

**Does Institutionalizing Social Accountability Enhance Municipal Governance?  
A Case Study of the Harare City Council**

**By**

**SAKAROMBE, Walter Mutsa**

**THESIS**

Submitted to  
KDI School of Public Policy and Management  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

**MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

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Committee in charge:

Professor Reed Edward P., Supervisor



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Approval as of February, 2016

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## **ABSTRACT**

Social accountability has, throughout the past few decades, emerged as an essential means through which residents within Council jurisdictions participate in local governance. This paper explores the conceptual and contextual issues to the notion of social accountability within the context of the city of Harare. Has the local authority institutionalized social accountability adequately to promote effective municipal governance? What have been the key challenges affecting realization of optimal social accountability outcomes? A comprehensive review of relevant sector literature shows that participatory governance has not been attained in Harare. A purely qualitative methodology was used as part of generating relevant data. Through an analysis of primary data generated during fieldwork, this researcher concludes that citizen participation in urban governance in Harare is tokenistic. Residents are only engaged to rubberstamp decisions exclusively made by Council technocrats. This researcher recommends that there be a paradigmatic shift to ensure that local governance is participatory, egalitarian and responsive.

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- Department of Rural and Urban Planning (University of Zimbabwe);
- Zimbabwe Institute of Rural and Urban Planners;
- Development Governance Institute;
- Local Government Board of Zimbabwe;
- Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front;
- Movement for Democratic Change;
- Urban Councils Association of Zimbabwe;
- Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe;
- Zimbabwe Council of Churches;
- Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network;
- Housing and Land Developers Association of Zimbabwe; and
- National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations.

Above all, this researcher heartily thanks the residents of Harare who took part in the data generation phase of this research as respondents and discussants. **GLORY IS TO GOD FOR THE GOOD AND MIGHTY THINGS HE HAS DONE!**

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTORY

*“Social accountability is the obligation of power-holders to take responsibility for their actions, the dynamics of rights and responsibilities that exist between people and the institutions that have an impact on their lives, in particular the relationship between the duties of the state and the entitlements of citizens” (UNDP, 2013).*

### 1.0 Chapter Introduction

This chapter introduces the nexus between social accountability and municipal governance within the context of the Harare City Council. It provides a brief background to the historical evolution of Harare and its transition into a self-governing local authority. The paper then discusses the fundamental rationale for undertaking the research. More importantly, the problem statement section identifies the gaps in the body of knowledge relating to the institutionalization of social accountability issues in urban governance in Zimbabwe. Consequently, this researcher deliberately generated data to add new knowledge on the social accountability discourse within the city of Harare. A threefold spectrum of research questions was adopted to guide the data generation process. The questions mainly focused on whether or not the local authority under review has adequately institutionalized social accountability as a governance tool and, if so, the mechanisms it uses. Emphasis was given to explore the alternative courses of action that can be adopted by the Council to enhance participatory governance in the city. A brief discussion of the research methodology employed is provided as is the overall structural organization of the paper.

### 1.1 Harare: Historical evolution and present governance regime

The city of Harare lies on the north-eastern part of Zimbabwe south of the Sahara. With an estimated population of 1 568 663 people (Government of Zimbabwe, 2015), Harare has a generally hilly topography characterized by rocky areas in the south and a generally flatter northern part. The city is sandwiched at the watershed plateau of two major rivers namely Limpopo and Zambezi (Rakodi, 1995). In social terms, the level of extreme poverty prevalent in the city is of unimaginable proportions. The majority of the residents rely on informal sector activities such as vegetable vending, carpentry, car washing and other blue-collar jobs. This is partly a consequence of the successive economic crises that the country has, since the turn of the new millennium in 2000, been grappling with. The World Bank, in 2015, estimated that approximately 85% of the Zimbabwean citizenry is involved in informal sector activities in order to eke a living. Consequently, it (the World Bank) ranks Zimbabwe as a ‘fragile state’.

Furthermore, the governance architecture within the Harare City Council has undergone a series of dynamic transformations since the city was founded in 1890. The British South Africa Company’s Pioneer Column was the first administrative regime that governed Harare. It was a mercenary colonial extension of British hegemonic rule. According to Rakodi and Mutizwa-Mangiza (1990), the colonial settler regime governed the city through a racially-charged system that segregated access to the urban area to black Africans. Originally named Fort Salisbury (latter Salisbury), Harare was declared a fully-fledged municipality in 1897. It was bestowed with the powers to determine its own spatial and socio-politico-economic dispensation by the central

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regime. In 1935 Harare became a formally recognised city (Rakodi, 1995). It became the colonial administrative capital of the Federation of Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (present day Zimbabwe) and Malawi (then known as Nyasaland). After the attainment of political independence in 1980, the city became increasingly governed by an emerging black elite. It has traditionally comprised elective (Councillors) and appointive (or management) staff members as part of its administrative structure. The Mayor is the overall political patron while the Town Clerk heads the management. The Mayors have usually been ceremonial except between 2005 and 2008 when the office assumed executive authority.

### **1.2 Problem statement and justification of the study**

Although social accountability has widely been regarded as an effective approach for promoting citizen-based and participatory service delivery, it has often received scanty attention as a subject of scholarly inquiry in Zimbabwe. Urban citizens have frequently been involved in local governance by Councils merely to rubberstamp annual budgets that are forecasted exclusively by technocrats (De Visser, Machingauta and Steytler, 2010; Masvau, 2007). The UN-Habitat (2005) concurs with this view, stating that limited empirical research substantiates the claim often made by urban Councils in Zimbabwe that local governance in general, and service delivery in particular, is done in an accountable and transparent manner. In its argument, the incessant service riots that characterize citizen-local government relations lend credence to the assertion that Councils do not effectively harness the participation of communities in the administration of local issues. This paper explores the extent to which the Harare City Council has institutionalized social accountability as a means of fostering participatory governance. The need to identify an array of factors, inhibitive or promotional, that affect institutionalization of social accountability within the city of Harare from achieving participatory service delivery justifies this study. The outcome of this in-depth inquiry will be used to fill the gaps that exist in the present body of knowledge insofar as institutionalization of social accountability in governance in Zimbabwe is concerned. More importantly, the research outcomes are useful for civil society and citizens to lobby the Council to promote social accountability through evidence-based strategies.

