely a progressive piece of legislation its implementation has been curtailed by the precariousness of finding employment. Of course, with the 2015 judgement on summary dismissals, the pendulum has swung towards protecting the interests of the employers. What we have instead is a de facto Master-Servant relationship between employers and employees mimicking the domestic government regimes we had on commercial farms.

Currently, the public service looks like the most organised sector but the multiple trade unions servicing their needs only serve the government's

interest of 'divide and conquer'.

Before delving into the new political manifesto, we need to discuss the broad configurations of the working class within both the rural and the new urban terrain.

2.4.1 Rural Based Forms Agitation and Protest

There is no doubt that after fast-track land reform we have more Zimbabweans living in the rural areas than before. Different studies including the latest census data put the rural population at around 67%[1] and the majority of these would fit into a broader concept of a working-class if we use incomes, modes of production (own labour vs. hired labour) and also the nature of socio-economic grievances that they confront. Using neoliberal of measuring wellbeing and poverty the majority of these are living on less than US$2 a day.

However, and unfortunately, we have not made much of rural politics in Zimbabwe. Popular land occupations signifying a real demand for access to some form of economic production were mostly dismissed as part of ZANU (PF)'s political machinations. The land occupations have a longer history than 2000. Immediately after independence, there were expectations of a rapid and popularly controlled redistribution of land and these had been fueled by guerrilla promises and nationalist claims to the lost lands. In the first three years of independence (1980 to 1982) much of the land that was formally 'acquired' and then 'resettled' was done so as a means of regularising de facto occupations that had occurred during or just after the war (Cliffe, 1998). The Riddell Commission (GoZ, 1981) reported that by 1980 at least 50 000 families had taken land for themselves and forced government to modify its plans. Cliffe (2000) and Alexander 2003:86 have argued that land reform policy in the first three years of independence should be understood in the context of government's responses to squatter demands for land.

The rural grievances and real demands for land were rarely factored

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1   https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=ZW

into the broader struggles for governance reforms that were mostly driven by urban-based civics. In the process, we have missed out on a very important opportunity of linking the urban and rural struggles for a broad-based development and democratic governance model. It was not only the opportunity that we missed but also lessons of grassroots-based self-organisation which have driven these land occupations since 1980. The urban-focused leftist scholars are unfortunately very silent on rural-based protests. This is not surprising, and it's quite common across Africa. Most of the scholars and activists steeped in orthodox political economy do not make much of rural struggles. Remember Karl Marx also did not believe that the peasantry could survive the expansion of capitalistic relations of production within the countryside. He argued that they were only compatible with limited development of industrial capitalism and that in the longer term they would be destroyed through impoverishment (Marx, 1976: p854). In Russia revolutionary ideologues such as Engels (1895) realising the challenges of the position of the peasantry suggested that a lie is presented to the peasantry:

> "Let us say it outright: in view of the prejudices arising out of their (peasants) entire economic position, their uprising and their isolated mode of life, prejudices nurtured by the bourgeois press and the big land-owners, we can win the mass of the small peasants forthwith only if we can make them a promise which we ourselves know we shall not be able to keep."

That lie entailed making a promise to protect the peasant's landholdings as private property when in fact the party was intending to abolish private property in a socialist Soviet Union. Even on the continent suggestions of a rural protest in post-independence Africa were rare, unwelcome, and seen as utopian (Amin, 1990:12). Thus, the rural, especially in a context where the peasantry is actually expanding like in Zimbabwe, remains a thorn in the flesh for many whose lens of organizing and struggle is steeped within

a traditional Marxist framework.

However, it should not be so. There has been some limited research on local collective action that rejects the myths of isolation and backwardness associated with the peasantry and empirically shows the level of mobilisation into various associational forms (Bratton, 1986; Moyo, 1995, 2000, 2001, 2004; Arnaiz, 1998; Alexander, 1993, 2003, 2006; Burgess, 1997). This group of scholars looked for insights into social organisation and agency from the colonial period and argued that the growing membership of churches was one of the early forms of political expression (Burgess, 1997:129). Furthermore, it has been argued that after land alienations and resettlement into reserves the smallholders went into a process of 'accelerated petty commodity production' – a process of quick adaptation to new cash crops (Ranger, 1985). Prior to colonialism these communities had not virtually engaged in one or other form of commodity production. The accelerated process of 'petty commodity production' took place as a strategy of defiance against the very different economic future planned by the new conquerors (Ranger, 1985:27). The research detailed how rural communities were responding to unfair state policies and market exploitation. Furthermore, there are others who have noted that rural action was not only confined to structured and visible forms of organisation. Many struggles for land reform starting in the colonial period have been championed by underground movements whose inspiration ranged from spirit mediums and militant chiefs to popular claims for restitution (Moyana, 1984, Sadomba, 2008b:163).

Yes ZANU (PF) has entered into an alliance with them since the turn of the century but it's the same ZANU (PF) that was busy establishing squatter control committees to curb land occupations in the late 1980s into the 1990s. The continuous demand and engagement in what Moyo and Yeros (2005) have called uncivil actions for land by peasants are what broke the camel's back and the GoZ conceded by embarking on Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) in 2003 after it had failed to contain the land movement that had intensified from around late 1999.

Besides agitations for land, many other studies (see for instance Murisa, 2009, 2011 and 2013) have also shown that peasants have a penchant for organizing themselves to achieve greater synergies, be it in economic production processes or defending their rights. In 2002 it was estimated that there are 3 000 local peasant organisations in Zimbabwe (Bratton,

1986, Moyo 2002, Sibanda 2002). The rural space is thus made up of a mosaic of associational forms which, if adequately analysed point towards readiness to engage in struggle as long as it directly resonates with the grievances that they face. The late Sam Moyo writing in 2002 argued that these local associational forms serve a (wide) variety of purposes and assume a multitude of roles, but they are mostly formed in responses to the negative effects of state politics and market penetration.

2.5 NGO Dominated Public Spaces and Narratives

Zimbabwe like many other African countries has experienced a significant proliferation of NGOs that focus on defending, human rights, voters' rights and their education, advocacy on improved governance. These NGOs emerged as the most organized part of civil society and sought to mediate the excesses of the market in a non-coercive way and also sought to make sense of how common citizens were organizing and asserting themselves against repressive governments. However, even then, the majority of citizens feel disconnected or do not see the need to participate in national or local political processes. Levels of voter apathy have been on the rise since 1990. NGOs in the meantime have over time institutionalized, created their own bureaucratic hierarchies and entered relationships with donors.

They continue to be a site of participation around a set of reforms that they need the state to embark on, but they are not necessarily inclusive. In many instances where the participation of citizens has been called for, the processes have mostly been top-down to endorse defined NGO positions instead of unleashing citizen agency. The participation paradigm remains valid, but others have begun to raise criticism about what they are identifying as invited NGO spaces. Participation theorists such as Cornwall (2008), Gaventa (1993, 2005) have contributed important insights to the dilemmas of effective participation. Eversole (2010:37) capture this dilemma in a more revealing way:

"...the problem of participation is not that participation is impossible to achieve but rather that it is impossible to achieve for others. Rather, the challenge of participation is about becoming participants in our own right; choosing to move across institutional and knowledge terrains to create new spaces for communities and organisations to participate together."

Indeed, the current NGO led initiatives of participation are characterized by 'invited' spaces and managed projects instead of what Cornwall (2008) describes as spaces that people create for themselves.

2.5.1 Civil Society Based Mobilisation: 1980– 1990

The following sub-sections provide a brief post-independence analysis of the evolution of the civil society-based mobilisation and the ensuing state-society relationships.

Zimbabwe's civil society has evolved through three phases:

i.   the infancy phase (1980-83)

ii. pro-state (1983-1990), and

iii. the anti-state (1990-).

In the infancy phase at the period of independence, there was very limited civil society activity. Society had up until that moment been organized around liberation movements and political parties. There were a few welfare organisations such as the women's clubs organized by the YWCA and a few voluntary organisations such as the Red Cross.

The second phase of civil society's evolution was largely state-driven to enhance its development agenda and was mostly focused on enhancing collective efforts in state-based projects such as infrastructure development and in enhancing welfare interventions.

Independence was associated with the congealing of a philosophy

of self-reliance and collective action aptly captured by the Organization of Rural Associations for Progress' (ORAP) slogan of Vuk'uzenzele (literally translated to mean wake up and do it for yourself). Non-state-based initiatives around cooperatives, community foundations, and community-based organisations received endorsement and support from the government and from the fledgling donor community. Despite their seemingly non-political focus, they were very instrumental in ensuring that citizens participated in local and development processes. For instance, ORAP (operating in Matabeleland and Midlands) established in 1981 had by the end of 1983 established 300 local groups known as 'amalima' which in isiNdebele means 'meeting together for working and helping ourselves' (Chavhunduka et al., 1984:3). The activities of ORAP included the establishment of service projects (water and sanitation), income-generating projects (sewing, carpentry) and training on new farm skills (Chavhunduka et al., 1984:13). The organisation contributed towards improved participation of communities in local development projects. Although there has not been a movement operating on a similar scale elsewhere in Zimbabwe, there were many districts focused development associations that emerged during the same period. Most of these associations had local structures at village levels and were instrumental in the formulation and implementation of many development programmes in partnership with different donor organisations, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) such as Save the Children and Oxfam and more importantly they worked in conjunction with existing local government structures.

Another important actor in this space was the self-organising farmer unions. The National Farmers' Association of Zimbabwe (NFAZ) represented the majority of the farming community at independence. Its membership was derived from the communal areas. Membership of the NFAZ peaked in 1988 with some 4,000 clubs, 85,000 paid up members and perhaps 150,000 occasional adherents (Bratton, 1994:14). In order to strengthen its viability, the NFAZ appealed for financial support from external donors and by the late 1980s, it had established an administrative structure with headquarters in Harare and field offices in every provincial capital.

The major trade union, (Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions-ZCTU) was formed at the behest of the ruling party and the initial cadre of leaders

was composed of ruling ZANU (PF) members (Yeros, 2002). Most of the local NGOs and CBOs were also initiated with state assistance and were accorded the title 'development partners' by the state. Members of Parliament and even government ministers sat on the boards of some of these NGOs.

2.5.2 1990–2000 Increased Urban Based Protests

Politically, the 1990s are associated with a shift in civil society politics from one of development partnership with the state to a more overt anti-state position. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and affiliates were at the centre of mobilising against what were seen as the negative effects of the economic reform programme. The labour-led coalition, comprising protesting students, striking public and private sector employees, and intellectuals, coalesced around issues of the need for improved wages, job security in an era of deregulation, and improved financial support for students at tertiary institutions. Civil society, for the first time in the post-independence era, became increasingly confrontational and began to challenge ZANU (PF)'s control of the mantle of nationalism (Raftopolous, 2003). Opposition to the government policy was expressed through the privately controlled press, nationwide strikes, street protests and frequent work stay-aways (in the wake of the banning of strikes).

In 1992 the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) amended the Labour Relations Act to conform to the requirements of capital for flexible working hours, and ease of recruitment and firing of labour. The ZCTU responded by protesting both the content and process of legal reform. ZCTU complained that it had not been consulted in the design of the amendment and that the Act jeopardized the rights of the worker. In the following year the ZCTU took a more radical anti-liberalisation reform stance when it accused the IMF and World Bank as enforcers of liberalisation in Africa (Yeros, 2002a:174). A walk-out by nurses at Chinhoyi hospital on 19 August 1996 triggered a nationwide civil servants' strike and the ZCTU, sensing the possibility of a bigger action involving even private sector workers, called for a general strike (Yeros 2002). Only a few affiliates of the ZCTU heeded

the call for the strike and it largely remained a public servants' strike against poor working conditions and wages.

Even under such circumstances of confrontation with the state and capital, internally the ZCTU strategy was changing course from confrontationalism towards dialogue with the state and the international financial institutions. For example, whereas the 1991 ZCTU conference theme was 'Liberalisation or Liberation', in 1995 the theme had evolved to 'Progress through Cooperation, Participation, Involvement' (Yeros, 2002a:178). As part of the GoZ's conciliatory measures towards labour it invited the ZCTU to be part of the trade negotiations with South Africa. In a strategy document entitled Beyond ESAP (1996), the ZCTU shifted the focus of the development problem from politics to economics, identifying the problem not as a political one requiring worker control, but as a technical one requiring state level solutions (Yeros, 2002a:181). The strategy placed among its principal objectives "the need to upgrade the performance of the economy so that it meets international standards of global competitiveness" (ZCTU, 1996:10). As part of this strategy the ZCTU accepted the inevitability of privatization and retrenchments under structural adjustment and resorted to dialogue and training of retrenched workers.

Meanwhile the economic situation continued to deteriorate, and the country was rocked by industrial action. Most notably farm workers downed tools for the first time in protest over poor working conditions and wages which stood at less than one-sixth of the poverty datum line, demanding a 135 percent increase against the 20 percent offered by employers (Yeros, 2002a:183). In all there were more than 230 strikes in 16 sectors during 1997.

In an attempt to increase revenue levels, the GoZ introduced a new regime of levies and taxes on already overburdened workers. In May 1996, the ZCTU called for a general strike in all the six regions of the country. Approximately 3 000 out of an expected 250 000 workers from Harare and Chitungwiza participated in the general strike which was violently disrupted by riot police who used teargas, batons and dogs against demonstrators converging on the centre (Yeros, 2002a:185). The violence continued into the offices of the ZCTU. Exactly two days after the strike several assailants appeared in Morgan Tsvangirai's office and proceeded to beat him unconscious (Yeros, 2002a:186). The violent nature of the state

led to indignation with the scare tactics and, whereas earlier the ZCTU through its Beyond ESAP document had acknowledged the centrality of the ZANU (PF) in handling economic problems brought about by the reform programme, the discourse within civil society veered towards the possibility of taking over state power. Strategies shifted from public strikes, where workers would gather as a crowd holding protest placards and march towards government offices, to stay-aways where workers were asked to stay at home on the designated day of action. There were increased calls from the membership for the ZCTU to form a political party (Yeros, 2002a).

Furthermore, from 1995 onwards many civil society organisations emerged in the area of human rights activism in response to the violent nature of the state's response to general strikes, taking advantage of the global agenda of governance reforms as a necessary precondition for economic development. The increase of organised civil society activity within this area was not accidental. Although many NGOs seemed to be local formations, they mostly depended on donor funding which suggested possibilities of foreign influence in programming, especially on government policy matters. The period was also characterised by a shift within the donor community to wards human rights and these were often defined restrictively to emphasise first generation rights, the political and civil rights, and to exclude second and third order social and economic rights. During the same period, NGO lobbying and discourse made a comparable shift towards emphasizing political and civil rights without a complementary discourse on social and economic rights (Masunungure 2008:64). All of a sudden, society's struggle had taken the form of the Polish and Latin America model of civil society as 'society against the state' and capital was no longer the enemy (Masunungure, 2008:61).

The urban labour protests of the 1990s kept rural grievances such as the need for land reform peripheral to their demands. Very few NGOs, including the umbrella body Mwelikeo wa NGO (MWENGO), Zimbabwe Economics Society (ZES), ZERO regional environmental organisation and the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU), organised themselves to make an input into the GoZ's Land Tenure Commission. The Land Tenure Commission was appointed by the President to consult on land tenure issues and was chaired by Professor Mandivamba Rukuni. It recommended that Government should retain but decentralize communal tenure in communal

areas, allocate longer-term leases in purchase and resettlement areas with a view to granting private tenure, and retain freehold tenure in commercial areas (Rukuni, 1994a:49, 69, 83, 99). An NGO task force was established in 1997 to mobilise other NGOs to make an input into land policy.

These activities were at the periphery of the main urban protests that animated the public space of the 1990s. The failure to take up land reform as an agenda of the ordinary working people is significant, and many analyses of civil society continue to identify a perpetuation of a false separation between urban civil society, which is preoccupied with governance issues, and human rights reforms couched within a political and civil rights framework and paying little attention to the structural causes of inequality within society. On the other hand, another more rural and uncivil force has focused on land reform within a nationalist restitutive agenda without an adequate questioning of the violence that is associated with the process (Yeros, 2002a; Moyo, 2001; Helliker, 2006).