### **1.3 Research rationale**

#### **1.3.1 Aim**

The essence of this research was to examine whether institutionalizing social accountability within the Harare City Council can enhance municipal governance.

#### **1.3.1 Objectives**

The overall purposes of this study were to:

- ❖ Explore whether the Harare City Council has fully institutionalized social accountability within its governance structure for managing residents' issues effectively;
  - ❖ Find out the social accountability tools that the Council uses and their effectiveness; and
  - ❖ Recommend, on the basis of generated findings and conclusions, some alternative ways that the local authority can use to improve residents' participation in public administration.
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### **1.3.2 Research hypothesis**

This research is founded on the following hypothesis:

- ❖ There is a positive correlation between institutionalizing social accountability in municipal governance and achieving optimal service delivery outcomes.

### **1.3.3 Research questions**

Among the most fundamental questions that this research sought to explore are:

- ❖ To what extent has the Harare City Council institutionalized social accountability in its administration of local affairs?
- ❖ Which mechanisms does the Council use to promote citizens' participation in local governance and to what extent have these been effective?
- ❖ What can be done to enhance participatory local governance within the City of Harare?

These questions are critical for conceptualizing the nature and extent of the challenges that urban Councils in general, and specifically the Harare City Council, face in institutionalizing social accountability. The questions help to locate the key limiting factors that hinder urbanites from participating actively in the management of their affairs by the Council.

## **1.4 Methodology**

The research largely employed qualitative methods in generating relevant data to diagnose the factors inhibiting institutionalization of social accountability in the city of Harare. Questionnaires were administered, interviews conducted, focus group discussions held and strategic documents reviewed as part of the data generation process. More so, since the research entailed considerable expenses, sampling was purposively done in the targeted area to ensure that study outcomes were produced timeously. As a fully-fledged urban province, Harare Metropolitan Province also incorporates a small city (Chitungwiza) to the south-west of the central business district and a slum area, Epworth, located south-east. These are managed under separate semi-autonomous local authorities. The city of Harare, where this study was carried out, comprises five (5) districts/regions and 144 formally planned residential suburbs. In addition, there are approximately sixty-three (63) slum areas in and around the city's greenbelt (Dialogue on Shelter, 2014). One-fifth (or 20%) of suburbs in each of the districts was sampled. In addition, twelve (12) informal settlements also constituted a significant part of the sample population in this study. Harare presents a strategic case from where general conclusions on the need to institutionalize social accountability in urban areas in Zimbabwe can be drawn.

## **1.5 Organization of this paper**

This paper is organized into five key chapters. Chapter 1 gives an introductory overview of the status of social accountability and provides contextual and conceptual clarity to the notion. Chapter 2 essentially focuses on the review of literature on the social accountability discourse in municipal governance through both global and local (Zimbabwe) perspectives. Chapter 3 discusses in detail the methodological design that was used in generating data. Chapter 4 presents and

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analyzes the data that were generated during the fieldwork phase of the research. A combination of data presentation methods and analytical frames is used for the purposes of analysis. Summary conclusions and possible alternative courses of action to enhance social accountability in local governance are given in Chapter 5.

### **1.6 Chapter conclusion**

This chapter gave a brief overview of what the research sought to explore. This researcher focussed, in this section, on introducing the subject matter that prompted the research. As a result, there is neither an in-depth analysis of notion of social accountability nor presentation of study findings. The chapter is intended to provide guidance on the rationale of the study and why the research, this researcher contended, required an empirical study. In the following chapter (Chapter 2) this researcher turns focus on analyzing the current body of knowledge insofar as the social accountability discourse is concerned. The conceptual and contextual underpinnings of social accountability as an overarching urban governance approach are provided in this particular section of the report. In addition, social accountability systems and paradigms are analyzed within the context of geospatial regions of the world.

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## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

*“The SAcc [social accountability] field has outgrown conventional conceptual frameworks, and lessons learned from practice should inform new approaches” World Bank, 2015*

### **2.1 Chapter Introduction**

The first chapter of this report introduced the notion of social accountability. The rationale behind carrying out the study as well as its overall aim and objectives were provided in the preceding section. The problem that prompted the study was identified, filtered and defined. A brief methodological approach used in generating the relevant data during the fieldwork phase of this research was provided. In this section the focus turns to the conceptual and contextual issues on the social accountability discourse. It begins by clarifying the concept of social accountability as well as analyzing its constituent parts. The chapter goes further to explore the various operational approaches under which social accountability is exercised. A global synopsis draws cases studies from both the global North and South. The analysis then zooms in to the local context (that is, Zimbabwe’s social accountability experiences). Whilst social accountability is driven by different development agencies within the nation-state, this researcher deliberately focuses on civil society based initiatives. This is done not least because civil society organizations interact closely with recipient communities of public services but also constitute an essential development actor.

### **2.2 Defining social accountability**

A cursory review of development literature will show that the concept of social accountability has been defined variously by different theorists and relevant sector agencies. According to the United Nations Development Programme (2010) ‘social accountability refers to a form of accountability that emerges through actions by citizens and civil society organizations [CSOs] aimed at holding the state to account, as well as efforts by government and other actors [media, private sector, donors] to support these actions.’ In essence, social accountability enhances participatory governance in municipal affairs ensuring robust engagement between the citizenry and the government (at both central and local tiers). Malena & Tamang (2011) define social accountability as the broad range of actions and mechanisms (beyond voting) that citizens can use to hold the state to account. In addition, it (social accountability) comprises the actions on the part of government, civil society, media and other societal actors that promote or facilitate these efforts. Social accountability must initiate demand-driven and bottom-up citizen voice and oversight in the delivery of public services (Malena, Forster & Singh, 2004). Thus, consultation, networking and dialogue amongst sectors actors are essential for effective social accountability processes.

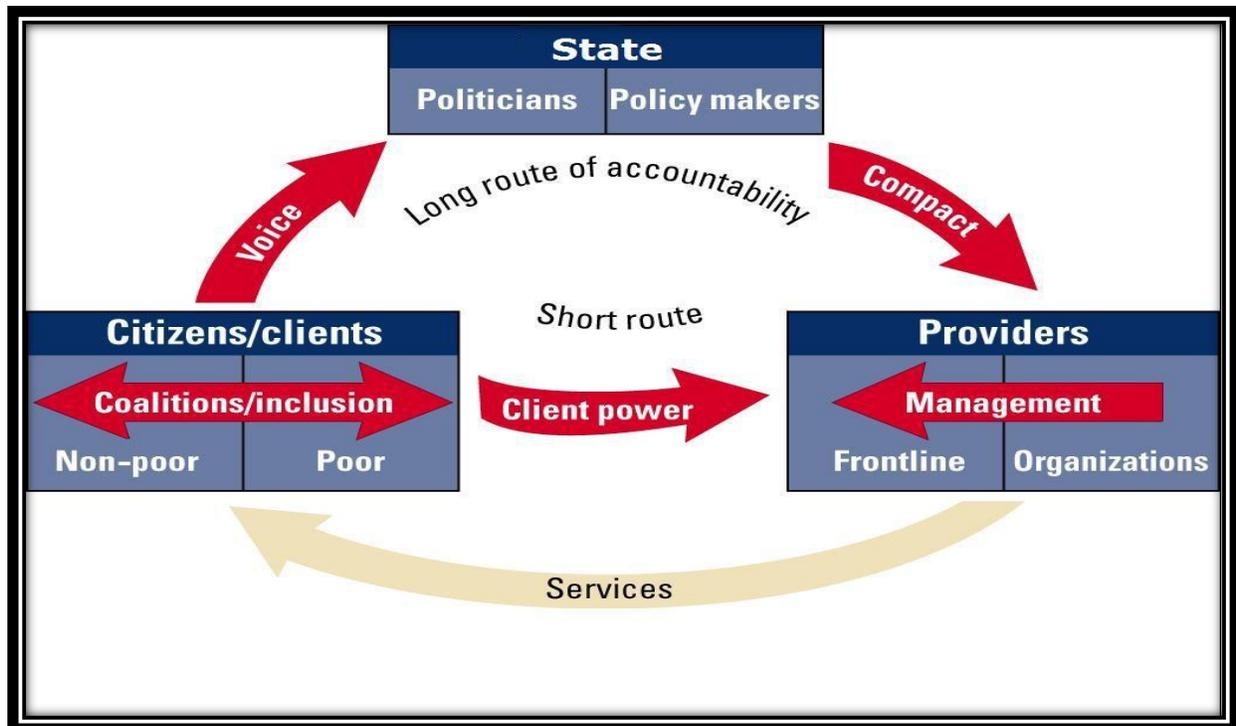
### **2.3 Conceptual clarity and framework**

Various development theorists and agencies have offered alternative conceptual frameworks for analyzing the concept of social accountability. Perhaps the most plausible explanatory view is the one offered by the World Bank in 2003. The institution conceptualizes social accountability as a multi-actor interactive process amongst citizens (clients,

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politicians/policymakers and organizational providers). Apart from these, but equally essential, are the frontline professionals. Figure 1 below depicts this multi-dimensional nexus.

**Figure 1: Conceptual framework for social accountability**



Source: World Bank, 2003: 49; UNDP, 2013: 37

The World Bank advances an argument whose anchors are fourfold. First, service delivery programmes can be enhanced 'by putting poor people at the centre of service provision: by enabling them to monitor and discipline service providers, by amplifying their voice in policymaking and by strengthening the incentives for providers to serve the poor' (ibid). Second, citizens must not only be perceived as constituted only by individuals but also as households and corporates. Third, politicians and policymakers are, at law, and consequently as duty-bearers, mandated to provide the services that the citizenry demands (*cf* Nofianti & Suseno, 2014; Filios, 1985). Fourth and finally, the operationalization of the synergies amongst the three stakeholders is the responsibility of the frontline professionals. Thus, the significance of role clarity amongst these sector actors for realizing optimal social accountability outcomes cannot be overemphasized.

More so, the conceptual framework proposed by the World Bank illustrates the synergies among the actors within the social accountability chain. These linkages, constituting the 'long and short routes' of accountability, are analyzed within the context of:

- ❖ **Voice and politics:** bonding citizens and politicians;
- ❖ **Compacts:** connecting politicians (policymakers) and providers;

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- ❖ **Management:** attaching provider organizations with frontline professionals; and
- ❖ **Client power:** linking clients with providers.

The short route of accountability directly connects service providers and citizens. On the one hand, the citizens, as rights-holders, focus the quality, affordability and reliability of the services offered whilst the providers are preoccupied with economic returns on the other. The long route of accountability, as the World Bank conceptualization suggests, explains that the state acts as a strategic interaction conduit between citizens and service providers. Hence, at the practical level the relationships amongst these sector agencies are often both mutually reinforcing and debilitating.

Evidence abounds in development literature (Flores, 2011; Kluvers, 2011; Pasteur, 1999), in addition, suggests that there are three basic building blocks that characterize social accountability processes. These are enhancing access to information, amplifying citizen voice and realizing negotiated change. In relation to municipal governance access to information enables citizens to engage effectively and robustly with public service providers (Gaventa & Barrett, 2010). Deliberate withholding of information from citizens, through, for instance, repressive legislative instruments, is an antithesis towards promoting democratic and participatory urban governance (Chakaipa, 2010; Green 2013). There is, therefore, need to broaden interactive spaces that promote effective engagement between citizens and the state. Khus (2010) concurs with this view asserting that public institutions ought to be responsive to the aspirations of the recipient communities upon whose ‘benevolence’ they survive. Similarly, in his analysis of the concept of social accountability, Sharma (2011) concludes that the ultimate goal of social accountability is to achieve inclusive local governance.

### 2.4 Contextual social accountability perspectives

A vast body of literature exists on the social accountability discourse. Much of the focus has been on documenting community experiences in their pursuit of making local authorities responsive to their rights. However, as noted by O’Meally (2013), few scholars have preoccupied themselves with analyzing the gamut of social accountability tools and their applicability on leveraging governance processes in different contexts. An analysis of how social accountability systems have been operationalized globally should begin by mapping the basic tenets of the process itself.

#### 2.4.1 Basic elements of social accountability

Table 2 below illustrates some common elements of social accountability. It is instructive to point out here that the choice of which particular approach to use depends, in part, on the local context[s]. In addition, the selection is also a function of the specific issues under review at a particular point in time.