2.5.3 Post 2000 & The Ongoing Quest for Democracy

Since the turn of the century the debates and protests for democracy have been dominated by the broad alliance of human rights NGOs, trade unions and also the then newly established opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). However, for some reasons that are beyond the scope of this discussion the period was also associated with the narrowing down of democracy; it was equated to the realization of political and civil rights. Official practice on the other hand has been to use democracy as shorthand for a certain form of political arrangements which mostly include regular elections for local and national government processes. Such thinking unfortunately, led to narrow institutionalism without an organic evolution of democracy from below and in the process unintended disengagement of citizens from the public space. The process of disengagement has been noted by many others but there is no consensus on what has caused it. Others (see for instance Masunugure 2008 and Bratton 2011) have cited the historical intimidation that characterize Zimbabwe's political processes. The period has also been characterized by a proliferation of NGOs engaged in

policy advocacy and service delivery. The growth and spread of NGO based/initiated interventions has to an extent crowded out citizen voices in preference for expert opinion.

These pro-democracy formations have been overwhelmed by resource scarcity, backlash from the state which has most often labelled them as either 'regime change agents' or 'agents of imperialism' and also ironically they have not adequately mobilized the support from citizens. Their responses to growing authoritarianism in Zimbabwe has included highlighting incidences of gross abuse of power, supporting the process of writing and adopting a new constitution which curbs state-based excesses, voter education (especially towards elections) and also defending those who are arrested when making calls for democratisation. These are important contributions towards ensuring some form of a democratic order, but they have not adequately helped prevent state-based wanton violence against its own people, repression, continuing corruption, and economic decline.

The response of the state to public demonstrations and other forms of protest calling for reforms over a broad range of issues has mostly been the same; deploy anti-riot police, arrest the leaders, torture them, or keep them incarcerated over a long period of time despite the fact that the charges will not stand in court. The anti-dissent posture of the state has cowed many would-be strong opponents into silence. The country is characterized by a long history of intolerance of dissent; in the late 1980s university students working alongside the trade unions challenged the decision to adopt a one-party state and although they won, it was at a huge cost. Student leaders were jailed and tortured and one of them died.

The conditions in the country have continued to deteriorate to an extent that citizens and non-state institutions such as NGOs have been left with no other option except to confront the state. In the first decade of the 2000s the country was in an economic meltdown characterized by the highest inflation rates, collapse of its currency versus major currencies, an acute shortage of basic commodities and shrinking of the economy by close to 60%. The political and civil rights space was also not spared of the drama. New laws prohibiting NGO funding and registration were enacted, pseudo state-sponsored trade unions were formed as a counter to the traditional autonomous ones that had been in existence since the 1990s.

2.6 New Spaces and Ways of Organising

In the urban areas most of the working class are engaged in what are referred to as informal sector activities. It is estimated that only 20% of urban households have at least one member in fulltime formal employment and the rest eke out an existence on the margins of this formal economy. Others estimate that more than US$2billion circulates within sector. However, there are very few analytical studies of how players in this sector are organizing themselves. It is a highly differentiated sector with the upper echelons earning more than their formal sector counterparts, but others are also living on the margins of poverty, earning just enough to scrap by. What are the implications for political mobilization? Probably one must look at the diversification within the sector and identify an entry point for organizing. One of the longest surviving associations in this space is the different types of vendors' associations that occur at a very local level. Given the implosion of the economy and the rise of the unemployment one can only imagine that the number of vendors or broadly informal traders has increased. The implosion and collapse of service delivery has spawned new opportunities in the informal sector such as owner operated short and long-distance taxis, water vendors, mobile phone, and mobile cash agents. Operators in this space have become a bit more sophisticated with capacities to play cat and mouse with the bureaucracy and potential to organize themselves in pursuit of achievement of collective goals. We have also seen the emergence of thriving residents' associations. These formations have in the recent past been at the forefront of demanding accountability and transparency within local authorities.

However, as already mentioned, in the absence of good field based analytical studies we know very little about the internal organization of these associational forms and the terrain in which they organize. One can only surmise on the basis of the Tunisian uprising that those who are looking to and investing energy in organized labour or reconstituting an NGO led civic movement maybe missing a golden opportunity of building a grassroots broad working-class movement (see following chapter on Hashtivism).

2.7 THE NEW POLITICS

Today one of the most common discussions is either the claims around rigging in the July 2018 elections result or who will take over in ZANU (PF) and for the MDC, the question is about who will be able to unite the different factions in light of the coups and party dismissals. In the conversation, one senses something more of a messianic expectation. Who will take us to the proverbial promised land? Good leaders are without a doubt a very necessary component of our fragile democracy. However, in the absence of issue-based politics where parties are evaluated on a set of policies and programs that they pursue, we may find ourselves stuck with mediocre leadership, good on rhetoric and weak on delivery. Leadership should be seen as just one component of the democratic equation but if we are not careful it can easily keep us enslaved in the bygone era of African strong men (never women). In the discussion that follows I will discuss in more detail the vital components of what I call the democratic ecosystem. The democratic equation should read thus: 'leadership is a necessary component but not sufficient condition for democracy; we also need engaged citizens.'

One of the questions that we rarely ask and thus never answer is 'politics/democracy for what'? During the liberation struggle, the objective was very clear we wanted to dismantle minority rule and replace it with majority rule and universal suffrage. A working people's socialist revolution was, to be fair, a utopia even at that time, especially if one looks at the leaders of that struggle, these were not working people although some were sympathetic to workers' rights. The post-July 2018 dispensation provides us with an opportunity to re-imagine our struggle for democracy and this time we need to work with the end in mind and two questions come to mind; (i) the nature of the democracy that we want and (ii)what do we want from that democracy?

Since the turn of the century the democracy discourse has been dominated by the broad alliance of human rights organisations, trade unions and the MDC. The realization of political and civil rights was amplified to be the sine qua non of democracy itself. The system of representative government is by nature very exclusionary. Citizens rarely have the opportunity to influence day to day allocation of resources, which by the way is central to

politics! In many countries that claim to be democratic such as Zimbabwe, citizens do not have access to sufficient information required for making political decisions such as voting. Secondly, the effectiveness of platforms for interaction between the elected and the electorate is very limited in many ways. Firstly, they are too few and incoherent in terms of the agendas they seek to promote. Secondly, they are structured in a way that does not promote dialogue but rather the speaking down to citizens by the elected.

In practice, democracy has been used as shorthand for a certain form of political arrangements which mostly include regular elections for local and national government processes. Such thinking has led to narrow institutionalism without an organic evolution of democracy from the bottom. The 'democracy is equal to elections' mantra has been exported to most of Africa with varying consequences for governance, economic development and the way political power is exercised. However, Zimbabwe was not alone in having to deal with such a conceptualization, it was indeed part of the global neoliberal project. Mkandawire (2011:41) observes that during this period "...democracy eschewed substantive issues of material well-being and equity and focused on the more formal aspects of 'good' governance', that is free and fair elections, transparency and so on". In many ways, it has led to an elite based and unaccountable dynastic form of politics strengthened by clientelist relations which fuel corruption and entrench inequality. So, do we throw democracy away? Absolutely not. We invigorate and broaden it.

ZANU (PF)'s attempts at broadening democracy to include social and economic rights initially did not receive as much attention given the contradictions within ZANU (PF) itself and the violent nature of the transformation process. The success of the land reforms in terms of absorbing otherwise idle labour and the opening up of new markets such as the recent entrance of smallholders into cash-rich tobacco has served to challenge the myths of collapse and chaos in land reform (see for instance Scoones et al 2011). Indeed, even the then Secretary General of the MDC quoted as saying the ZANU (PF) manifesto resonated with people's interests of redistribution and material well-being. The ZANU (PF) led process of re-imagining democracy are constrained by the self-serving elite which ends up making everything that the party says or does seem farcical and contrived to perpetuate the regime. The party cannot lead this process of

re-imagining a new distribution of power especially given its violent past.

A proposal could be made that citizens have to engage in a process of re-imagining how they want to be ruled. The ideal of a democratic society can only be achieved through a complex arrangement of state and non-state institutions which seek to ensure that political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights of all citizens are protected. The democratization process depends on an ecosystem of civic alliances, inclusive of actors focused on local government processes and ensuring access to economic resources for well-being. There has been an awakening across the developing regions of what others have referred to as resource nationalism, especially in the countries where high-value natural resources are abundant. The manner of ownership and utilisation of these resources has somehow found its way into questions of democracy, especially where social and economic rights are considered.

2.8 WHAT ARE OUR OPTIONS; DO WE MOBILIZE FOR A WORKING PEOPLE'S SOCIALIST REVOLUTION?

Zimbabwe faces a huge challenge of citizen apathy, and this does not only refer to staying away from voting but a total disengagement from public matters. Citizen disengagement is partly explained by the historical intimidation and violence that characterise Zimbabwean political processes. Other forms of disengagement manifest at the level of social service delivery- one would have assumed that the collapse in essential services such as health, water and sanitation, unreliable electricity would have led to massive strikes like we see in neighbouring South Africa- no not in Zimbabwe. Instead, citizens in the middle classes (real, perceived and aspirational) have managed to devise ways of coping through the purchase of generators, installation of solar panels, digging of boreholes- in the process creating new market opportunities but allowing the government to survive even though things have fallen apart. Disengagement is a real threat to a thriving democracy. The disengagement has led to an embedded practice of deference. In this context deference is a process by which citizens elect not to engage in political activity and instead choose to 'delegate' it as

the role of politicians, civil society organisations and at times to so-called 'academics.'

Citizens are rarely engaged on national matters- take the new constitution- it would be interesting to carry out a survey to find out the proportion of citizens aware of the fact that we have a new constitution before we even ask about its provisions. In the new political culture of deference, we have citizens who have chosen to hide under the guise of religiosity, avoiding controversy/confrontation or are just too busy, praying and eking out an existence and have no time to be involved in national matters besides the direct causal relationship with their current situation. The task of mobilization should start off from the perspective of re-inserting citizens into politics-not just elections but in its everyday forms. A new consciousness around the national question and national interest needs to be developed. I might as well quickly add that we must guard against the obvious temptations by political party elites to hijack such processes and reduce them into patronage politics that ends spiced up by a redistributive tendency.

Citizen engagement must start where the people are and has to address issue of direct relevancy. A common phenomenon in the rural and urban contexts is the tendency towards associationalism. However, most often the formations that are established tend to be parochial in nature-only focused on a single issue. The task of organising will be in encouraging them to broaden their focus beyond the immediate grievances that they originally established to address and to begin collaborations with others in similar circumstances and address the systemic causes of the challenges they confront.

One may ask, how these formations can contribute towards deepening the process of democracy. Very little has been invested in terms of working with these associations as part of a broader engagement on national and local democracy. Tocqueville asserted that 'in democratic countries the science of association is the mother of science'. Even though most of us belong to at least one association no university has yet created a Department of Associational Science/Studies. We do not have systematic studies of associational life'. In most instances, these voluntary associational forms do not feature within the democratisation discourse, especially around the big projects such as constitutional reform and elections. The potential synergy

that can be derived through engaging local formations is underestimated especially within the realm of politics in government and civil society. They provide a platform for broad-based mass mobilisation as we have seen in Latin America within the land movements and in former communist countries such as Poland, where engaged citizens gathered under the banner of 'Solidarity' toppled a dictatorship. However, most analyses of the public space have unfortunately been devoted to the professionalised spaces dominated by donor-supported NGOs. These NGOs and other professionalised formations are not necessarily at the centre of organic community mobilisation and in many cases their consultative and consensus-building capacity is inadequate.

Beyond associations one of the most obvious gaps in creating a democratic ecosystem is the limited linkage between rural-focused unions such as the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU) and the more urban-focused such as the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU). Whilst they seemingly represent different interests, they are mostly representing either same people (semi-proletariats) or people of similar income status. Zimbabwean smallholder agriculture has traditionally been financed through emittances from the urban areas-this suggesting a symbiotic relationship between the two sectors. However, moments of joint action between the two unions mentioned above are very rare. Instead, the ZFU has historically preferred to enter into an alliance with different forms of commercial farmers unions despite the different class interests represented. An alliance between a farmers' union and a trade union around broader economic and political governance issues has a potentially bigger chance of creating real headaches for the ruling elite.

2.9 Re-invigorating the Zimbabwe Social Forum Platform Under Another Name

The Zimbabwe Social Forum (ZSF) was created in 2003. The ZSF was born out of participation in the earlier processes of internationally organised protests such as at Seattle, alliances built in other campaigns such as the debt and trade campaigns and in other World Social Forum (WSF) meetings. Like

the World Social Forum and the Africa Social Forum, the ZSF was created to 'open space for working people, the poor, the oppressed and exploited to discuss and strategize on how to link up struggles and liberation from the yokes of capitalism, just as the capitalist and their governments annually meet at the WEF in Davos and other national, regional and international forums' (Gwisai, 2007).

It was mostly under the leadership of mostly NGO based activists. Although membership and participation at the ASF and ZSF was open to all organisations, social movements and individuals that subscribe to the ideals and principles of the ZSF charter. At its peak participation grew from the initial 300 to around 3000 people in 2006. Key actors in the ZSF included the trade and debt networks (ZIMCODD, AFRODAD and MWENGO), the labour groupings (ZCTU, ISO and GAPWUZ), governance and constitutional reform networks (Crisis, Women's Coalition and NCA) and the youth movement (ZINASU, SST and ZSCM). ZIMCODD hosted the secretariat of the ZSF since its inception. However, most of the key actor organisations were predominantly urban-based NGOs.

There are two important considerations to bear in mind, firstly that the NGO formation is not a problem per se but rather what is contested is its autonomy in terms of decision making (understanding donor/NGO relations), the ability of the NGOs to include a wide variety of agendas, approaches and process of rationalizing different opinions. Others would argue that these are internal to NGOs and are not an issue in the ZSF process given the fact that all members are equal. However, such an argument disregards the significance of organisational culture and habits, such as a project-based approach to executing strategy, which can be exported into the ZSF processes from NGOs. Secondly, there are inherent limitations within the social forum process both at a global and local level. It is constituted as a discussion forum and has no programme of action besides discussing the negative impact of neoliberal capital, identification of alternatives and alliance building amongst similar-minded organisations and movements. Others have called 'it a safety valve or talking shop for working people to vent out their anger now and then but leaving the structures of exploitation intact' (Gwisai, 2007). Aye Win (2007) asserts; 'we have spent the past years letting off steam on the corporate-led neo-liberal globalisation process and the widespread suffering caused by the unjust global political

and economic system'.

Is there a need to think of the new social forum as an aggregating space for collaboration and action? Could the Citizens Manifesto, another NGO led process adequately replace to the Social Forum. Who else needs to be part of the conversation? Can the Citizens Manifesto be reconstituted as a people's space rather than another NGO managed process?

2.10 Conclusion

We are in a period of uncertainty and unpredictability and face the risk of an entrenched longer period of despotism and stagnation. Current developments within the opposition forces do not hold much promise in terms of an organized mobilisation against the ruling regime. We face two possibilities, either continue with the usual formula or try new mobilization and protest civic action methodologies that put citizens at the centre. There is no quick answer to our quest for deepening democracy of our political processes except that we need to think, mobilize and act in other ways. Perhaps a starting point is to re-mobilize the different social forces that have all along been reduced to spectators of an elite based political struggle.

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CHAPTER THREE

CITIZENS AND RURAL POLITICS IN ZIMBABWE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The case of Zimbabwe's radical Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) from 2000 provides a focus for understanding the interplay of rural politics and state-making in a post-liberation setting in Africa, where the failures of neoliberalism – and attempts at 'structural adjustment' – provoked a major political and economic crisis (Bond and Manyanya, 2003). The combination of authoritarianism and redistributive populism, whilst serving the regime's agenda, has also transformed rural accumulation opportunities for some, albeit with limited democratic freedoms. It is these tensions at the heart of the authoritarian-populist project that this paper will explore for the Zimbabwe context, alongside the emergent rural politics that offer hints of more emancipatory alternatives from below.

The FTLRP suggested to many that a new politics was in the making. Through the land reform, ZANU (PF) created cross-class rural support for land reform, between a new group of smallholders and a potentially loyal agrarian capitalist class, mediated by state and security interests. This is fragile, contested and variable across the country, but allows us to explore the underlying political-economic characteristics of authoritarian populism at this crucial moment in Zimbabwe's history. Whilst having a broad, electorally important populist appeal in Zimbabwe's rural areas, it also represented forms of authoritarianism, characteristic of a nationalist liberation party-state, with military origins. By focusing on the FTLRP period, and its antecedents, this paper will examine how President Mugabe's rule has been characterized by a combination of an authoritarian approach, especially in terms of how he has dealt with dissent, and populism, characterized by land redistribution associated with grand rhetoric against the 'forces of imperialism'.