**Table 1: Basic elements of social accountability**

Element	Description
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<b>Preparing community and civil society groups to engage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising the awareness of citizens;</li> <li>• Building confidence and capacity for engagement; and</li> <li>• Fostering networks and coalitions.</li> </ul>
<b>Collecting, analysing and using information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding, securing and analysing information on government activities;</li> <li>• Translating information into different formats, styles and languages; and</li> <li>• Sharing information through the media and social and political networks.</li> </ul>
<b>Undertaking accountability engagements with governments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using instruments such as scorecards, audits and budget analysis to engage with a government;</li> <li>• Making use of formalised spaces of participation;</li> <li>• Creating new spaces of participation; and</li> <li>• Mobilizing social protests.</li> </ul>
<b>Using information from accountability engagements with governments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Following up on commitments through advocacy, lobbying and campaigning work.</li> </ul>

Source: UNDP, 2010

Moreover, one of the fundamental issues that have been emphasized in development literature (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013) is that social accountability work must be embedded within government institutions. This is particularly essential for fostering convivial working relationships among government institutions, non-state actors and the citizens. In the global South, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, the relationship between the citizenry and public institutions has been characterized by mutual suspicion and hatred (De Visser, 2005). This has militated against achieving optimal service delivery outcomes. The role of non-state actors (particularly civil society) in leveraging participatory local governance systems is extremely vital. Amongst the most essential characteristics that have been proposed by scholars (Charlick, 2001; Houtzager, Lavalley & Acharya, 2003; Johnson & Wilson 2000) to shape the behaviour of these organizations include, among others:

- ❖ **Legitimacy:** the authority to speak on behalf of constituents, through open and accountable membership-based organizational structures;
- ❖ **Managerial capacity:** to plan and administer activities with coherent objectives and strategies;
- ❖ **Advocacy capacity:** to negotiate with and lobby government and to optimize the benefits of working in coalitions and networks;
- ❖ **Connection to networks and coalitions:** to strengthen collective efforts and address them at different levels, to share information and to create inclusive action;
- ❖ **Information and knowledge capacity:** to seek, create, interpret and learn from information in order to provide evidence that informs accountability claims;
- ❖ **Leadership:** to build alliances and identify strategic entry points for engagement with government; and

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- ❖ **Independence:** to be seen as separate from decision makers and politicians, basing claims on evidence rather than political party positions or other identities.

Consequently, the need to either build wholesome or strengthen the existing capacity of civil society organizations to achieve positive governance transformation, as postulated by the Theory of Change, cannot be overemphasized.

### 2.3.2 Social accountability tools

A broad typology of social accountability strategies has been provided by UNDP. A threefold spectrum of criteria has been used by the institution to provide an in-depth understanding of local governance accountability systems. There are tools earmarked on sustaining social accountability at the Council level. These constitute the first category of accountability approaches and include tools such as, but not limited to, citizen juries, public hearings, study circles, virtual or online town hall meetings, appreciative inquiry summits, public forums and future search public workshops (UNDP, 2010; Gaventa & McGee, 2010). The second category relates fundamentally to financial management. Amongst the most common tools that constitute this nomenclature are public revenue monitoring, independent budget analysis, alternative budgets, public expenditure tracking surveys, community led procurement and participatory budgeting. Finally, UNDP also focuses on approaches aimed at monitoring the quality and reliability of public services. These include, *inter alia*, stakeholder surveys, citizen report cards, community scorecards, participatory output monitoring, social audits and citizens audits. Table 2 below is a summarized version of this social accountability taxonomy.

**Table 2: Social accountability tools**

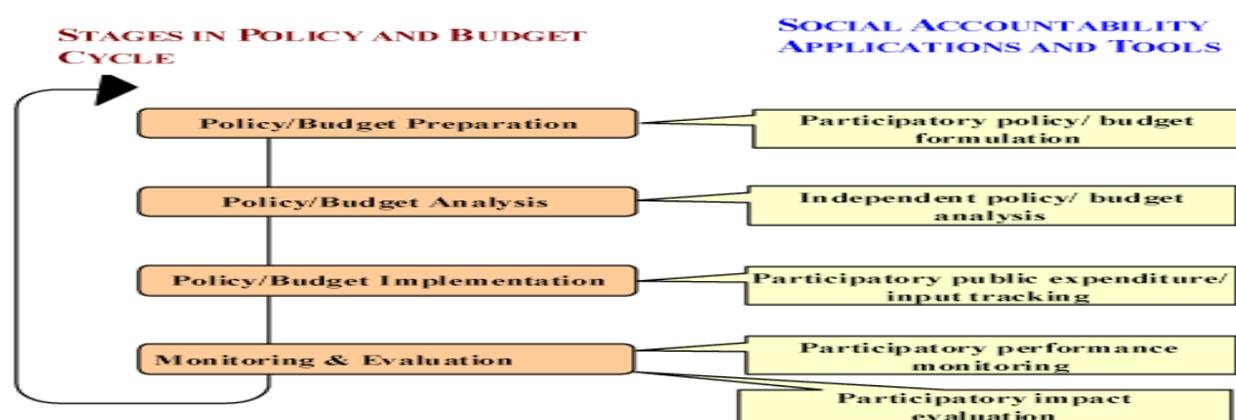
Mechanism	Description
<b>Citizen Juries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Citizen-based tools</b></li> </ul> Composed of 12 to 24 randomly selected citizens, constitute a direct method for obtaining informed citizens' input into policymaking processes
<b>Public Hearings</b>	Usually conducted by public bodies (such as city councils, municipalities and planning commissions) either as a part of regular meetings or as special meetings to obtain public comment on particular governance issues
<b>Study Circles</b>	Comprise a small group of people who meet over a period of time to deliberate on critical public administration issues
<b>Public Forums</b>	Occur when a government opens its official meetings to the public to harness community input and concerns
<b>2. Public Finance Accountability</b>	
<b>Public Revenue Monitoring</b>	Entails the tracking and analysis of the amount of revenue that a government (or Council) generates

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<b>Independent Budget Analyses</b>	Occur when a critical mass of stakeholders research, monitor and disseminate information about public expenditure and investments
<b>Public expenditure tracking surveys</b>	Track the flow of public funds to determine the extent to which resources actually reach the target groups
<b>Community-led procurement</b>	Enables local communities to participate in procuring public goods
<b>Participatory budgeting</b>	A process through which citizens participate directly in budget formulation, decision-making and monitoring of budget implementation
<b>3. Monitoring public services</b>	
<b>Stakeholder Surveys</b>	A range of techniques employed in mapping and understanding the perspectives of stakeholders with an interest in a particular policy reform programme by the government
<b>Citizen Report Cards</b>	Participatory surveys that seek to obtain user feedback on the performance of public services
<b>Citizen audits</b>	An information generating process that gathers evidence from citizens on the implementation of programmes and their social consequences
<b>Community scorecards</b>	Involve surveys of both citizens and service providers on their perceptions of the quality of services provided
<b>Social Audits</b>	Collecting information on the implementation of particular public services in relation to expected standards, usually by an independent organization

Source: UNDP, 2010

Figure 2 below illustrates the nexus between financial management and social accountability.