Yet authoritarianism has its limits, and another aim of the paper is to explore what responses have emerged that counter the impositions of the party-state and associated security services. Through a series of case studies, the paper will reflect on new forms of associational life in land reform areas, linked to new economic activities and political mobilization. Such forms of 'emancipation' will be examined in relation to tensions and struggles between the alliances struck during the FTLRP period, between the party-state, the military/war veterans, poor smallholders and new (quasi)-capitalist landholders.

3.2 Revisiting Discourses on Rural Politics in Zimbabwe

Whilst rural marginalisation has been a dominant discourse for the past three decades in Southern Africa in particular, literature on rural responses and struggles has been sparse. Studies of everyday responses and tactics of rural social reproduction in Zimbabwe and in Southern Africa are critical, they must shed light, not only on rural grievances, but also on the capacity of the local state (beyond official structures) to adequately respond to the socio-economic and political challenges. Discourse on

agrarian change and rural politics in Zimbabwe has tended to overlook localised rural forms of mobilisation and action. The post-independence period debates on rural politics have been contentious in Zimbabwe; scholars such as Von Blackenburg (1984) dismissed the smallholders' demands for land as morally and economically weak because of their low productivity. Sachikonye (1995:132) argued that there is "no independent peasant (rural) organisation vis à vis the ruling party that has survived or emerged after independence". He was not alone in making these assertions, Bratton (1994) similarly argues that rural politics "is pervaded by a neo-patrimonial political culture which derives from precedents of the arbitrary rule established in traditional, colonial and post-colonial regimes" (Bratton, 1994:12). Within such reasoning an objective analysis of organic collective responses to unfair land distribution and exploitative agrarian relations has been very limited.

Rarely did alternative organic forms of social organisation and mobilisation feature in the discourse on broader struggles of economic and political development in Zimbabwe or even in Africa. Suggestions of a rural protest in post-independence Africa were rare, unwelcome and seen as utopian (Amin, 1990:12). Furthermore, the totality of the mode of the rule of traditional authority was assumed. As yet there are very few systematic studies into the class dynamics of these struggles, which particular groups participated, how and under what conditions (Veltmeyer, 2005).

The 1980s saw the first signs of attempts to break away from the established orthodoxies of understanding agrarian change in Africa. Two important studies – a collaboration between Beinart and Bundy (1988) and another by Ranger (1985) – on South Africa and Zimbabwe emphasised the interrelationship between social action and social structure. While focusing on the rural agency (politics), these works remained attentive to the structural constraints at the local and national levels that have shaped the daily lives of the peasants and limited their range of options. Beinart and Bundy (1988) demonstrated how rural opposition to the Glen Grey Act, which raised taxes and challenged the indigenous land tenure system, compelled the South African government to slow down the process of land alienation and to abandon the proposed labour tax. Ranger (1985) noted that, in Zimbabwe, 'illegal squatting' allowed peasants to use portions of land long after they had been designated as European areas and describes

how they resorted to acts of sabotage against the property of the settler who had appropriated their land.

There have been few other studies on rural responses and they have made a considerable contribution towards an understanding of the different forms of rural organisation, such as farmers' unions, and how these have influenced agrarian policies especially producer pricing (Bratton, 1986; Skalnes, 1995). Even so, the analysis has been limited and does not adequately delve into the broader meanings of local organisation and mobilisation. Whilst significant attention has been devoted to the analysis of the roles of large farmer unions such as the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) and the Zimbabwe Farmers' Unions (ZFU) in terms of the way they influence agricultural pricing and input policies, very little work has been done on the everyday practices and realities of rural households and local formations.

There has been some limited research on local collective action that rejects the myths of isolation and backwardness associated with the peasantry and empirically shows the level of mobilisation into various associational forms (Bratton, 1986; Moyo, 1995, 2000, 2001, 2004; Arnaiz, 1998; Alexander, 1993, 2003, 2006; Burgess, 1997). This group of scholars looked for insights into social organisation and agency from the colonial period and argued that the growing membership of churches was one of the early forms of political expression (Burgess, 1997:129). Furthermore, it has been argued that after land alienations and resettlement into reserves the smallholders went into a process of 'accelerated petty commodity production' – a process of quick adaptation to new cash crops (Ranger, 1985). Prior to colonialism these communities had not virtually engaged in one or other form of commodity production. The accelerated process of 'petty commodity production' took place as a strategy of defiance against the very different economic future planned by the new conquerors (Ranger, 1985:27). The research detailed how rural communities were responding to unfair state policies and market exploitation. Furthermore, others have noted that rural action was not only confined to structured and visible forms of organisation. Many struggles for land reform starting in the colonial period have been championed by underground movements whose inspiration ranged from spirit mediums and militant chiefs to popular claims for restitution (Moyana, 1984, Sadomba, 2008b:163).

3.3 Do Citizens Exist in Rural Customary Tenure Areas?

At the centre of Mamdani's (1996) project is an analysis of the extent to which the structure of power, especially in rural areas in contemporary Africa, was shaped in the colonial period rather than born of the anti-colonial revolt. This is done by an explanation of the features of contemporary politics through an analysis of the modes of state power, domination and resistance. According to Mamdani, state power in colonial Africa was derived from the imperatives of dealing with the native question – "how to maintain foreign control over large indigenous populations" (Mamdani, 1996:22). Mamdani (1996) argues that the common response across Africa entailed the devolution of power to indigenous rulers in the name of custom and tradition, creating a 'decentralised despotism'. To his credit, however, he identifies that the process was not uniform; there were countries such as Mozambique and Zimbabwe that instituted local government reforms at independence that were aimed at marginalising traditional authority in favour of political party structures. In the case of Zimbabwe, the independent state sought to minimise the influence of the chiefs by establishing modern bureaucracies that operated within the confines of civil law (Alexander, 1993, 2006).

In countries where indirect rule was perpetuated, such as Kenya, ethnic forms of organisation led to ethnically defined authorities in the countryside, while urbanites (especially minority whites) were subject to civil laws. This led to a bifurcated state of 'citizens' and 'subjects. The 'subjects', primarily peasant households in the countryside, had to contend with the wrath and arbitrariness of native authorities, chiefs and their subordinate structures. He further argues that the form of rule shaped the form of revolt against it, thus ethnicity was simultaneously a dimension of social organisation and colonial domination as well as a valid mobilisation platform for resistance against colonial rule.

Transitions from colonialism have, in many cases, failed to comprehensively deracialise civil society and democratise the local state by reforming customary authority. In the urban areas, independence tended to deracialise the state but left civil society intact, such that historically accumulated privilege (usually racial) was embedded and defended in

civil society (Freund, 1997:102). In terms of countryside reforms, Mamdani (1996:24-25) states that

> a consistent democratisation would require dismantling and re-organising the local state, the array of the Native Authorities organised around the fusion of power, fortified by an administratively driven customary justice and nourished through extra-economic coercion.

Thus, the bifurcation of the state has been bequeathed to the post-colonial state and 'indirect rule' continues to be the dominant form in a context in which the state has been 'deracialised' but not 'democratised'. In summary, the Mamdani argument rejects the political economy approach in favour of a Weberian model of authority; 'possession of the means of administration', and for him civil society is civil law. Within this framework, colonial and post-colonial bureaucracies are claimed to have encapsulated the local state (in this instance chiefly power in systems of customary law) and curtailed its decision-making authority to suit the needs of the centre (Dijk and van Nieuwaal, 1999:4).

However, there are serious shortcomings with this formulation. Mamdani's (1996) attempt to theorise peasant-state relations in colonial Africa has obscured the relationship that emerges when smallholders and the landless are part of hired labour for large scale commercial farmers (Yeros, 2002:17). More importantly, Mamdani (1996) privileges 'tribal' identity in the majority of mobilisations that have occurred from the townships in South Africa to the Rwenzururu in Toro, Western Uganda. This is problematic for several reasons. The privileging of 'tribal' identity as a concrete category of political behaviour, especially in reference to Southern Africa, was discredited as far back as 1959, when it was established that township-based identities bore little resemblance to traditional or rural tribes, which were themselves often creatures of the vortex of social and administrative change (Chege, 1997). In fact, mobilisations for struggle have emerged in contexts of despotism fanned by the need to resolve material inequalities created by

harsh and exploitative relations promoted by the market and enforced by the state which have conditioned peasant responses.

Furthermore, Mamdani (2006) has been challenged especially on his treatment of traditional authority with broad strokes that do not acknowledge the different interests that traditional authority had to serve to retain legitimacy. In practice, the chief and their subordinate structures are not necessarily mere instruments of 'indirect' despotism but rather were and are by nature 'Janus' faced: on the one hand serving the interests of the colonial and post-colonial state and, on the other, representing popular local causes. The latter role of the chiefs explains their continued existence and legitimacy within African communities. Alexander (1994, 2006), Moyana (1984) and Dzingirai (1994) have detailed how chiefs in Zimbabwe were part of the struggle against colonialism and the ways in which they increased their mobilising strength based on rallying for the restoration of the alienated lands. Furthermore, the chiefs have retained their influence despite the post-colonial state's attempts to co-opt them, and they have done this through not letting themselves "be pushed aside and [rather] kept on fulfilling these customary laws, thereby entering into full competition with the relevant state institutions" (Rouveroy and Dijk 1999:29). Thus, rather than depict the process as one of full co-opting of traditional authority into the service of the post-colonial state, the former has in fact mobilised a complex set of tactics to maintain and retain its legitimacy within the customary areas. The tactics include limited collusion with the post-colonial state in areas where it stands to benefit and competing with the structures of the state when its authority especially over land is under threat. The post-colonial state has on many occasions been compelled to enlist the support of chiefs to acquire some measure of legitimacy, while chiefs similarly need the state to defend their position in local government (Rouveroy and Dijk, 1999:4). In some parts of Africa, such as Tanzania and Malawi, chiefs have been at the forefront of direct action against the government's policies on land. In Malawi, the chiefs using their historical claim to land have mobilised communities to occupy land alienated by the state for foreign investment (Shivji, 2006).

3.4 Post-Colonial State-making in the Rural Areas

By the time of independence, the councils were barely functioning, and in those areas where the war had been fought, chiefs had been forced to withdraw from their often-ambivalent cooperation or face violent attack (Alexander, 2006:107). The initial efforts of local government reform saw the new government working through district councils established in lieu of African-based chieftaincy councils that had been established by the transitional government and political party structures.

The attainment of independence made local government reform a vital necessity. Among the underlying objectives of local government reform were, to create a modern unified state-linked from village to national level; to replace customary authority with democratic institutions; to create an entirely new basis for rural authority; and to institutionalise development (Alexander, 2006:107-111). These reforms were expected to lead to the redefinition of identity outside the narrow customary or tribal limits to create identification with the nation.

The reforms were carried out via two interrelated strategies: firstly, the creation of some new ministries and deconcentrating of others. The Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MLGRUD) and the Ministry of Community Development and Cooperatives (MCDC) were introduced as part of local government reforms, and the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture formally introduced provincial and district structures (Stewart et al., 1994). The second strategy of local government reform was the enactment of legislation and directives to put policy changes in motion. The District Councils Act of 1980 (amended in 1981 and 1982) applied to customary lands and consolidated the previously fragmented authorities from over 220 to 55 (Mutizwa-Mangiza, 1985).

The District Councils, which consisted predominantly of elected members, were responsible for principal planning and development within their zones of jurisdiction and had limited powers of taxation. The Prime Minister's Directive (1984-1985) provided for the creation of a hierarchy of representative bodies at village, ward and district levels. The local development committees – the Village and Ward Development Committees (VIDCOs and WADCOs), also composed of elected members, were charged with the responsibility of defining local development needs

(Mutizwa-Mangiza, 1985). These development committees were described as "democratic institutions of popular participation to promote the advancement of development objectives set by government, the community and the people" (Alexander, 2006:108).

In 1988 the GoZ, introduced legislation to formally amalgamate white Rural Councils with black District Councils into 56 Rural District Councils (RDCs). The process was fraught with difficulties. Firstly, the Act did not come into effect until 1992 due to boundary disputes over the jurisdiction of the newly created RDCs. Secondly, these reforms were curtailed by the lack of sufficient devolution of authority, especially in terms of revenue collection. Local authorities remained dependent on the national purse, and in some cases wealthy large-scale commercial farmers subsidised the operations of the councils through donations of money and offered their equipment such as tractors for road maintenance at no charge to the local council. On paper the VIDCOs were supposed to submit their plans to WADCOs, who in turn would submit the development plans to the District Development Committees, in the process bypassing the elected Rural District Councils (RDCs). However, in reality, the VIDCOs rarely came up with anything more than lists of needs, WADCOs hardly functioned, and councils did not have the sufficient capacity to analyse and respond to the plans made by the District Development Committees (Alexander, 2006:110). The formulation and implementation of the new local structures was characterised by bureaucratic coercion despite the stated democratic intentions. For instance, the creation of the VIDCO was based on an arbitrary unit of 100 households, a unit that did not necessarily share resources, interests or a common identity.

Furthermore, the newly elected government did not entirely trust the office of the chief and its subordinate structures given the latter's previous alliances with the colonial government, especially from the 1960s to the 1970s. The chiefs had largely benefited from the limited reforms implemented by the colonial government as an attempt to counter the spread of nationalism. However, as Alexander (1994, 2006), Ranger (1985) and Nyambara (2001) have shown, the chiefs did not necessarily accept political co-option but in certain instances attempted to take advantage of local government reforms to insist on further changes which would bolster their authority and probably their interests. Some, such as Chief Rekayi Tangwena, had openly

challenged the colonial government in the courts over land alienation and later aligned with the nationalist movement (Moyana, 1984). Government was in a quandary over how to treat the chiefs in the post-independence era, especially given the ruling party's desire to establish its own forms of control in the countryside under the guise of democratic decentralisation.

The Communal Lands Act (CLA-1982 amended in 2002) ascribes land authority to the RDC. It states that a person may occupy and use communal land for agricultural or residential purposes with the consent of the RDC established for the area concerned (GoZ, CLA 1982: 3). It goes on to state that when granting consent, the RDC shall "consult and cooperate with the chief appointed to preside over the community concerned in terms of the TLA (1999)". It creates the impression that the RDC is the initial point of contact in granting authority over land, whilst actual practice in the customary areas suggests otherwise. The Act stipulates that the RDCs should,

> "Grant consent only to persons who, according to the customary law of the community that has traditionally occupied and used land in the area concerned, are regarded as forming part of such community (CLA, 1982 amended in 2002)".

The underlying objective of the local government reforms was to officially usurp the land by allocating powers of chiefs in a manner very similar to the Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) of 1951 and to introduce new social relations of production that are not defined by belonging to a lineage grouping. In terms of land allocation, the District Council Act (1982, section 8 [2]) required District Councils merely to "have regard to customary law relating to the use and allocation of land". These measures were, however, resisted by chiefs who had enjoyed land allocation powers in the last decade of colonial rule.

In practice, the passing of the District Councils Act (1980) and the introduction of new structures did not necessarily diminish the prestige of

the office of the chief, as rural inhabitants continued to defer to traditional authority, especially in land allocations and in resolving land-related disputes (Dzingirai, 1994). In a study of land allocations in Binga, Dzingirai (1994:168) noted that migrants bypassed the Rural District Council and sought permission from traditional authority functionaries such as the chiefs, village heads and influential lineage elders. Even in instances of land conflicts where a land case reached the Rural District Council (RDC), the headman's court (dare) continued to be the primary legal arena for dispute resettlement (Anderson, 1999). Traditional authorities regularly involved themselves in land administration and they were often at 'loggerheads' with elected authorities (Alexander, 2003:587). Rural District Councils and traditional bodies represented two competing 'parallel systems of authority' (Chaumba et al 2003b:587).

A decade long struggle between elected and customary authority over the control of land ensued. In 1994 the government's Commission of Enquiry into Land Tenure commented that,

> "there is evidence that the dissolution of traditional authority and their role in land and natural resources matters at independence was premature, and currently, there is widespread resistance to VIDCO/WADCO structures as credible authorities over land and natural resources" (Land Tenure Commission, 1994:33).

The direction of local government took another turn in the second decade of independence when the GoZ introduced the Rural District Councils Act (1996) and the Traditional Leaders Act (1999). Whilst in the previous dispensation prior to the RDC Act (1996), the chiefs had been regarded as ex-officio members of the council, the new legislation did not make any reference to traditional leaders. The RDC Act (1996) is silent not only on the relationship with the chiefs but also on the council's role in terms of the communal lands. The Traditional Leaders Act (TLA, 1999) on the other hand creates the impression that the two institutions of local

government can easily work together. In terms of land the TLA (1999) states that the chief will,

> ensure that land is allocated under the Communal Land Act (20:041) and to prevent any unauthorised settlement or use of any land; and to notify the Rural District Council of any intended disposal of a homestead and the permanent departure of any inhabitant from his area, and, acting on the advice of the headman, to approve the settlement of any new settler in his area.

The position of customary authorities benefited particularly from increasingly central control exerted on elected local councils by both the ruling party and government ministries (Alexander, 2006:109-10). The local accountability of VIDCOs was thus eroded as they were cast in the role of implementing agencies for centrally designed programmes, modelled along the lines of the discredited colonial NLHA 'villagisation' schemes.

The Traditional Leaders Act (1999) formally restored customary chiefs' land allocation role in communal areas (although still notionally subject to approval by the Rural District Council) and created a governance structure that resembled a hybrid between the 1982 District Development Committees and the 1969 model for 'tribal' governance by customary chiefs. The Traditional Leaders Act (1996) extended to A1 resettlement areas the model of local governance used in communal areas, in some cases imposing 'headmen' and 'chiefs' where elected officials had represented villages for the previous 20 years (Kinsey, 2005). The reversal of policy served to ensure the further co-option of the office of the chief towards the logic of the state in terms of both the political and development agendas. The reforms were and remain a part of the state's broader political agenda to win over the support of the chiefs. Indeed, ever since the reforms the chiefs have been beneficiaries of state largesse. Besides a monthly wage, chiefs were provided with brand new vehicles and their rural homes were given priority in the rural electrification programme (Murisa, 2007).

From 1980 to 1996 smallholders in customary tenure areas were subordinated to a fusion of authority revolving around an awkward 'institutional mélange' in a similar situation to practice under late colonialism, including elected Rural District Councils (RDCs), traditional chieftainships and local ruling party cell structures (Tshuma, 1997:90). In practice, however, beneficiary participation was 'seriously curtailed' and development committees "were incapable of producing development plans" (Makumbe, 1996:47). The RDCs had limited financial autonomy in relation to the central state and became "basically incapacitated and weak agents of the centre" (Makumbe, 1996:85) The Rural District Councils Act of 1988 sought to provide overarching district authorities by incorporating commercial, communal and resettlement areas, but it was not particularly successful in ensuring a functional integrated rural authority structure. The decentralisation that emerged was a highly politicised process that strengthened the state at the expense of a nascent rural civil society, and this facilitated central government's "penetration of the periphery for purposes of control and manipulation of the local people" (Makumbe 1998:53).

The newly created Rural District Councils did not have sufficient resources to carry out development plans and they were also placed in direct competition with the District Development Committees (DDCs) comprised of representatives of various ministries operating at local level. Furthermore, councils and VIDCOs were heavily dependent on centrally generated and controlled resources. Alexander (2006:110-111) quotes a disgruntled Provincial Administrator saying,

> If you are going to plan and plans are going to be workable you also need to control the budget [and]... the system of VIDCO [to Provincial Administrator] ...was brought from another country but they forgot to bring the authority...There is no use of talking of decentralised structures when decision making staff is at head office.

Although the decentralised structures were initially greeted with

excitement they failed to deliver on the practical goals of development, especially land allocation.

The measures of local government reform within the newly resettled areas should not be analysed in isolation from what the GoZ had begun in 1999 with the introduction of the Traditional Leaders Act (TLA) and how fast track land reform was organised. The TLA (1999) was part of a bigger shift from the prior concerns of democratic decentralisation which had seen Government establish local participatory structures such as the Village Development Committees and Ward Development Committees and reduce traditional authorities to ex-officio functionaries within these structures. The local government reforms of the 1980s had usurped the land allocation and conflict resolution powers of the chiefs and transferred them to the Rural District Councils. The TLA reinstated the juridical, political, and social powers of the chief over land which included its allocation, resolution of disputes and use. In justifying this shift, which in essence weakens the power of the RDCs, the GoZ cited the empirical reality that in most cases the chiefs ignored these reforms and continued to hold court over land disputes and to allocate land. The people also seemed to prefer traditional courts over RDC processes. Anderson (1999) and Fontein (2009) have shown that in many areas the locals continued to pay allegiance to their chiefs. The GoZ thus justified its move as a form of capitulation in the face of unchanging local practice, restoring the powers of the chiefs through the TLA.

Thus, the shift in 1999 reflected a convenient convergence between demands from 'below' for familiar forms of authority and the 'challenges' of governance from above. The 'challenges' of governance essentially relate to the costs related to effective decentralisation. However, the objective of establishing control over chiefs who were viewed as popular by the GoZ cannot be dismissed.

3.4.1 Rural based Agitations for Reforms

Immediately after independence, there were expectations of a rapid and popularly controlled redistribution of land and these had been fuelled by guerrilla promises and nationalist claims to the lost lands. In the first three

years of independence (1980 to 1982) much of the land that was formally 'acquired' and then 'resettled' was done so as a means of regularising de facto occupations that had occurred during or just after the war (Cliffe, 1988). The Riddell Commission (GoZ, 1981) reported that by 1980 at least 50 000 families had taken land for themselves and forced the government to modify its plans. Cliffe (2000) and Alexander (2003:86) have argued that land reform policy in the first three years of independence should be understood in the context of the government's responses to squatter demands for land.

Land-needy rural households used a variety of methods to acquire land which included land occupations (squatting), natural resource poaching and fence cutting (Moyo, 2001:313; Alexander, 2003:87). The tactics used by land-hungry peasants varied according to the natural region; in the drier parts (NR IV and V) the tactics entailed 'poach grazing' (Alexander, 2003:85) while in the wetter areas (NR I to III) they involved land occupations. People turned to the local party structures to demand specific pieces of land-based on historical claims (Moyana, 1984).

Some of the tactics that are associated with breaking prevailing laws have been conceptualised by Moyo and Yeros (2005a) as 'uncivil' (paralegal) in contrast to the more legal tactics such as changing ineffective leaders through voting, writing petitions to the government, and forming structured groups as vehicles to channel member grievances (Moyo and Yeros, 2005a). The uncivil actions have been organised around underground movements that have at certain times, especially in the 1980s, received support from radical elements within the ruling party such as MPs and war veterans (Alexander, 2003:86-8).

In terms of the organisation of these demands for land, Moyo (2001:312) states that empirically a land occupation movement that is not necessarily nationally organised but one which shares common grievances has existed since the pre-independence period across the country. These land occupations have remained the single most important and visible strategy of advocacy for radical land reform in the country, especially since 1980 (Moyo, 2001:313). The essence of the movement has been the same since 1980 and the tactic of land occupations has been used to gain access to land in various tenure categories which include white-owned commercial land, state land and communal lands (Moyo, 2001:314). The occupations

have gone through different phases of intensity throughout the post-independence period. Accordingly, land occupations or squatting have tended to become an organised community strategy and state-owned lands increasingly became a soft target for occupations for years especially in Matabeleland and Manicaland where forests and parks are predominant" (Moyo, 2003:68).

3.4.2 Post–Colonial Rural Associational Life

Alongside land occupations, the countryside was also undergoing a major process of reconstructing associational life and collective action. Zimbabwe's countryside was by the end of the 1980s comprised of a mosaic of associational forms including loose unstructured mutual networks such as faith-based groups, credit associations, women's groups, labour sharing groups, and the more structured peasant organisations which are either localised or national (Bratton, 1986:358). Their origins vary but labour and asset pooling formations tend to emerge out of the traditional institutional framework of cooperation, whilst those entailing the introduction of an innovation, such as joint marketing or mobilisation of savings, are founded by charismatic leaders (especially peasant organisations). State-based local functionaries such as extension officers tend to have an influence in the formation of groups for sourcing inputs and for extension support (Mlambo, 2002). Rahmato (1991) argued that communities live by a shared system of values and that these traditional values have an integrative function, especially in mobilising networks of cooperation. In certain instances, traditional leaders have been identified as a form of legitimising process of mobilisation into these networks (Chatterjee, 2002). Petty commodity producers are likely to enter associative relationships because of the perceived benefits of such endeavour, especially in a context of repeated social, economic, and environmental crises (Bratton, 1986:368). Some of the most common rural formations in Zimbabwe that played a significant part in enhancing livelihoods include national farmers' union, cooperatives, and local farmer organisations.

3.4.3 Civil and Structured Rural Formations: The Case of National Farmer Unions

There were three national farmer unions which serviced the fragmented categories of farmers according to land tenure and size. The largely white Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) grew out of the Rhodesia National Farmers' Union (RNFU) which had formed in 1942 when various regional associations of largescale white farmers and ranchers agreed to unite under a central institution (Bratton, 1994). The RNFU (and then CFU) was an important pillar of white farming power bolstered by the passing of the Farmer Licensing Act (1942) which made it mandatory for all commercial farmers to buy a farming licence from the newly formed union (Herbst, 1988:268). Through this legislation the union avoided the problem of inadequate funding and focused on developing research and lobbying capacity.

There were two farmers' unions that represented black farmers; the Zimbabwe National Farmers' Union (ZNFU) and National Farmers' Association of Zimbabwe (NFAZ). These two were at the time of independence probably the only self-managed national smallholder unions on the continent, with 9 000 and 85 000 members respectively (Bratton, 1994:15). The Zimbabwe National Farmers' Union (ZNFU) was formed in 1945 to represent the special interests of smallholders who owned private farms from 20 to 200 ha and averaging 80 ha (Bratton, 1994:14) in the then African Purchase Areas. Mufema (1997:16-17) argues that this was a successor to the Bantu Farmers Association, formed in 1938, "a quasi-political group operating alongside and as part of the Rhodesia Bantu Voters Association, the Matabele Home Society and the Southern Rhodesia Native Welfare Society". The ZNFU represented the elite of the African smallholder farming community.

The National Farmers' Association of Zimbabwe (NFAZ) represented much of the farming community. Its membership was derived from the communal areas and it originated from the Master Farmer programme initiated by the settler regime to promote the adoption of modern farming methods among the peasantries. It was led by another tier of elite peasants based within the communal areas but it did not adequately embrace the aspirations of the land and asset poor. The NFAZ was severely

handicapped by the fact that its constituency was fragmented, far from the main transportation and communication routes. It also lacked independent research capability, especially in a context in which no comprehensive research had been done on smallholder producers in the country before 1980 (Burgess, 1997:139).

The national farmer unions in Zimbabwe are better known for their role in lobbying for competitive producer prices for commodities. Since 1980 the unions representing different categories of farmers, smallholders in customary tenure areas, small-scale and large-scale commercial farmers, have combined their special skills such as research capacity (found among the large-scale commercial farmers' union) and strengths such as political muscle (resident within the black-led farmer unions) to lobby government to ensure that their members get market-related prices for their commodities (Herbst, 1988:270). In the 1980s the NFAZ and the ZNFU had to rely on the CFU's elaborate computer models of costing production to make the case that farming was becoming less economically viable in the context of the producer prices established by the state (Herbst, 1988:270). Over these years the large unions developed expertise to negotiate with financial and marketing institutions for affordable credit to members (ZFU, undated: 4). They also bargained with manufacturers for discounts on inputs such as fertilisers (Interview with ZFU Programmes Manager, December 2008). The unions, taking advantage of their presence in the city, also engaged donor organisations for the initiation and implementation of commercial projects on the farms.

At independence, the government encouraged the unions to merge and "although this was imminent at several instances it never really came about" (Bratton, 1994:23). They did manage to set up a loose umbrella committee known as the Joint President Agricultural Committee (JPAC) comprising the presidents of the three unions and serving as a forum to discuss marketing, pricing and related issues (Bratton, 1994:24). The JPAC was described as a "practical and worthwhile forum in which frank and full discussions have taken place on economics, viability, crop reports, marketing labour and security" (Sibanda, 2002:334). The Committee's lifespan was cut short because of disagreements over land reform in 1994.

After the collapse of the JPAC, the state, in pursuit of the 'one sector, one union' policy, actively promoted the idea of a merger between the two

black farmer unions. In August 1991, the Minister of Agriculture compelled the NFAZ to join the ZNFU to form the new Zimbabwe Farmers' Union (ZFU). However, the new union was dominated by leadership from the former ZNFU.

The process of the merger of the unions was perceived by members as undemocratic. District level and below structures of the NFAZ complained of inadequate consultation before the merger (Bratton, 1994:21) and many of the members felt excluded from the process of selecting national ZFU leaders. The national leadership was elected at a national congress which the NFAZ leadership had been led to believe would be the platform for discussing the process of merging the unions' structures from the district up to provincial levels before national elections could be held. However, when the Minister of Agriculture (who was the guest of honour) came to the podium he suggested the elections be held during the congress (Bratton, 1994). There was no agreement on the specific quotas for each organisation and almost all the leadership from NFAZ failed to gain entry into the new executive structures of the newly formed ZFU. Prior to their merger, the two unions had developed different specialisations; the ZNFU had focused on policy advocacy on prices and inputs while the NFAZ had put emphasis on organising smallholders to respond positively to production and marketing incentives made available by government. The activities of the NFAZ had partially contributed to the maize production boom experienced in the first five years of independence (Bratton, 1986). However, the new entity, with its recycled, mostly former ZNFU leadership, decided to take on new tasks which entailed transforming the organisation into a service delivery agency for farm supplies and new agricultural projects. The new activities included providing small farmers with credit, inputs, research and extension service. These activities potentially contributed to the greater visibility of the organisation at the local level.

However, it still failed to attract new members and by 1995 the ZFU membership was less than 10 percent of the total number of smallholder households in Zimbabwe. Mobilisation and recruitment were particularly challenging in the resettlement areas where neither of the former organisations had previously penetrated.

One of the weaknesses of the new union was its failure to recognise the high levels of internal differentiation among smallholders. The ZFU

leadership resisted identifying different socioeconomic groups within their structures and potential membership. The refusal to accept internal differentiation was inconsistent with some of the strategic decisions made by the Union. For instance, the Union's structures of participation were designed according to landholding size, small scale commercial plot holders, indigenous large scale, and communal and resettlement area farmers (ZFU, undated: 3). The new leadership insisted that communal, resettlement and small-scale farmers had common interests regarding agricultural issues (Bratton, 1994:27).

Failure to accept internal specificities led to an undifferentiated strategy for the whole union that did not respond adequately to the real needs of some of the actual members or those who might have joined. The new leadership was reluctant to target resources to the neediest members concentrated in the communal areas, giving priority instead, to programmes aimed at securing tractors and pick-up trucks which promised to benefit mainly members in the small-scale commercial sector. Some of the assumed common interests included the need for improved availability of seasonal inputs, transport, and markets. They disregarded differences in infrastructural developments especially in resettlement areas, the land tenure challenges that resettled farmers faced, and the overcrowding that communal farmers suffered (Bratton, 1994:28). Even those who retained membership within the new structures were widely differentiated, while policy was dominated by elite 'capable farmers' whose demands for freehold land for productive purposes were different and far from representing the majority of black farmer demands.

Officially the ZFU endorsed the programme of land redistribution but only to competent farmers. Its position on customary tenure was that 'deserving farmers' should be granted freehold title. The ZFU tended to divide membership according to an unclear framework of competency, focusing its activities on the medium scale commercial farming areas and neglecting problems specific to communal and resettlement area farmers. Hence, despite the officially granted monopoly that the ZFU had in the representation of small and medium scale farmers, it did not adequately represent the different socioeconomic sub-groups within the farming community.