### 2.3.2 Guiding principles and approaches

There are common methods that citizens use to track accountability and transparency of public entities that manage their affairs. These entail, among others, using judicial channels for

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seeking legal redress; formal government structures and processes; citizen participation approaches; government policies; ICT-based; and traditional/conventional methods.

### **Direct engagement**

Interaction among citizens, politicians and technocrats within local authorities is one proven mechanism for establishing transparent governance thresholds. Cornwall, Lucas and Pasteur (2000) state that individual citizens can petition local authorities and tender their complaints formally through the department that is responsible for public relations. This is often the office of the Ombudsman or its equivalent. Direct engagement offers citizens quicker and more effective response to their complaints.

### **Legal recourse**

The law itself has become an essential tool that citizens can utilize to agitate for the fulfilment of their justiciable rights. For example, Nepal's 2008 Good Governance Act stresses the significance of establishing a public administration regime that is 'pro-people, accountable, transparent, inclusive and participatory' (Malena & Tamang, undated). On the basis of this law, citizens can take a judicial approach to have their problems resolved by the responsible authorities.

### **Utilizing government structures and processes**

Many governments establish structures within their governance systems to ensure social accountability. Claasen & Alpín-Lardiés (2010) are of the view that horizontal accountability is usually seen within the structures of the state (legislature, judicial bodies and ombudspersons) where it provides institutional checks and balances to guard against abuse of power by authorities. These structures also have departments that respond to citizens' issues.

### **Citizen participation as a conduit for fostering social accountability**

At the core of public administration is the need to ensure that citizens participate actively in how their affairs are managed by the authorities. Krisnna (2003) argues that social accountability mechanisms involve citizens seeking information from government (for example on budgetary issues) and in creating new information about access to and quality of services. *Twaweza* (meaning 'We can make it happen') is an example of citizen-led initiatives in East Africa established to trigger social action by enhancing citizen agency. In Bolivia, the Popular Participation Law of 1993 attempts to decentralize power to the local level, where citizens would participate directly in governance (UNDP, 2013).

### **Deliberate government policy**

Some governments formulate deliberate policies that foster social accountability and democratize governance systems making them responsive and transparent at both the local and national levels. Moldova, for instance, adopted an Open Government Data system which allows

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open access to governmental information by its citizens. Citizen feedback approaches (including Grievance Redress Mechanisms) have been utilized to improve resource governance in different countries (World Bank, 2013). Thus, governments can positively steer the social accountability processes.

### Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

ICT-based social accountability approaches that have been utilized to improve governance include websites and portals, video conferencing, tele-centres, citizen service centres and electronic kiosks (World Bank, 2015). Mobile phone-based services using short messages, interactive voice recording and hand-held devices such as personal digital assistants are being used globally as social accountability mechanisms. In India, for example, *CGNetSwara* (a telecommunications company) provides the tribal population of *Chhattisgarh* with a voice-based portal through which they can report local issues to the responsible authorities using a landline or mobile phone and listen to other voice reports (ibid).

### 2.4 A global synopsis

Different parts of the world have made diverse strides in integrating social accountability as an invaluable aspect of their governance systems. This diversity is also shown in the different priority areas that are emphasized in the various parts of the world. A deep understanding of social accountability experiences across the globe is, therefore, essential to ensure learning and sharing of lessons as well as in replicating good practices. Recently, UNDP has studied the status of social accountability in different geospatial regions that constitute the world. Table 3 below summarizes the priorities and lessons that have been achieved in promoting social accountability globally.

**Table 3: A global overview of social accountability experiences**

Region	Priority issues
<b>Africa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Prioritizes adoption of new models for service delivery and for scaling up interventions that are effective;</li><li>❖ Highlights importance of building capacity to strengthen MDG-based planning at all levels of government; and</li><li>❖ Promotion of private sector, civil society involvement in efforts to achieve the MDGs</li></ul>
<b>Asia-Pacific</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Prioritizes greater policy coherence, reducing corruption, strengthening regulations and increasing accountability and stakeholder participation</li></ul>
<b>Arab</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Focuses on redressing gender inequality in the region (there is low participation of the feminine gender in decision-making processes in this region relative to the masculine one).</li></ul>
<b>Europe and Central Asia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Prioritizes building capacities to help governments shift from over-regulation to better regulation (including increasing the transparency and accountability of decision makers)</li></ul>

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<b>Latin America and Caribbean</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Emphasizes the need to establish a new social covenant in which the government has a greater capacity to redistribute resources and advance equality; and</li><li>❖ Empowerment of women through meaningful participation in different decision-making spheres</li></ul>
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Source: UNDP, 2013

### 2.4. 1. Civil society-driven social accountability systems in Africa

The global South, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, has been identified as a ‘hotspot’ of public maladministration, corruption and institutionalized disregard of principles of good corporate governance (Korten, 1987). The relatively dormant civil participation in this particular region of the world has been attributed to the high incidence of poverty. Many citizens (either as individual or households) are mostly preoccupied with livelihoods activities such as subsistence agriculture and informal sector initiatives. However, recent evidence has suggested that social accountability is gaining increasing momentum in the Third World (World Bank, 2015; UNDP, 2013) Africans, through the emergency of a vibrant society, have begun taking a keen interest in how their affairs are managed by their respective governments. Service riots in some parts of Africa north of the Sahara have seen repressive regimes being overthrown. The ‘Arab Spring’ revolutions that led to the dethronement of despots in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt, often through violence, are classical cases in point. Civic participation activities that have led to citizens confronting dictatorial administrative regimes have been escalated in some African countries such as Burundi and the Central African Republic. The role that civil society has played in democratising institutions of local government in African countries has, thus, been phenomenal. Table 4 summarizes key lessons and good practices that have been documented in some African countries.