3.4.4 Agency within Communities– Local Farmer Organisations

Rural life in Zimbabwe is complex and is neither fully commoditised nor fully pre-capitalist but rather inherent within it is a hybrid of both worlds. The associational forms that have emerged are in most cases alert to these complexities and at times mobilise and operate within pre-capitalist social relations to enhance access to the market. The most commonly existing formation is the local farmer organisation which operates under a variety of forms, such as farmer clubs, community-based organisations, savings and credit associations and women's clubs. Exact statistics on the total number of local organisations in Zimbabwe are not available, but it was estimated in 1982 that 44 per cent of households in customary areas belonged to such associational forms and in 2002 it was estimated that there were 3 000 local organisations in Zimbabwe (Bratton, 1986:371; Moyo, 2002; Sibanda, 2002). A local level study by Arnaiz (1998) on rural responses to economic reforms in the late 1990s in Shamva found out that over 50 per cent of the smallholders in the district belonged to a local farmer group. These are often localised, at times registered with the local government structures or the national farmers' union and with hierarchical structures and defined mandates, although they have been found to modify themselves in response to the grievances affecting a particular community.

Amongst a variety of the other roles, local groups are involved in defending the interests of smallholder rural households from outside threats and are part of an attempt to preserve a way of life in times of social stress. Other objectives may include social, religious, mutual welfare or community integration. There are two broad types of local farmer organisations, the agricultural and non-agricultural groups (Arnaiz, 1998). The agricultural groups can also be further divided into two categories – asset-sharing groups and access groups.

Non-agricultural groups include welfare associations, women's groups focused on income generation (such as sewing and poultry production) and savings clubs. The benefits derived from these non-agricultural activities play an important role in supporting farm-related activities such as the purchase of inputs. These groups generally have a medium to large membership and their objectives range from social welfare, to solidarity and promotion of

identity either through religion or recruitment into cults or secret societies (Rahmato, 1991). Some of the groups take advantage of the existence of ethnic and kinship networks or occupational affiliations (Rahmato, 1991:4).

3.5 POST 2000 LAND OCCUPATIONS

Exactly a day after the announcement of the February 2000 referendum results rejecting the draft constitution, war veterans occupied a derelict farm in Masvingo belonging to a white farmer (Sadomba, 2008a:119) and this triggered a wave of occupations such that by the end of the month this had occurred on 30 farms across the country. At their height in June about 800 farms had been occupied (Moyo and Yeros, 2005b:188). Yet again the response of the state to the new wave of occupations was ambivalent. There seemed to be two camps, one that preferred to pursue a legalistic route and another that was "in favour of radical nationalist solutions to the land question" (Moyo and Yeros, 2005b:188). When the national land movement re-emerged in 2000 the latter camp appeared able to dominate but not without resistance (Helliker et al., 2008:14). Unlike in earlier times when land occupations were resisted by the state, this phase of occupations enjoyed tacit endorsement from the Government, for instance whereas during the earlier land occupations the state had evicted the land occupiers, in the post-2000 period the land occupation movement received logistical support from the ruling party and the state (Moyo and Yeros, 2005b:192).

Many land occupations were spearheaded by war veterans and in a few cases by traditional leaders (Moyo and Yeros, 2005: p189). The overriding social base of the land occupiers was mainly the rural-based semi-proletariat from neighbouring customary areas and in certain instances it expanded to include the urban unemployed elements. The categories of people participating in land occupations included farm workers, urban unemployed and people from communal areas, including those on resettlement waiting lists, joined the occupations to enhance their chances for resettlement (Moyo, 2001). Rural and urban elites also participated in the land occupations with the intention of attaining more land for grazing or in order to penetrate new frontiers for petty trading purposes (Moyo, 2001; Chaumba et al 2003).

Although land occupations seemed chaotic, it has been shown through various studies (Moyo, 2001, Moyo and Yeros, 2005, Chaumba et al 2003, Sadomba, 2008) that structures and procedures were followed in land and beneficiary identification and allocation of plots. Smaller and localised administrative units capable of making decisions within a shorter amount of time were established in most of the locales. At district level the new land committees included local ministry officials, traditional leaders plus the ruling party, security organs and war veterans. Locally the role and place of traditional leaders' varied; in some instances they were called in to lead the land identification process based on historical claims and in some they were called to legitimize occupations and also to 'bless' the occupation (Chaumba, 2003). In certain instances traditional leaders tended to compete amongst themselves in defense of their jurisdictions and also competed with local government structures and outsiders in order to settle their 'subjects' (Moyo and Yeros, 2007)

In a field survey conducted by Chaumba et al (2003) they noted the visible leadership role of war veterans and the replication of 'army barrack' like form of organisation; curfews were established, and visitors had to report to the base commander first. Furthermore, the 'organisation of the base camp reveals a highly militarized organisational structure to an extent that the base camps took on the semblance of a military camp, for example, occupiers were segregated by gender. War veterans played an influential role in the land committees; they continued to influence the identification of land for acquisition and also in vetting land beneficiaries based on waiting lists submitted by customary area leaders. The land committees emerged as the most influential local institutions in bringing order and coherency to the implementation process (Chaumba et al 2003) at both district and provincial levels. Their roles included mobilisation of communities, monitoring of progress in terms of pegging of land, regulation of the actual occupations, identifying land to be expropriated by the state and resolving land conflicts (Moy, 2001, Chaumba et al 2003).

The overriding social base of the land occupiers was the rural-based petty commodity producers and the landless from neighbouring customary areas, and in certain instances it expanded to include urban unemployed elements (Chaumba et al., 2003a:9). The categories of people participating in land occupations included farm workers, urban unemployed and people

from communal areas, including those on resettlement waiting lists, who joined the occupations to enhance their chances of resettlement (Moyo, 2001:323). Rural and urban elites also participated in the land occupations to attain more land for grazing or to penetrate new frontiers for petty trading purposes (Moyo, 2001; Chaumba et al., 2003a:23).

3.5.1 Post Land Reform Social Organisation and Agency

The land redistribution process was implemented in such a way that it brought together strangers from different backgrounds to settle on previously large-scale farms that had been subdivided into smaller units for the land beneficiaries. Most of these previously large farms had immoveable productive and non-productive assets that could not be utilised effectively by a single household resettled on six ha of land. As part of its efforts to rationalise access to such equipment the GoZ issued a directive that all A1 households should share the productive and social infrastructure left behind by the previous owner without necessarily outlining how this would be done (GoZ, 2001b:2). Productive infrastructure found on the farms included tobacco barns, dip-tanks, cattle handling facilities and irrigation equipment. Social infrastructure included farmhouses and farm worker compounds (GoZ 2001b:3). The farm divisions in A1 areas created common grazing lands which had to be utilised by the resettled beneficiaries on a particular former large-scale commercial farm, thereby suggesting another arena for engagement among the beneficiaries. The survey found seven common areas of cooperation among households resettled on what used to be a large-scale farm and these are: sharing of productive infrastructure, sharing of social infrastructure, reciprocal hiring of equipment, labour sharing, combined farming operations, sharing of advice and information, common membership in similar associational forms.

3.6 Structured Multifaceted Farmers Groups

Studies by Murisa (2007, 2009, 2011) and Masuko (2009) have found that even though beneficiary selection did not emphasise lineage links the newly resettled beneficiaries have set about establishing networks of cooperation that include structured local farmer groups in the few years of being settled together. Murisa (2011) discusses in more detail the extent to which these groups have facilitated farm production and the creation of a sense of community in the absence of state or NGO intervention. There are many reasons for associationism, and they include the previous socialisation of beneficiaries, most of whom come from customary tenure areas where production, consumption and accumulation were usually organised within certain identifiable frameworks of association. These frameworks of association include the lineage structure, farmer unions, local clubs, and projects of cooperation organised by NGOs. The second-largest segment of beneficiaries comes from the urban areas where there are varied associational activities, ranging from rotating savings and credit clubs among vegetable vendors to religious activities. These groups are multi-focused, the most common activities including mobilising resources through the pooling of labour, productive assets and expertise, ensuring access to critical inputs such as fertilisers and seeds, and mediation of farmers' grievances with regard to production.

There are various layers of associational activity. Representative associations have been established at the district and the Intensive Conservation Area[1] (ICA) and the ward level in many provinces. In Bromley, in Goromonzi district the land beneficiaries have formed the Bromley Farmers Association (BFA) with approximately 250 active members drawn from the A1 and A2 farms. The Association was formed in 2005 and seeks to address common grievances within the resettled community (interviews with BFA members, September 2008). The Association has been involved since its establishment in the bulk-buying of inputs such as fertilisers and seeds for members. The executive committee of the association is almost entirely made up of A1 beneficiaries with just one A2 farmer as an ex-officio member. However, the Association has been facing viability challenges since 2008 because it failed to secure inputs for its members and has not managed to come up with a constitution that clarifies its mandate and

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1   An ICA comprises 4-5 administrative wards and ICAs make up the district.

objectives (interview with AREX officer, September 2008).

The Zvimba South Farmers Association services half of the Zvimba district, which includes Banket and surrounding areas. The Association has a pre-fast track resettlement history. It was created by local leaders (mostly politicians) to foster improved yields and nurture good agricultural practice among smallholder farmers but was always hampered by low membership levels. In the aftermath of the fast-track programme the Association experienced a new lease of life. It was revived as a mobilising platform for those who had been offered land but were struggling to obtain inputs (interview with Executive Committee member of the Association, August 2006). The Association represents all the newly resettled farmers and customary tenure area households. Since 2003 the Association has been involved in securing inputs for its members through bulk buying or entering contract farming arrangements. However, due to its broad-based membership, it has not managed entirely to satisfy the differentiated internal interests and has been seen to prioritise the interests of the A2 farmers.

While local farmer groups have emerged on almost every A1 settlement this does not necessarily mean they are an adequate response to the constraints faced by the newly resettled farmers. However, without romanticizing the significance of these formations there is need to appreciate their significance and the clues these formations provide to understanding how social organisation in the newly resettled areas is evolving under austere economic circumstances and as part of a bundle of strategies to extricate themselves from dependency on the state. Their emergence has been a critical intervention in the survival of the newly resettled communities. The benefits derived from common membership are broader than the stated objectives of the group.

These formations have within a short space of time improved farm production capacities, especially at Dunstan and Dalkeith farms. The groups have contributed towards broader rural participation by nurturing democratic practice within and outside the organisation. At an immediate level, local organisations have managed to shift the locus of rural power from traditional structures (headmen and chiefs) in terms of organising communities for farm production and relations of exchange. They have also contributed to pluralising social organisation beyond the traditional structure. Their emergence has not been a neat process but combines self-

organisation and externally imposed rationalities to engage in collective action to lessen the external agents' (in the case of the newly resettled areas, the state) burden of introducing new farm innovations and direct support.

The attempts by the land beneficiaries to form associational forms are part of the initial steps towards addressing broader issues of distribution and long-term economic sustainability although they do not seem to have a coherent viable agrarian vision. Furthermore, the groups that have emerged have no links with both the national and global networks of rural producers' associations that are at the forefront of mobilising against the negative effects of globalisation especially the removal of subsidies to smallholder farmers, rather the forms of social organisation that have emerged are deeply subordinated to the state. These developments form part of a long-held tradition within the post-colonial state of usurping legitimacy found in local authority structures and institutions to its own ends. This has involved reconfiguring traditional structures to be more focused on servicing the needs of the state and to ensure that traditional authority functionaries derive their power from the state. In terms of local cooperation, the strategy has entailed co-opting the emerging formations through the provision of subsidies and deploying a modernising state agent in the form of the extension officer. Thus, whilst land reform has to a certain extent accommodated the majority poor, the ensuing local government and agrarian reforms are more focused on limiting their participation in broader processes of political engagement around distribution and accumulation and their own governance.

3.7 Significance of Emerging Associational Forms

Using the same schema of reasoning as Mamdani (1996) and Gramsci's notion of civil society, the discussion below summarises the significance of the fast-track reforms, associationism in local farmer groups and village authority. As already mentioned, the fast-track programme not only redistributed land but significantly altered relations of property ownership, with the state becoming the landlord holding land in trust for all the A1 and A2 beneficiaries. This is in direct contrast to the previous situation in

which land was either privately owned or held in trust by clan elders on behalf of their people.

The introduction of promissory tenure that is statutorily defined within A1 settlement gives the immediate impression of the expansion of citizenship to the countryside. Besides the introduction of civil laws in property relations the programme is linked with associational activity outside the parameters of kinship (except in few instances). These developments suggest that the hallmarks of civil society have been attained. However, the movement towards this civil society remains constrained by several factors. Firstly, it lacks an organic leadership (what Gramsci calls 'the intellectual') to challenge for autonomy against the state. The leadership previously provided by war veterans during the period of occupations has dissipated. There are remnants of war veteran leadership within some of the local farmer groups, but it is too fragmented and isolated to have a significant impact on broader mobilisation. Secondly, fast track resettlement areas remain not only isolated from the national smallholders' union but also from global and national civil society comprising a complex web of networks involving local and international actors such as NGOs, unions and donors. The local farmer groups that have emerged operate outside the parameters of this civil society. They sit uneasily in both the civil society and as subordinate agents of the state as they help their members to undertake productive and economic activities, a role associated with the state. They remain shunned and isolated by other civil society-based networks despite the state's attempts to civilise the fast-track resettlement areas by ensuring that the land beneficiaries are legitimate property holders through the 17th Amendment to the Constitution which nationalised all the agricultural land.

The continued exclusion of fast-track resettlement areas from the networks characterising civil society is not surprising. Civil society discourse in Zimbabwe and globally is united around the need to protect human rights and it is the interpretation of the right of the individual that is problematic. As discussed above the constraint view as an approach to human rights tends to be ahistorical and status quo oriented. The Commercial Farmers' Union managed to operate within this sphere of rights and to defend the rights of its members to due process in land redistribution while disregarding the historical theft of land, labour and livestock. Other civil society networks including the ZFU were also mobilised to defend the

racially defined privilege based on due process and the 'rule of law'. The CFU in the process emphasised (to the point of exaggeration) its importance to the economy and the urban civil society-based networks joined in the process of ridiculing 'fast track' as "chaotic and likely to lead to a decline in agricultural production" (Zimbabwe Crisis Coalition and National Constitutional Assembly Joint Press Statement, August 2001). While the fears of production decline are genuine, the statements from urban-based civil society were not accompanied by viable alternatives to the 'fast track' approach.

The fact that fast track resettlement areas are isolated from receiving support from development and relief NGOs is convenient for both civil society and the state. It simplifies a very complex problem where civil society, by choosing not to engage with the land beneficiaries, can continue to dismiss the land reform process as largely benefiting politically connected elites. In the meantime, the ZANU (PF) dominated state remains the only active external agent in providing support. In the absence of partnerships with civil society, the local farmer groups in newly resettled areas have entered into relationships of survival with the state. This is convenient for the ZANU (PF) dominated government for two reasons. Firstly, the state and the party remain the only players active in responding to the challenges these communities face, and this dependence entrenches clientelist relations. Secondly, the GoZ uses the isolation of the newly resettled areas from any outside help to strengthen their case of sanctions. The rules of engagement with the state have been mostly welfare and production-oriented to an extent that the politics of local farmer groups remain very underdeveloped.

However, although these formations look similar to the groups existing in customary areas they need not to be treated as similar. In customary areas, they are a product of a society with established structures of authority, while in the newly resettled areas they are emerging within a space where there is no defined framework of cooperation and the legitimacy of local authority is in a state of flux and contestation. In certain instances, such as in Goromonzi, the local farmer groups have become a more dominant structure of inclusion and allocation of resources, especially in the absence of the lineage form of organisation, while in rare cases such as at Dalkeith, where beneficiary selection was based on belonging within a certain lineage group, traditional authority functionaries have taken the lead in establishing

village structures that include the farmer group. There is a need to qualify the foregoing by briefly discussing the significance of the emergence of traditional authority in these areas.

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C H A P T E R   F O U R

CITIZENS AND PROTEST: THE RISE AND FALL OF HASHTIVISM IN ZIMBABWE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The site of mobilisation for political and policy change has shifted from formal spaces into loosely established formations. These new arenas of political mobilisation focus on the need for improved economic performance, creation of jobs, addressing corruption and improved service delivery. In some instances, these have worked alongside NGO based activism for the respect of the rule of law, human rights and free and fair elections. They mostly operate outside of organized civil society-based organizations but are not necessarily in contradiction with

the demands and aspirations of civil society. They are not constrained by the rigidities within formal organisation and tend to be spontaneous in how they operate. They also do not necessarily fit the social movement tag easily; they have no defined membership but are mostly identified by the cause that they are attempting to address. The discussion in this chapter explores the way citizens have protested against the excesses of government. There is already a fair amount of literature on the big labour led strikes and protests against government (see for instance Yeros, 2002, Ratopolous and Mlambo, 2004) there is very little on internal dynamics within citizens'-based formations and how protests evolve from the formal civil society space into what one can call 'new movements.