**Table 4: Lessons and good practices from civil society-driven initiatives in Africa**

Civil Society Initiative	Key Lessons
<b>Seeking Social Accountability from Provincial Government in South Africa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Strengthening and institutionalising social accountability must take cognisance of the context;</li> <li>❖ Support evidence-based social accountability monitoring with mass-based demands for improved service delivery; and</li> <li>❖ Confrontational and cooperative relationships with the government</li> </ul>
<b>Ensuring Social Accountability in Times of Political Crisis in Kenya</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Accountability requires a strong public voice and vibrant (and accountable) institutions and rules; and</li> <li>❖ Importance of the international community in promoting accountability</li> </ul>
<b>Using the Media to Advance Social Accountability in Uganda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ CSOs can make a significant contribution to media development through promoting citizen journalism;</li> <li>❖ They (CSOs) foster critical synergies with media moguls;</li> <li>❖ CSOs encourage journalistic specialisation through, for instance, running tailor-made courses;</li> <li>❖ Precision and concision in reporting are essential to provoke interest and research on a particular issue; and</li> <li>❖ Vibrant communication strategies to disseminate strategic information are critical</li> </ul>
<b>Enhancing Civil Society Capacity for Advocacy and Monitoring: Malawi's Poverty Reduction Strategy Budget</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Evidence-based advocacy is essential for fostering positive transformation;</li> <li>❖ Constructive criticism induces innovation and outcome enhancement;</li> <li>❖ Good rapport with strategic institutions (such as Parliament) needs to be promoted;</li> <li>❖ Synergistic and strategic alliances to enhance advocacy strategies;</li> <li>❖ Training on governance issues must be prioritized; and</li> <li>❖ On-going media advocacy on the budgetary issues is critical</li> </ul>
<b>Participatory Budgeting in Fissel, Senegal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Testing alternative courses spurs innovation in financial management;</li> <li>❖ Collaborative approaches between the Councils and grassroots community organizations are critical in ensuring participatory budgeting;</li> <li>❖ Civil society (especially NGOs) reinforce the capacities, methods and techniques essential for effective stakeholders' effective participation; and</li> <li>❖ Mass communication strategies (in this case a local radio station) are essential tool for information dissemination</li> </ul>
<b>Gender-Sensitive and Child-Friendly Budgeting in Zimbabwe</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Action-oriented research, participatory budget analysis, lobbying and advocacy and partnerships escalate development potential</li> </ul>
<b>Citizen Control Of Public Action: The Social Watch Network In Benin</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Capacity-building, critical analysis and research, dialogue, advocacy, media relations and alliance building are pivotal for social mobilization</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from: Claasen, Alpin-Lardiés & Ayer, 2010; McNeil & Malena, 2010

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To add on, other African countries have made significant strides in localizing the democracy agenda in terms of promoting citizen-based governance regimes. Clayton, Oakley and Taylor (2000) note that efforts have been made to ensure the transition of African countries from ‘predatory nations’ toward ‘developmental states’ through media reforms, capacity building and fostering financial transparency. For instance, in Benin there has been increasing engagement among different stakeholders throughout the budget cycle processes. In the early 2000s, Benin witnessed escalating demand by CSOs for fiscal transparency and efficient public spending (World Bank, 2015). Elsewhere, funding mechanisms in Kenya to ensure money reaches targeted beneficiaries include the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), the Constituency AIDS Fund to fight HIV/AIDS and the Poverty Reduction Funds (ibid). Similarly, the Rural Electrification Programme Fund, the Free Primary Education Fund and the Youth Enterprise Development Fund have been sustained to promote the development of different sectors of the economy.

#### **2.4.2 The Asian Experience**

Various countries situated on the Asian block have had varying experiences in fostering social accountability as a key anchor of governance at both the national and local tiers of government. The Philippines, for example, has strengthened municipal accountability as part of responding to the current and emerging service delivery issues. In this country, UNDP and UN-Habitat have partnered five municipal governments to implement the Citizen Action for Local Leadership Programme which promotes citizen engagement in urban governance. The State of Democracy Assessment Framework of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) developed indicators to measure the extent of democratic governance in Mongolia (UNDP, 2013). Elsewhere, the 2008 Good Governance Act in Nepal stresses the need for a public administration regime that is ‘pro-people, accountable, transparent, inclusive and participatory’ (ibid). Thus, Asia has been a lead actor in promoting social accountability systems.

#### **2.5 The local context: The Zimbabwean dimension**

Zimbabwe, regarded by many (*cf* Makumbe, 2010; Mwando, 2008) as a pariah state, has been led, for nearly four decades since 1980, by Mugabe and his Zimbabwe African National Congress Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) party. Perceived by his foes as a dictator, Mugabe has presided over a nation that has morphed from being the ‘bread-basket’ of Africa in the 1990s to currently being a ‘basket case’ itself (ibid). The governance regime is centralist and commandist. Human rights are violated blatantly whilst extrajudicial killings sponsored by the state accompany electoral seasons (Human Rights Watch, 2015; Amnesty International, 2015). Social systems are virtually dysfunctional and the Cholera outbreak between 2008 and 2009 left in excess of 5 000 people dead in the country 32 urban centres (Tibajuka, 2005). Zimbabwe is ranked 156 out of 175 highly corrupt countries in the 2014 Global Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International. Thus, the World Bank classifies her as a ‘fragile state.’

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### **2.5.1 The socio-economic perspectives**

In the past two (2) decades, Zimbabwe has experienced severe and successive economic crises. These catastrophes have manifested through unemployment, hyperinflation, deindustrialization, rampant company closures and erosion of disposable incomes (World Bank, 2015). According to the Zimbabwe 2014-2015 National Budget (2015) the country has an unsustainably high wage bill (standing at 81% of GDP in 2014). The local government sector has suffered critically leading to the provision of extremely poor quality and unreliable services by Councils. For instance, the quality of water supplied by the Harare City Council to consumers is certified unsafe by the World Health Organization [WHO] (Nhapi, 2009). The industrial sector, which traditionally has been one of the major public sector employers, currently operates at a 39% capacity utilization threshold.<sup>1</sup> The regime's adverse track-record of maladministering public affairs is well documented (Makumbe, 1998; Makumbe, 2010).