4.2 Potential for Citizen Based Democracy

Currently one of the most significant challenges to democratisation in Zimbabwe is that most citizens feel powerless or do not see the need to participate in national political processes. Modern and free political communities must first have people who are citizens and not subjects. The struggles for independence from colonial rule usually framed a redistribution agenda, equity, freedom and justice. In Zimbabwe, for instance, reference was also made to 'taking over the commanding heights of the economy'(Astow, 1983). However, Zimbabwe and many other African struggled to meet the promise of independence. The failure of the 'independence project' to deliver on national development, especially on justice, efficiency, equity and freedom, yielding instead monopolization of property, concentration of power in the hands of a small elite and unprecedented violence against citizens who dared to challenge power had led to the need to reconceptualize and reimagine cites and spaces for self-organisation and new ways of engaging the state. Furthermore, the unfinished business of liberation led to the questioning of the role of the state in promoting equitable development and broadly justice. Citizens across the country responded to this failure by slowly disengaging from state-based processes initially by just not voting and instead organizing themselves within autonomous organic associative activities and relationships. These

associational forms and activities are unevenly spread across the country but are characterized by an attempt to recreate livelihoods or social order in a context of diminishing state capacity. The associational forms that citizens establish include but are not limited to savings and loans societies, self-help groupings, multi-purpose cooperatives, occupational groupings and unions.

Oftentimes the claim is made that citizens withdrew from the public political space. In many instances, such a claim is based either on a narrow definition of politics focusing mostly on the act of voting or an inadequate observation of the ways that citizens are actually engaged. Instead, when we redefine democracy as 'the politics of the governed' and begin to investigate what citizens are doing to each other and with each other to address local problems we come across an actively engaged citizenry as the discussion that follows will demonstrate. Citizens within their own platforms of agency are actively pursuing a variety of goals ranging from improved socio-economic opportunities, negotiating power and governance frameworks, resolving welfare and collaboration in times of local crises. Zimbabweans like many other Africans are very associational in nature and it is through these voluntary platforms that are actively addressing issues to do with their wellbeing. An average Zimbabwean family belongs to a religious institution (usually a church), a residents' association, a welfare/solidarity focused association such as a burial society and for others even a savings society. We have also observed a similar tendency in the rural areas. In many communities, production and accumulation are actually organized within these voluntary formations. These formations provide clues to understanding what citizens are doing with each other-the stuff of democracy but also the potential of mobilisation into party based politics that aims at taking over the reins of power.

The democracy under discussion should be seen more and more as the politics of the governed or what citizens do to/with each other. Such a formulation of democracy is contingent upon a constitution that guarantees rights of citizens in terms of their participation in the public space and as the ultimate sovereign. Unfortunately for Zimbabwe, the political class has not adequately ceded space for citizen engagement rather like any other elite in political power they have sought to direct how citizens should participate in politics with pre-arranged boundaries of what citizens can do and cannot do. Attempts at stifling citizens' independent thought and

actions has yielded an environment of polarization between those who hold power and citizens. In the process, public protest instead of dialogue has become the main characteristic of how citizens engage with the state. In the previous dispensation, the compact between citizens and the state was characterized by fear, intimidation and patronage and it is incumbent upon the new leadership to promote a culture of dialogue between those who hold power and citizens.

4.3 In Search of New Definitions

For the purpose of the discussion, we define the formations under discussion as new hashtag based social movements[1] because of the manner in which they leverage technology especially social media to mobilize others to the cause, publicize their work and even affect their advocacy. These new social movements unlike the traditional ones are not necessarily membership-based or driven but instead leverage social media and other technology-based mobilizing tools. They organized twenty-five protests within three months (May, June and July 2016) signifying a huge shift and in the process stretching the oppression machinery of the state. The same movements were also at the centre of probably the largest turn-out of citizens at the courts in solidarity with the leader of the #thisflag movement. Could this be the awakening of a new form of a civic alliance Zimbabwe?

They also mimicked global movements such as the occupy movement that began in the US and spread across the world. The Zimbabwean version was called Occupy African Unity Square (OAUS)[2]. Others included #thisflag and #tajamuka (we have rebelled) and #sokwanele (we have had enough) emerged overnight and their posts on Facebook (especially the

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1   They have been called hashtag movements due to their dependence on technology especially the use of their twitter and Facebook platforms to communicate grievances and to mobilize for public action.

2   The African Unity Square is an iconic park located at the centre of Harare and lies adjacent to parliament and other historical buildings-it was named Africa Unity Square at the time of independence to reflect the new identity of the country. The choice of the park as venue for protest is equally significant as it challenges those in power to reflect on how they have undone the promise of liberation.

#thisflag) went viral. Some of it was purely organic without a detailed plan, for instance, Evan Mawarire a young pastor posted a video of himself on Facebook expressing his frustration of failing to pay his daughter's school fees because of the prevailing macro-economic conditions and he connected his personal grievance to the promise embodied in the national flag, which in many respects is a symbol of liberation and self-determination. His post went viral leading to the emergence of #thisflag movement, initially as a one-man band but eventually broadening to include a cross-section of society. He continued with weekly podcasts and in them raising important issues such as corruption, inconsistencies in monetary policy, worsening economic conditions. His podcasts led to a 'town-hall' like meeting with the governor of the central bank and representatives of different sections of civil society when the latter sought clarification on government's strategy to resolve cash shortages and enhance productivity. The #thisflag campaign's activities culminated in a non-violent stay-away action from work. It was so successful that they literally shut down the entire country for a day. However, when they thought to call for another one government arrested Pastor Evan, initially on charges of disturbing the peace and eventually changing them to treason charges. His arrest and arraignment in the courts resulted in a spontaneous gathering of over 5,000 protesters who thronged the Harare Magistrates court, protesting his arrest and demanding that he be released immediately.

Alongside #thisflag there emerged another formation under the banner #Ses'jikile-tajamuka[3] led by former students' leaders who had been active in opposition politics. Their main demand was for the then President to step down because of failure to govern. Besides mobilizing via social media, they also engaged in one-on-one conversations with people waiting in long bank queues. The campaign, together with the radical sections of the vendors association and renegades from the trade unions held a public protest at a hotel where one of the Vice Presidents was staying citing his actions as an extravagance in a country that is struggling to pay wages to workers. They called for a boycott of the hotel and roped in TripAdvisor, the popular travel advise website, to also support the boycott.

Also, from May to June 2016 there was a group of activists gathered

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3   Literally meaning, we have changed, and we are rebelling.

under the banner 'occupy Africa Unity square' a park in central Harare. The protest was largely peaceful and continued for a period of more than 40 days without interruption save for skirmishes with the police. The protest was directed at government's failure in resolving the deteriorating socio-economic conditions in Zimbabwe, in particular rampant state corruption and, they were protesting the disappearance of Itai Dzamara, a well-known public journalist and critic of the government who had also in previous months spent time at Africa Unity Square protesting. The #occupy movement was perhaps one of the most sophisticated in the way they articulated the ongoing problems and connected the local with the global in exposing how neoliberalism-based policies adopted in the 1990s combined with a despotic political system have served to worsen material conditions in the country.

By July 2016, the country had experienced 25 protests and eight of these were in June and three major ones in July. The grievances of the protesters included discontent over several issues including human rights abuses, the apparent collapse of the economy, lack of jobs, insincerity of government in the process. Many other sections of society organized protests; public transport operators-who have borne the brunt of being abused by police on the roads- organized a strike refusing to operate.

Most of the protests have been led by those who have not been involved in public activism before such as clergymen, underground movements, vendors, drivers and commuter omnibus touts, cross border traders and those frustrated with their formal institutions (such as trade unions). There was no evidence of overarching leadership or broader coordination, instead, they seemed to be autonomous from each other but connected in terms of the issues they respond to; an increasingly incompetent state, collapsing economy, high level of corruption, overwhelming unemployment, poverty and limited spaces/platforms to engage with office holders. The response of the state to the protests was predictable. They used beatings and arrests. However, unlike before where state-based violence could be hidden, ordinary citizens have become journalists and they were able to capture and share images of police brutality using their smartphones.

4.4 Characteristics of the Hashtag Formations

The sub-sections below describe in a more detailed manner some of the salient features of these new forms of civic agency using an analytic framework initially developed by Veltmeyer (2001) and expanded by Moyo (2002). The framework provides scope for a comprehensive discussion on the internal and external dynamics of these formations by examining their origins, the way they grow, their material demands and their strategies and tactics. The discussion avoids a technical evaluation like approach but instead objectively examines these formations as actors contributing to ongoing processes that can potentially invigorate democracy.

4.5 Origins, Growth and Model

Many of the new formations emerged out of frustration with the socio-economic context and the lack of a visible counter-vailing force. The economic decline that peaked around 2016 was associated with increased levels of unemployment, with shortages and closure of companies and it provided fertile ground for actors outside of the state to consider how to engage the government. Evan Mawarire, the undoubted founder of #this flag started his protest with a message of discontent with the status quo which he posted on his Facebook page. The reason behind the post, he explains, was the frustration he was feeling at the time he could not pay school fees for his daughter and as he was reflecting on options, he looked at the flag that was at his desk and thought about the promise of liberation which had not been fulfilled. He has admitted on several platforms that he did not wake up one day planning to form a national movement. He was just expressing his own frustration and when the first post went viral, he felt obligated to post another one.

The same spontaneity is also evident in the establishment of the Occupy Africa Unity Square movement. According to one of the founders, Linda Masarira, the action started off with just two women and by the end of the day the number had grown up to fifty and by the sixth day, they were more than one hundred. It kept on growing in numbers until the state arrested

and dispersed the occupiers under 'the public nuisance' charge.

However other formations such as Tajamuka had more deliberate origins. Linda Masarira stated that;

> 'We (Linda and Lynette Mudeme) spoke with Promise and a lot of people and that is when we formed Tajamuka. When we formed Tajamuka we had just gotten to a stage where we said enough is enough, where are we, because we were just a grouping of young people, jobless, hopeless, helpless and we were just asking ourselves how long we were going to be like this and where really are we going?

Tajamuka was established in a more deliberate manner as a platform for coordinating public protests. They reached out to formal opposition parties, youth and student organisations. One of the founding team members, Promise Mkhwananzi is a former student leader and at some point, he was the leader of the youth wing in the opposition MDC.

Whereas the way these formations were established may differ, there is a striking similarity when it comes to the reasons why they were established. All of them cited the harsh economic environment and visible inequality in terms of lifestyles between politically connected elites and the rest of the society. One of the members stated it this way;

> "We have a crisis of governance, we have had the same government in power for 37 years and they have gone from crises to crises, from mishandling our problems, they have gone from fumbling on issue to fumbling on issue, and so they are systematic .... institutionalized problems that affect the lives of Zimbabweans."

They kept on citing corruption especially the disappearance of monies

from diamonds. At that time, the then President Mugabe had revealed that US$15 billion from diamond earnings could not be accounted for. They were also concerned about the cash shortages that had led to many people spending hours or days in bank ques. Others also felt the need to take the initiative in responding and resolving the crisis instead of waiting for the government, opposition political parties or NGO's. One of the respondents emphatically declared;

> 'The only people that can, and that should act and will bring an end to this are the citizens themselves'

4.6 Material Demands

There is some level of difference between the formations in terms of what they were demanding, the Mawarire led #this flag was mostly a call for government to fix the mess they have caused. Mawarire summed up this flag's manner of demands as

> "What I have done is to represent the issues that are on the ground and his (Mugabe's) government has failed to respond to that."

Whilst Tajamuka is very clear that there should be a power shift - one of the big demands was for President Mugabe to step down. The Occupy Africa Unity Square also demanded amongst many other things that the entire government should step down. One of the respondents, a member of the Occupy Africa Unity Square stated it this way,

".... the only thing we are asking from the government is to step down because the things we are asking for, are the things they have not provided and will not provide and are incapable of providing...so it would be ridiculous. It will be like asking a donkey to fly."

All the formations also made demands for a functioning economy with capacity to create jobs, availability of cash at banks, dealing with corruption and improved service delivery. When the government came up with Statutory Instrument 64 as a method of controlling imports to save foreign currency, the pool of protestors widened to include cross border traders. The Statutory instrument was seen as a threat to the livelihoods of many unemployed who had been pushed into the informal sector. There is also the realization that the political culture, mostly characterized by polarization along racial lines, implicit ethnic undertones and intolerance of dissenting views by the ruling party is highly problematic and has to be addressed.

Admittedly, given the diversity, there would be many demands from these formations and some of those listed include fixing the country, improved access to education, access to clean water, justice (getting a fair hearing at the courts and also for police to restrain from arbitrary). They are also committed to seeing an improvement at local government level.

In March 2017, the different formations came together and produced a Citizens' Manifesto for change. In it, they expressed a common vision of change and identified specific policy-related issues that need to be fixed. The process behind the citizens' manifesto brought together sections of organized civil society and the new hashtag movements-based activists signifying possibilities of broader alliance building within the struggles for a more inclusive Zimbabwe.

4.7 Organization, Strategy and Tactics

As already mentioned, most of these were spontaneous in their emergence. They literally went through sudden growth to an extent that some were devising ways of work whilst in the middle of protesting. The

#this flag was centred around its founder and there were no visible attempts to create membership structures except for his core which eventually grew to involve even his legal defence team. Tajamuka is different in that it was started through a deliberate process of consultation with different stakeholder groups seen to be sharing similar concerns. Linda Masarira explained it this way;

> 'What we did when we formed Tajamuka is that it was young people from different youth organisations, the political parties and youth leagues in the church that believed in the cause.'

From these consultations, Tajamuka then formed a core group of coordinators made up of activists from ZINASU and the youth structure of the MDC and PDP. Instead, Tajamuka should thus be seen as an aggregator platform for different groups sharing similar concerns. Perhaps the multiple stakeholders also served to influence the need for decentralized structures across the country and the holding of regular meetings for planning purposes. Occupy Africa Unity Square (OAUS) remained mostly spontaneous with no visible signs of a single leader. They remain the only ones with a more sophisticated analysis of the causes of the crises and the connection between the local and the global. Some of the core actors within OAUS used to belong to a radical left group the International Socialist Organisation (ISO).

These formations also differ in terms of public actions. Evan Mawarire's #this flag mostly focused on regular podcasts via Facebook where he was calling on Zimbabweans not to be afraid but to confront/engage leadership in dialogue but in a non-violent way. Evan Mawarire's posts went viral on Facebook calling for a responsive government and even the state-based violent response to these protestors was captured on smartphones and quickly shown around the world. They were able to successfully call for a stay-away through what they call the ShutdownZimbabwe campaign. Tajamuka on the other hand has always been unrestrained, they have engaged in violent protests and directly confronted the state. They have

also been engaged in sit-ins within local councils to protest the lack of service delivery. All the formations use instant messaging-based platforms such as WhatsApp to mobilize people to a campaign, demonstrate and even to hold meetings. Technology also helped these formations to connect with the outside world. The Occupy movement's strategy was to literally take over a public park and make it a site of protest and had night vigils for almost 40 continuous nights in the winter. They also managed to connect and combine forces with Zimbabweans in the Diaspora and others concerned about the country. One of the founders of the Occupy Africa Unity Square said

> "...there are comrades in London who would carry out demonstrations at the Zimbabwe Embassy in solidarity with our action in Harare ...and the people in the United States that we would communicate with".

There is very limited funding into these formations. Most of the funding groups were only involved in assisting with providing legal aid and other forms of support after the arrests of the activists. None of the formations have physical offices but they had ways of meeting together quickly. Most of those interviewed confirmed that there is no strong sense of strictly belonging within a formation but instead they are cause driven and tend to join different protests initiatives as they emerge. Most of them mentioned they had at some point worked together with certain formal unions such as students' union ZINASU.

In their organizing, they seemed to be wary of old methods preferring instead to try out new approaches. One of the OAUS activists stated;

> 'Now that sort of formalized structural way of doing things has drawbacks and a lot of the time it is in tactical imagination, where a lot of people have set ways of doing things. What has made us effective....is the fact that we have gone out on a limb and taken risk to do something differently'.