Additionally, the successive economic crises have had adverse ramifications on the social front. As the citizens lack formal and gainful employment opportunities, social ills in order to eke a living have escalated. Prostitution has become extremely prevalent in Zimbabwe. This has fuelled the rapid spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic leaving at least 15% of the national population infected and affected by the deadly virus (National AIDS Council, 2015). Juvenile delinquency is common across all the socio-economic strata of the Zimbabwean society. Crime has gone out of control. Drug abuse due to stress has reached unimaginable proportions. The social fabric that binds familial relations has broken down. Overcrowding in the high-density suburbs of urban Zimbabwe has led to a sharp increase in taboo cultural dynamics such as incest (Grey, 2012; UN-Habitat, 2005). The level of extreme poverty prevalent in the country is too ghastly to contemplate. The Gini coefficient continues to widen. Corruption is now a way of life. Relational life has seen gender stereotypes aggravating. The net effect of these and other socio-economic occurrences has been the incapacitation of the local government system.

### **2.5.2 Politico-institutional dynamics**

The primitive and partisan politics that have characterized national governance in Zimbabwe have had a devastating effect on the ability of public institutions to provide services in a sustainable manner. It is heartrending to note that the past three decades have been characterized predominantly by primitive politics in terms of public administration rather than a genuine commitment on the part of duty bearers to serve the nation. Partisan politics, which are often violent, have penetrated the whole social fabric of the Zimbabwean society. Professionalism in the local government sector has been blatantly disregarded (McGregor, 2013). Thus, institutions of governance have been infiltrated by political opportunists.

In addition, the regime regards civil society with contempt and as foes. For instance, Mugabe himself (referring to NGOs) once retorted in 2008,

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<sup>1</sup> (The NewsDay, June 9, 2015).

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*"We have now a phenomenon of NGOs, or shall I call them phenomena, for they really are a type of government in the background of a formal government. I don't know whether this creature is for the better or for the worse, but in our country we have seen a situation where they have exceeded their terms of reference, and perhaps we might have to reconsider the advisability of having NGOs"*<sup>2</sup>

Thus, this statement coming from the executive head of state qualifies the widely held view that the ruling party is repressive and does not tolerate criticism. Consequently, this dents local governance.

### **2.5.3 The Constitutional dispensation**

Zimbabwe commits to enhancing social accountability in municipal governance stating explicitly in the Constitution's preamble 'the need to entrench democracy, good, transparent and accountable governance... [and] commitment to upholding and defending human rights and freedoms.' In Section 8:1 it (the Constitution) guides the state in 'formulating and implementing laws that will lead to...a sustainable, just, free and democratic society.' However, the regime (ZANU PF) has flagrantly violated the supreme law of the land. For example, one Information and Publicity Minister once chillingly warned,

*"I want to repeat that this country came about through the barrel of the gun. It cannot be taken by a pen, never, never, you can forget"*<sup>3</sup>

Thus, in order to realize the noble ideals of social accountability the rule of law would need to be exercised, and sustained, in Zimbabwe.

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<sup>2</sup> IRIN, July 29, 2009

<sup>3</sup> The DailyNews, May 13, 2015

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### 2.5.4 Anchoring legislative environment and impact on social accountability

The Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15) is the principal legislative instrument that guides urban governance in Zimbabwe. Section 288 of the Act specifically deals with financial management issues that the local authorities need to administer in an accountable and transparent manner as a means of fostering social accountability. This is particularly the functional obligation of the Finance Committee within the Council. The Act provides that the Councils must formulate their budgets (annual) through a consultative process that ensures the participation of residents. The Council must give a 30-day notice, in newspapers of sufficient circulation within its jurisdiction, to enable stakeholders to make their objections and representations concerning price regimes (of services) and any other salient budgetary issues. This legislative instrument, however, has been criticized (*cf* Davies, 2014; Makumbe 2010) for conferring the responsible Minister excessive powers in numerous ‘as he deems fit’ provisions. Thus, it needs to be repealed.

#### Box 1: Proposed Local Authority Bill and Social Accountability

##### a) Right to Information

There is no mention of this critical clause in the Bill. Section 52 of the Bill removes the provision for *under-camera* meetings as contained in Section of 87(2) of the Urban Councils Act. Section 53(7) of the Bill maintains the secrecy of the minutes of any committee meetings. The Council may even reconstitute itself as a committee to maintain secrecy of its internal operation which is an antithesis to transparency.

##### b) Citizen Participation

The Bill pays lip service to practical considerations of the notion participation. It alludes to the need for ‘consultations’ with residents without defining what this really entails. This is retrogressive.

##### c) Objections by Residents

The Bill empowers Councils to connive with the responsible Minister, to dismiss citizens’ objections (such as rates thresholds) without justification.

##### d) Residents Associations

There is neither mention nor legislative clauses for residents associations in the Bill.

##### e) Accountability of Council authorities

The Bill does not provide for increased transparency in the financial operations of local authorities nor specify penalties for failure to meet financial reporting requirements.

*Source: Adapted from Davies (2014)*

Moreover, having realized that the local government sector is regulated by too numerous legislative instruments, central government decided, post adoption of the new Constitution, to amalgamate all the attendant laws into one Act. The ensuing legislative instrument is the Local Government Bill. It is yet to obtain Presidential Assent. Interestingly, the Bill has already been exposed to severe criticism by reformist local government scholars and practitioners (*cf* Davies, 2014; Muchadenyika, 2014). Much of this criticism has emanated from the Bill’s silence on the importance of information dissemination by local governments to all actors whose interests are at stake in the service delivery programmes and approaches. Thus, the Bill requires further amendments before it can pass the ‘progressive legislative framework’ test.

### 2.5.5 The Service Delivery Capacity Building Programme (2013)

The Programme, a brainchild of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry responsible for local governance, aims, among other things, to build the capacity of Councils to provide services in a sustainable manner. It is being implemented within the framework of the Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF)

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Outcome 3. Among other focus areas, Outcome 3 seeks to achieve ‘enhanced accountability in the management of public resources and service delivery’ (Government of Zimbabwe & United Nations Zimbabwe, 2011). Perhaps one of the most essential outputs has been the production of the Councillor Induction Handbook (*cf* Chatiza et al, 2013) to educate elective Council officials on their mandate and the means of achieving it. Thus, the Programme is generally progressive in terms of addressing fundamental social accountability issues in urban governance in Zimbabwe.