The manner in which they have chosen to engage with police is also different. Historically, protestors have been advised to seek police clearance before their public action, but these activists found a loophole; there is actually no requirement for police clearance but instead it is a courtesy given to the police. The Bill of Rights in the constitution gives people the right to demonstrate if it is peaceful. It has not been smooth sailing for these formations as they have also faced opposition from groups that have been in the space for longer. Political parties have been wary of them getting more media coverage and allegations have been made that at certain instances leaders in these political parties have discouraged their youth structures from participating. Their appeal remains concentrated within the new groups as per observation below:

> "If you take an organisation, who have been active and doing their thing for many years, if you go in there as an organisation, as a movement that has popped up last month and try to tell them how to do things, it is not going to happen. Whereas if you go to a group like a residents' association that has been dealing with issues in a quieter way for a while but are now interested in action, that is a bit more radical. If you come as a person who has gone toe to toe with the riot police and who is known for being arrested and pulling off some spectacular stunts, then there is already an attitude of 'hey you are one of those guys' and there is a bit more deference to you..."

They must navigate tensions between sticking to the established routines of the game and innovating new approaches. Their organizational skills have been stretched by the state when it goes on a blitz and arrests the leadership. The arrests tend to create gaps for continuous mobilization leading to moments where there is no visible mobilization on the ground despite the worsening economic conditions. Most of these actors are youths, and some are young adults who still have to find ways of paying for their upkeep in the city. Some of them have failed to pay rentals for the cottages/

apartments that they are renting leading to them being kicked out. These personal challenges at times lead to some to make a withdrawal from day to day organizing so that they can focus on resolving their personal issues.

Most of these formations appeal to youths from most of the political parties, maybe except ZANU (PF), and to the large numbers that are essentially part of the lumpen proletariat with no productive activities. In fact, the numbers of protestors tend to swell during days of demonstrating beyond the core group of organizers. The swelling in numbers suggests a widespread nature of the grievances that these formations are trying to address. Other age groups have struggled with the manner of organisations, and the most common comment has been about an unclear endgame. What are they trying to accomplish? Are they going to be a political party and try to take over power?

4.8 Conclusion: Significance of the Hashtag Movements

To sustain freedom and equality in the political domain there is need for urgent processes that help transform the institutions and practices of civil society, whether from the top or from below. The post 2015 period presented new challenges in terms of how civic engagement around questions of democracy in Zimbabwe was to be framed. The emergence of hashtivism (#thisflag, #tajamuka, #tshay'imbiza) suggest the need for a more nuanced approach to understanding the evolution civic engagement and especially how citizens are clawing back into a space previously dominated only by formal and elitist structures. The question remains though, what does it really mean for democracy and the future of Zimbabwe. Premature as it may seem, there are many lessons to be gleaned from these protests. We cannot be conclusive, this is a discussion of something that is in motion, yet still needs to be understood – that is the challenge of social change.

There have already been several criticisms raised on the value of social movements and public protests such as #thisflag and #tajamuka. Miles Tendi (15 July, 2016) was dismissive of these, "*Hashtag activism and Facebook posts will never be a substitute for a well-crafted agenda; nor do they offer a successful alternative to on-the-ground political engagement*". He was right in many ways.

There is usually a huge vacuum created after such intoxicatingly spontaneous protests. For example, what happened after the Arab Spring and even more recently, in Burkina Faso. However, Tendi misses some significant aspects about these protests, that is their origins and the social base, considering the real challenges of living in Zimbabwe (prior to November 2017) with very limited space to organize and the high price one had to pay to speak against the regime. As already mentioned these movements are mostly led by ordinary people but instead of being parochial they are alive to global trends of mobilizing, are in tune with how the local grievances are connected to global frameworks of organizing economies such as neoliberalism, they are alive to the fact that the idea of political party based democracy is also being tested, the potential of removing despotic authority through protest as they had seen in Burkina Faso and also during the Arab Spring.

The leaders of these hashtag movements were visibly involved in the organization of the biggest march ever seen in Zimbabwe on the 18th of November 2017. The main demand from the marchers was for the then President to step down. Indeed, on the following Tuesday he stepped down after a culmination of citizen-based actions which demonstrated that Zimbabweans no longer wanted him to remain in office. Furthermore, these movements value the importance of organizing locally and engaging with authorities. Take for instance the town hall like meeting with the governor of the central bank. They also have the capacity for more sophisticated campaigns such as carrying a public petition for the dismissal of a Cabinet Minister over corruption. As already mentioned, it is too early to tell how these movements will reposition themselves considering the new populist regime. Activists such as Evan Mawarire and Linda Masarira have continued to call for improved service delivery and in January 2018, they ran a campaign to bring to the attention of leaders the challenges to do with the quality of water being supplied by the council. Others who have been involved in these movements have announced that they will be running for office either in the state legislature or council. These trends continue to present challenges on how we interpret civil society and the manner in which activists envisage themselves as champions of change.

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CHAPTER FIVE

CITIZENS' SOLIDARITY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

C itizens interact with each other on a daily basis and their daily interactions are mostly focused on cohering livelihoods and providing support to one another through material and immaterial support. This chapter foregrounds the important but often marginalised link between citizens' daily interactions and democratic processes. We argue for nuanced ways of thinking about and doing democracy. Rethinking democracy not only entails embracing the role of elections and officeholders, it also means acknowledging the fact that the work of a democracy goes beyond election processes. This chapter problematises democracy as a concept and method and seeks to answer the question: What is the work of democracy? So far, we have considered the various ways in which citizens from different contexts mobilise themselves to agitate against a grievance. These forms of mobilisation have a stronger relationship with

electoral politics or the apparent political aspects of democracy and they serve to expose the existing gaps between what officeholders are engaged in and what the electorate desire. However, there are civic capacities that on a superficial level, seem to not have a direct relationship with processes of seeking and retaining power. These mostly focus on creating social and economic opportunities for members within or those they deem fit to be recipients of their endeavours. Indeed, there are many different types of organisations established by citizens in pursuit of resolving economic and social problems and these range from associations, community-based organisations (community foundations), social movements and many more. Thus, with reference to some of these organisations, we seek show how the problem-solving work that is done by citizens with each-other, is significant to the achievement of democracy.

The Kettering Foundation has for over three decades been pre-occupied with the question 'What makes democracy work as it should?' They have mostly focused on what citizens do with each other in their communities so as to resolve public problems. This is not some post-modern thinking that imagines an existence outside of the state, but rather, a quest to understand how "a diverse body of citizens joined together in ever changing alliances to make choices about how to advance their common well-being." (Mathews 1999:1). Theirs is an attempt at developing a democracy that integrates two forces that have been in conflict ever since the emergence of electoral-based democracy. The two contending forces can be described as: (i) power comes from representative government and (ii) power comes from direct citizen action. The kind of democracy being envisaged here is broader than that which is narrowly framing around elections. This expansive democracy thrives when citizens are able to take responsibility for what happens in their communities and decide who can make sound decisions about their future. In other words, there is a need for an actively engaged citizenry.

5.1.1 Beyond a Fixation with 'Democracy is Equal to Elections' Mantra

Rethinking democracy also entails unthinking the taken for granted assumption that democracy solely lies within elections and to consider other

equally important parts of democracy. Currently, there is no consensus on the additional ingredients required to achieve sustainable democracy. Some scholars have argued that there is need to strengthen constitutionalism–the rule by the constitution. The constitutionalism school holds that institutions that uphold the constitution such as the civil service, courts, prosecutorial services and various commissions have not been adequately developed or granted sufficient autonomy to ensure that provisions and freedoms guaranteed in the constitution can be rolled out to everyone without favour or bias. The constitutionalism school is prominent across most of Africa and it has played a major role in ensuring constitutional reforms, legal challenges to executive decisions, and, in countries like Kenya, Malawi and Zimbabwe, has even challenged election results. However, the political science and constitutional law traditions that have been at the forefront of the struggle for constitutionalism have paid little attention to ways in which citizens engage and negotiate with power as well as the power relations that emerge between power holders and citizens. Instead, they have made the courts the new theatres of struggle to extract concessions from the ruling elite.

Other scholars (see, for instance, Moyo and Yeros, 2005), view the resurgence of social movements around land and broader economic grievances as potentially suggesting the inadequacies of the existing frameworks of governance. Indeed, citizens globally, have started to make demands on power outside of the political party based parliamentary system either through public protests (for instance, the global Occupy Movement), the hashtag-based challenges to power and in some instances through the formation of post-modern utopias of self-governed territories.

Based on these diverging scholarly view, we argue that it is crucial to epistemologically dig deeper into what citizens do outside of voting once every five years or so. Following the pattern established by Ostrom (1993:7), we consider the different forms of cooperation that citizens forge with each other on an everyday basis and, using Briggs' formulation, we also consider this cooperation as part of the problem-solving mechanisms that contribute significantly to the texture of a democracy.

5.2 BACKGROUND

Perhaps the processes of rethinking democracy discussed above and in previous essays should also be informed by the reconfigurations taking place within the capitalist economy based on emergent norms of sharing and solidarity. There is even a new terminology called a 'sharing economy' or 'collaborative economies'. Innovations like Uber, Lyft, Airbnb and crowdsourcing platforms such as gofundme.com have seemingly altered the way in which we understand ownership, use of space (vehicles and accommodation) and the practical ways of demonstrating solidarity. In many advanced economies, Uber and Lyft have disrupted the taxi business in fundamental ways. Statistics indicate that Uber is now the largest taxi company world-wide. Previously, no one anticipated that there would be one global taxi company. However, the real innovation, is perhaps in the ride-sharing part of the business in which four or five strangers share a ride in a small vehicle through what is called Uber-Pool (before COVID-19). Instead of one taxi driving across the city carrying one passenger, now, it can carry more strangers (matatu/mushikashika style). Airbnb has also radically changed the way in which we imagine travel and has disrupted hotel costs in very significant ways. In the process, it has allowed for increased travel and opportunities for those who could not have otherwise afforded hotels. Another innovation has been the emergence of platforms such as gofundme.com which allow for one to raise resources for social good from strangers who are spread across the world. Platforms such as www.gofundme.com leverage small gifts from ordinary citizens towards a common cause. Ever since, there has been a significant increase in combining small gifts from many people in a very transparent way toward a specific cause using technology-based tools. To date, the largest fundraiser by amount raised has been the ongoing America's Food Fund campaign launched by Laurene Powell Jobs and Leornado DiCaprio where they raised US$44.6 million (https://www.gofundme.com/f/AmericasFoodFund).

Additionally, the largest fundraiser by number of donations was towards the Official George Floyd Memorial Fund which raised US$14.7milliuon with an average of US$29 per donation. All these examples demonstrate new ways of thinking about what citizens do with each other; the solidarity through ride shares, disrupting monopolies within the capitalist economy

and creating possibilities of aggregating small gifts towards big causes in real-time.

These businesses, however, are not necessarily new innovations, but the use of technology to conduct these businesses is what is innovative. These practices of sharing and solidarity at their core suggest an attempt at reconnecting individuals and helping to recreate communities. They have mostly been replicated from poorer regions where they have become tools and norms of survival. People living at the base of the pyramid across Africa have always shared their means of transportation (including motorcycle rides) and utilized their informal networks in seeking accommodation when traveling and have always crowd sourced for resources. Uber and Airbnb remain significant to this discussion because they bring to the fore the practical ways to rethink existing mechanisms of social and economic organisation especially when in pursuit of creating possibilities of a more caring and equitable society. They provide scope for thinking through possibilities of a new form of a citizens led and governed commons radically different from the individualism promoted by mainstream methods of production and accumulation. These technology-based approaches serve to prompt us into reimagining cooperation and community.

5.3 CITIZENS AND PROBLEM SOLVING IN ZIMBABWE

In reimagining cooperation and community we are compelled to question the problems that citizens are resolving in Zimbabwe. Lately our civic capacities have been under strain for different reasons and at times we have channelled most of our significant energies to the public square of politics. There are renewed calls for citizens to rediscover their civic capacities and ensure that they are setting the agenda for public policy processes. There are many initiatives that currently look like part of an awakening of civic capacities across the country where citizens instead of coming up with wish lists of what they expect from their government, have, using their own assets, taken it upon themselves to contribute towards change.

An example of this kind of civic awakening is the #KeepBulawayoClean campaign which was started by brothers Tonderai, Willard and Tinashe Shoko so as to ensure that the cleaning of the city's roads, squares, and parks is not just the responsibility of the local authority. The campaign has been running for more than a year and has received widespread support. The organizers arrange clean up campaigns mostly during the weekends and they encourage citizens to take photos of themselves cleaning in their neighbourhoods. The results have started to show in terms of urban aesthetics, but also new conversations have emerged about the role of citizens and the accountability of local authorities in service delivery.

Another example of activation of civic capacities is known as the #Asakhe (let us build) initiative which also hails from Bulawayo. The initiative is focused on contributing towards the revival of what used to be Zimbabwe's industrial hub. It is made up of a variety of stakeholders inclusive of those in manufacturing, technology, banking and working alongside the state. Although new, the morning discussions held via the #Asakhe handle on Facebook and Twitter have created interest within and outside of Zimbabwe. It is similarly an initiative which potentially demonstrates the multiple roles of citizens beyond just voting and waiting for the government to improve their conditions of living. Recently, we have also witnessed the emergence of new citizen led initiatives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic broke out, there has been a remarkable rise of unprecedented citizen giving. COVID-19 has put on the spotlight the various acts of giving from grassroots levels to large corporate levels all over the world. This has also been the case with Zimbabwe, and what is remarkable is that giving has been happening amidst a long- term economic crisis. We have already noted elsewhere that Zimbabweans from various sections of society, do give (see Jowah 2020). During the Cholera epidemic in 2015 and with Cyclone Idai in 2019, citizens came alongside government to mobilise resources to help deal with these disasters and support those most heavily impacted by these events.

After the breakout of COVID-19, we observed an increase in the number of citizen led initiatives that were soliciting for support to ensure the country's readiness to respond to the pandemic. In a desktop-based survey conducted between March to June 2020, we found 60 citizen-led/driven initiatives, 29 businesses and seven (7) universities running initiatives within the country

to fight against COVID-19 and its adverse impacts. Some Zimbabweans living in the diaspora set up various GoFundMe campaigns and some online platforms like Zimthrive (https://zimthrive.com/) expanded their scope of work to include giving platforms that were meant for mobilising resources to fight coronavirus in Zimbabwe. The platform was initially set up in 2018 to discuss how Zimbabweans in the diaspora can contribute by way of investment to redevelop the nation of Zimbabwe (Muchetu, 2020). The focus has now been on cushioning vulnerable members by providing food parcels, supporting health care workers through the provision of PPE and equipping and resources COVID-19 treatment facilities. Remarkably, citizens did not wait for the government to take the first step in the fight against COVID-19. Some private companies and individuals took centre stage towards mobilizing resources towards that fight.

Initial resource mobilisation efforts focused on securing ventilators, testing kits and PPE equipment. It was difficult to secure life-saving ventilators which cost between US$15,000 up to US$100,000. This struggle was common for most low income countries, and, in Zimbabwe individuals such as businessman and philanthropist Strive Masiyiwa the founder and Chair of Econet Wireless took it upon themselves to campaign for donations that would assist in securing ventilators for the country (Kachemere, 2020)[1]. Masiyiwa has also been involved in a campaign lobbying African governments to develop measures that mitigate against the endemic impact of the pandemic. As one of Zimbabwe's most influential people and biggest philanthropists, Masiyiwa, appealed to the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other multilateral institutions to set up a US$500 million trust fund to help Zimbabwe and Sudan tackle the novel coronavirus pandemic because the two countries had been omitted from wider COVID-19 relief funds due to the prevailing sanctions. Masiyiwa donated 45 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) ventilators, 100,000 COVID-19 test kits and helped the Zimbabwean government to pay striking doctors and nurses so as to motivate them to return to work.

Citizens also supported government efforts through the provision of a wide array of services such as the development of COVID-19 trackers and the sensitisation of communities on COVID-19 prevention measures

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1   https://allafrica.com/stories/202006250235.html

(e.g., OpenParlyZim); the provision of free educational awareness posters and infographics and free counselling services (e.g., Friendship Bench Zimbabwe) and the provision of meals and food hampers (e.g., Kuchengetana Trust). These examples demonstrate the ways in which citizens form progressive solidarities in times of trouble and it is our aim to show how the same unitary processes can be used to attain a commonly desired democracy. Before that case can be made, the following section provides an in-depth account of how two citizen-led initiatives emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic and the ways in which these initiatives helped to tackle pandemic related problems.

5.3.1 Solidarity Trust Zimbabwe

Solidarity Trust Zimbabwe (SOTZIM) was established by Zimbabwean citizens from various backgrounds who were concerned about the lack of preparedness on the part of the government to deal with the spread of COVID-19. At that point in March 2020 the country had lost a high profile media personality to COVID-19. The initial idea was to equip the then single COVID-19 response centre, Wilkins Hospital with ventilators. South Africa had at that time established the Solidarity Fund in response to COVID-19 and there was interest amongst Zimbabweans to explore ways of replicating the same idea.

From the initial idea of buying ventilators, the idea quickly turned into a much bigger movement with esteemed business people, sport personalities, medical professionals and philanthropists coming together and harnessing their social capital to raise funds and complement government efforts in the fight against COVID-19. It was no secret that the Zimbabwean health system was and is still underfunded and ill equipped. It made sense for the people involved to direct efforts towards addressing this problem. Moreover, the country, like the rest of the world, was witnessing a major health crisis like no other in modern history resulting in so many radical changes worldwide.

SOTZIM (www.sotzim.org) was thus, established by a group of concerned Zimbabweans from various sectors with the aim to contribute effectively to the national COVID-19 response through mobilising, informing, scaling, and supporting citizen-led contributions. The initiative was founded on

principles of solidarity and voluntary participation and it drew on a wide array of citizen based capacities to provide critical complementary actions for the national response. SOTZIM's work was focused on the following:

- Increasing awareness on COVID-19 and improve health-seeking behaviours;

- Enhancing prospects for equitable access to testing and treatment opportunities;

- Improving the safety of frontline healthcare professionals;

- Building solidarity against COVID-19.

Once SOTZIM was formally registered as a Trust according to the laws of Zimbabwe, it quickly did the following:

i.   put in place an interim operations team and appointed an interim Executive Director to manage the day-to-day operations of the trust ;

ii.   developed a website (www.sotzim.org). The website was the initial step towards its efforts to create an online platform for giving to support its fundraising efforts, to consolidate all non-state initiatives to COVID-19 as well to collate critical information around COVID-19 for planning and communication in the prevention and management of infection.

SOTZIM also developed its strategy document by April of 2020 and this document was meant to clearly articulate its message and vision within the processes of actively mobilising resources to support its work. One of its most immediate tasks was to mobilise resources for the establishment of a dedicated COVID-19 response treatment facility. The Trust entered into a joint venture agreement with St Anne's Hospital to establish the St Anne's Hospital COVID-19 Response Centre (SACREC). At that time, St Anne's was closed and in a state of disrepair. SOTZIM together with the team at St Anne's raised resources to ensure that the facility could be re-opened. The hospital was retrofitted with the required equipment to provide at least 100 general ward beds, 40 High Dependency Unit (HDU) beds and 20 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds. SOTZIM raised approximately US$450 000 and more than ZWL$15 million from Zimbabwean corporates and individuals (both locally and in the diaspora) to ensure that the hospital

was successfully re-opened and fully functional. The hospital was officially opened to the public in August 2020. In addition to mobilising resources for the refurbishment of the hospital, SOTZIM mobilised PPE for use by the health personnel employed at the hospital as well money to pay for their salaries.

To add on, SOTZIM has been working closely with "I Am for Bulawayo Fighting COVID-19" (IAM4BYO Fighting COVID-19), another citizen led initiative largely based in Bulawayo to help improve that city's readiness in dealing with COVID-19 cases. IAM4BYO Fighting COVID-19 has since its inception, been working to ensure that Ekusileni Hospital is rehabilitated and open to the public as a treatment facility for COVID-19.

The SOTZIM website, www.sotzim.org has been a useful source of information and a platform for the collection of donations from citizens and businesses to support the fight against COVID-19. For a period of three months, SOTZIM took over the management of the government toll-free line, 2019. During that time, the line was manned by trained health professionals who would provide an initial and comprehensive first line of diagnosis to citizens as part of efforts to avoid overwhelming the public health centres.

The SOTZIM trustees have also been exemplary by making donations from their own pockets. On the website's giving dashboard, one can see the evidence of support from people across diverse ages and backgrounds including small amounts of donations from children and perhaps speaks to the extent of citizens' involvement in a public environment. It takes a certain level of trust from donors to give money towards a cause. The economic environment in Zimbabwe is already hostile which makes it very difficult for businesses to part with money. However, with the level of citizen mistrust in the government, organisations that provide some sort of transparency for philanthropic causes are welcome and almost always get overwhelming support from businesses and individuals. In the wake of COVID-19 and the work that has been done by SOTZIM, the private sector has been key in creating opportunities for fundraising to complement government efforts which have been slow due to a lot of red tape. SOTZIM managed to mobilize for donations from corporates and other philanthropy focused organisations. The resources secured were used for the refurbishment of hospitals, provision of PPE and providing allowances for health workers that were working at the call centre.

5.3.2 Our Children, Our Hope Foundation – Epworth Feeding Kitchen

The COVID-19 pandemic posed a threat to livelihoods of already vulnerable groups in the global South due to decreased incomes and the limited access to food especially nutritious food. As already mentioned, the Zimbabwean economy is in crisis and highly informal. The COVID-19 related national lockdown crippled an already stretched and vulnerable informal economy. Many people in Zimbabwe found it difficult to fend for their families because informal trading was restricted.

Epworth, a low-income informal settlement Southeast of Harare, has a population of approximately 200 000 residents. Many of the inhabitants depend on informal trading. Caroline Bushu, a single mother who runs a flea market stand in Harare together with her friend Sandra saw children passing their house everyday with empty containers and plastic bags that came back filled with leftover food from a dumping area. The food was not for their pets but for them to eat because their parents could hardly provide for their daily meals. These children, between the ages of 5 and 14, made trips twice every day to the dump sites. The two women's hearts were touched by this level of misery and they decided to start cooking porridge for the children every day taking from the little personal resources that they already had. The numbers of children in need of feeding grew from tens to hundreds to a thousand, a number that far outweighed the initial feeding of porridge twice a day. The initiative received support from local and internationally based Zimbabweans and organisations. The foundation received a grant from a local philanthropic organisation called the Victory-Adullam Foundation and the grant was meant to cover the purchase of food stuffs and equipment (including pots, plates, and dishes, dishwashing liquid) to prepare and serve meals.

The initiative faced a lot of opposition from the local authorities. At some point Caroline and Sandra were asked to cease their operations. In their letter to Caroline and Sandra, the Epworth local board cited, among other things, that the operation was not registered with the Council in accordance with the Urban Council Act 29:15, it contradicted the Urban Planning By-Laws and that they were not licenced to operate. They further raised the concern that Caroline and Sandra's initiative was in contravention of the

Public Health Act Chapter 15:17 of Zimbabwe and not, as required by law, registered as a Private Voluntary Organization (PVC) with the Department of Social Welfare.

The initiative was subsequently registered as a charity organisation "Our Children Our Hope Organisation" with Caroline Bushu and Sandra Chikwama as the founders. Victory-Adullam foundation, run by a Zimbabwean couple, contributed resources to cover two meals per day for 1,000 children for three months. Other organisations like Restoration of Human Rights (ROHR) Zimbabwe, Scotland branch of the UK Chapter also helped with mobilization of resources. Their representatives arrived at the kitchen's opening time, 0730hrs and witnessed the long winding queues of children and at times, accompanying adults, waiting to be fed till 0900hrs. They also witnessed the health and safety system in place which were managed by the community. This involved marshalling, social distancing, wearing of masks and washing of hands among other things. All the women that cook and serve meals are volunteers and give their time, skills and knowledge towards this initiative.

In September 2020, the initiative expanded their work to preparing and providing food packs to elderly members within their community[2]. The work of the foundation continued throughout the year despite the gradual re-opening of the economy and the number of beneficiaries within the community continued to grow. The number of meals and food packs they provide is heavily dependent on the resources/donations that they can mobilise, however, without regular and consistent supply of donations, the initiative and similar community feeding schemes face the threat of discontinuation.

5.4 Conclusion: The Ephemerality of the Work of Citizens

When it rains small pools of water are formed. These pools can last a day, a week, a month, or a couple of months. They are largely temporary or seasonal and are mostly referred to as ephemeral pools. Life, in the form

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2   https://twitter.com/AndEpworth/status/1305501604955787264

of plants and small creatures can exist in these pools, some visible and some invisible. Several studies have since been carried out to understand the different life forms that emerge which coexist on these pools. Similarly, when it rains (metaphorically) in communities- for instance when unexpected life events happen such as COVID-19, death, sudden weather-related disasters which include floods, cyclones and droughts, citizens establish temporary mechanisms of responses. These have been mostly studied under the rubric of coping mechanisms or community solidarity. We are borrowing from various fields (especially those steeped in Biology), and we propose that the work of citizens must be considered as ephemeral pools of philanthropy or solidarity- the glue that keeps societies together. Communities and the authority structures they establish are by nature the obvious features, but the intricate relationships of solidarity/welfare can be hidden from the outsider as they are usually seasonal and are triggered by codes that are at times embedded either in tradition or cultural practices. These include for instance, the different forms of asset and labour pooling initiatives that emerge during the farming seasons and are non-existent during the dry seasons, or community mechanisms of pooling together resources (food, transport, and money) during a funeral. In the absence of a funeral, you will never know of a community initiative called 'Zibutheni' (let's gather) which is popular across most of the low-income suburbs of Bulawayo.

A reasonable question after all this is said and done would be: Why does this matter? We have noticed similar patterns where solidarity congeals during life events and disruptions such as natural disasters, epidemics and pandemics. Zimbabwe has in the past three years gone through a cholera epidemic, floods and displacement caused by cyclone Idai and like the rest of the world, also Zimbabwe was confronted with COVID-19. These have served to test not only state capacity but also the extent of citizen-to-citizen solidarity communities. As already mentioned, the COVID-19 period was/is associated with the emergence of several ad hoc citizens led initiatives focused on expanding access to health services and improving access to food for underprivileged sections of the community

These relationships of solidarity are probably related to what Robert Putnam has called social capital. Solidarity, where it occurs is characterized and influenced by bonds of trust, familiarity, mutuality and literally what many have referred to as Ubuntu (I am because you are). It also

has undertones of coercion- once in a community one cannot opt out of providing support during a funeral or where there is need for a labour pool. These practices are eventually coded through cultural norms and traditions.

There are many in rural communities and even urban areas who have not directly engaged with what one can call mainstream NGOs or institutional philanthropy-the generosity of the rich. But these same households or individuals have at some point received support from family and friends. It is Moyo (2010) who convincingly explains philanthropy as part of a life cycle from birth to death where one is always either a beneficiary or source of support for others. In 2005, Maphosa and Fowler wrote about the "Poor Philanthropist" referring to acts of kindness/solidarity carried out by ordinary citizens. That set of writings contributed to debunking myths about philanthropy being the domain of the rich but did not necessarily re-assert the role of citizens in organising their own social and economic responses.

Furthermore, there is reason to believe that with increased urbanization, these norms of solidarity have been replicated within urban settings. COVID-19 has provided an opportunity to test this assertion. Whilst visible and at times hierarchical, they operate in the same ways as the ephemeral pools of philanthropy discussed above. Religion also plays a significant role. Many of those who have engaged in ad hoc giving or creation of ephemeral pools cite their Christian and Muslim backgrounds as reasons behind their involvement. The most visible formations established in responses to COVID-19 such as Solidarity Trust Zimbabwe, IAM4Bulawayo Fighting COVID-19 (www.iam4byo.org.zw) and City of Progress Trust were established purely in response to the threat of the pandemic. These kinds of responses are ad hoc in nature. There is no clear-cut long-term strategy of giving or existence beyond the lifespan of the disaster. Their intervention is crucial. They are in most instances, the first responders during a disaster. In the case of Zimbabwe, they have played a significant role in mobilising financial and in-kind donations to help resuscitate a health delivery sector that was already under severe constraints prior to the outbreak of the pandemic. Furthermore, similar ephemeral pools have emerged in response to livelihood challenges that have been worsened by COVID-19. The main actors behind the drive for collecting food and feeding the vulnerable are coincidental. Most of them have no background

in running feeding kitchens. What they saw was a need and decided to do something about it without having to write a strategy and with no formal institution backing them, but they just mobilised their own resources and reached out to others within and outside the community. For instance, Caroline and Sandra of Epworth established their feeding kitchen after noticing that several very young children were literally scavenging for food at a dumpsite. What started as an initiative to feed around 10 children quickly grew to feed approximately 1,000 children and the elderly per day, before the local authorities shut it down.

5.4.1 Citizens' Ephemeral Responses and Organised Philanthropy

The donor community and local authorities have struggled to support citizen led initiatives that arise out of an anticipated disaster such as COVID-19. The response of donors has been to deploy the usual due diligence which normally leads to formalisation and long-term thinking despite the immediate agenda that these entities respond to. When Solidarity Trust Zimbabwe (SOTZIM) approached donors, it was asked to produce; (i) three-year strategy document, (ii) financial policy, (iii) procurement policy, (iv) a set of audited financial statements (v) and their organogram with a full set of job descriptions. In a different case, another donor requested for a secretariat to be established within SOTZIM even though this was not a part of the Trust's plans. These suggestions / requirements made by donors on how an ephemeral form of citizen solidarity has to organise / structure itself may contribute towards inadvertently creating an entity that the actors had no intention of creating. On the other hand, local authorities have insisted on certain conditions being met before the community kitchens/ feeding schemes can operate. In Epworth the Local Board asked Caroline and Sandra, the founders of Our Children Our Hope Foundation, to secure registration as a Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO) through the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. It can take up to 36 months for one to secure this form of registration. According to Mswelantho (2018), the registration of an organisation as a PVO must receive approval from the Office of the President, and this can take over two years for approval

and would require at least US$10,000 in the form of a non-refundable application fee. In the end, Caroline and Sandra registered their initiative as a Trust which was a quicker and less expensive process, but the delays took the focus of the women involved in the initiative away from helping their community. In addition, their registration as a Trust comes with certain legal requirements that they must now ensure to meet.

It comes naturally therefore, to question whether there is a way of creating alignment between due process and ensuring timeous response. To date the preoccupations of donors and authorities have been focused on institutionalisation and to a lesser extent sustainability. Both sites of power have been pre-occupied with questions of formalisation such as having the entity registered with the relevant authorities (although they are fully aware of the attendant bottlenecks) and compliance with elaborate governance mechanisms. A question that looms large in desperate situations such as a pandemic is whether flexibility could be created to allow for these ephemeral pools to operate without having adequately fulfilled the local authorities' and donors' conditions. When it comes to sustainability- the main question raised is whether the initiative has an endowment or resources. Sustainability has been narrowly framed as consisting of securing financial resources. The discussions on sustainability of philanthropy within communities should probably focus more on social relations, the quality of informal and formal institutions, and the extent to which these are owned and driven by the communities. In many instances, communities have actually not been in contact with a philanthropy foundation from outside. Literature and debates in the sector need to explore further how philanthropy can ensure that it is not encumbered by bureaucratic fiat and is responsive to the practical needs on the ground.

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About SIVIO Institute

SIVIO Institute (SI) is an independent organisation focused on ensuring that citizens are at the centre of processes of socio-economic and policy change. It aims to contribute towards Africa's inclusive socio-economic transformation. It is borne out of a desire to enhance agency as a stimulus/catalyst for inclusive political and socio-economic transformation. SIVIO's work entails multi-disciplinary, cutting edge policy research, nurturing citizens' agency to be part of the change that they want to see, working with communities to mobilize their assets to resolve some of the immediate problems they face.

SIVIO institute has three centres/programs of work focused on; (i) civic engagement (ii) philanthropy and communities (ii) entrepreneurship and financial inclusion. In the process SI addresses the following problems:

- Inadequate performance of existing political and economic system
- Increasing poverty and inequality
- Limited coherence of policies across sectors
- Ineffectual participation in public processes by non-state actors
- Increased dependence on external resources and limited leveraging of local resources

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