The local government system of Zimbabwe, in addition, is essentially bureaucratic. The MoLGNHPW is the central government institution that has the mandate of supervising Councils. Besides local authorities, the Constitution also creates Provincial and Metropolitan Councils as intermediaries between the centre and lower level governance structures. As the tier of government closest to the people, local authorities have the obligation of providing services to citizens resident in their areas in a sustainable manner. Whilst the Constitution recognizes that the administrative architecture at the governmental level must be a devolved one, in practice the centre still wields domineering power (Davies, 2014; Makumbe, 2010). The argument has been that the Councils are excessively overregulated which constrains their space for self-determination. Hence, the local government system in Zimbabwe remains volatile and performs sub-optimally.

### **2.5.6 Devolution**

For the first time in the history of Zimbabwe, the local government sector was officially recognized in the national Constitution in 2013. In particular, Section 274:1 proclaimed that ‘there shall be urban local authorities to represent and manage the affairs of the people.’ The preamble of Chapter 14 states that ‘the democratic participation in government by all citizens and communities of Zimbabwe’ must be guaranteed. It goes on to state in Section 265:1a that ‘provincial and metropolitan councils and local authorities must...ensure good governance by being effective, transparent, accountable and institutionally coherent.’ In Section 266: 2 the Constitution unequivocally directs that ‘no employee of a provincial or metropolitan Council or a local authority [shall] ...act in a partisan manner, further the interests of any political party ... [or] violate the fundamental rights or freedoms of any person.’ Consequently, by legislating the existence of Councils (at both the provincial and local levels), the Constitution establishes a three-tier local government system. Thus, theoretically, Zimbabwe should be a devolved state but whether this is obtaining at the practical level is beyond the scope of this researcher’s analysis.

### **2.5.7 ‘Checks and balances’ institutions**

In order to ensure organizational efficiency of the institutions that are mandated, at law, to provide public services there is need for institutional ‘watchdogs’ to supervise them. There has been ‘institutionalized looting’ (corruption) of public resources at local government institutions (Kanyenze, Kondo, Chatambura & Martens, 2011). In order to respond to the cancerous corruption that has torn the local government sector, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) were formed to check financial excesses within public institutions. In spite of the noble intentions that informed their establishment, the two institutions have

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themselves come under severe criticism. Critics (such as Freedom House, 2015) have alleged that the two institutions themselves are corrupt. Thus, as long as accusations of blatant violations of good governance principles by local government institutions continue, rejuvenating the sector will remain a pipedream.

### 2.6 Civil society experiences in Zimbabwe

In spite of the legislative restrictions and personal security risks associated with civil activities in Zimbabwe, several non-state agencies have played a fundamental role in agitating for accountable and transparent governance. A deeply dictatorial regime, Mugabe's ZANU PF has progressively been succumbing to incessant pressure to democratize and revolutionize governance paradigms in the country. However, this transitional journey has left scores of civil activists, opposition members and anti-regime protesters imprisoned, violently attacked, maimed or, in many instances, killed (United States Department of State, 2008; Freedom House, 2015). Several others have remained resolute and taken the regime head-on. Examples of such 'brave' civil society actors include, among others, the Harare Residents Trust (HRT), Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA), the Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network and the National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (NANGO). Thus, residents associations, special interest groups and other non-state actors continue to play a significant role in the democratization process.

#### 2.6.1 Residents' associations

HRT is one of the most vocal residents' associations operating in Harare. It has a monitoring tool that tracks the social accountability processes within the Harare City Council. This tool is used to evaluate the quality, reliability and affordability of services provided by the local authority. The water barometer is another tool that it uses to track the quality of water provided by the Harare City Council (HRT, 2013). Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA), an organization with affiliates from various neighbourhoods, has been vigilant in terms of getting the Council to account for the decisions they make in managing the city. The organization 'condemned' in the 'strongest of terms', in a press statement issued in 2011, 'utterances' in the media by the then Ambassador to China Chris Mutsvangwa to the effect that the Cholera pandemic of the 2008 was a result of 'illegal sanctions'<sup>4</sup>. It protested,

*"We find these statements totally unacceptable, mischievous, ill-informed and absolutely irresponsible...It is quite appalling to realize that such a learned person like Mutsvangwa fails to*

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<sup>4</sup> The United States of America imposed restrictive measures on Zimbabwe (through the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001) as a result of blatant human rights abuses during the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. The Act forbids, in Article 4, USA officials within the Breton Woods institutions (the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) as well as other multilateral funding agencies from supporting financial aid to Zimbabwe until it improves its 'checkered human rights' record.

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*realize that the Cholera outbreak was a crisis of failed governance by the then ruling party ZANU PF*<sup>5</sup>

Hence, CHRA has contributed tremendously towards the realization of the social accountability agenda in Zimbabwe.

### 2.6.2 Special interest groups

An essentially gender-oriented organization, the Zimbabwe Women Resource Centre and Network has championed feminine issues in Zimbabwe. Even though the organization has encountered both political and cultural impediments to its work, it has been a key actor in agitating for gendered governance processes. Through its Gender Responsive Budgeting Programme that started in 2001, the organization has fiercely advocated against masculine traditions that have militated against effective female participation in governance at both the central and local tiers of the state. In a study carried out by ZWRCN in 2003, the organization concluded that the gendered roles (such as reproductive work and providing home-based care for the sick and the dying) that women perform are often overlooked and unaccounted for. Thus, ZWRCN continues to play a significant role in redefining the governance discourse from the gender vantage point.

### 2.6.3 Non-state actors

The National Association of Non-Governmental Organizations is the umbrella body of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Zimbabwe. Through the Child Friendly Budgeting Programme, which began in 2000, NANGO has advocated vigorously for the integration of child issues in the governance processes. It argues that there should be progressive budgetary allocations to children's issues from the national fiscus (NANGO, 2013). It held a Social Accountability Conference in 2007 which, among other things, aimed at revolutionizing the local government sector which was sinking into the doldrums then. The conference was run under the theme '*Citizens have a right to demand accountability, Public actors have the obligation to be accountable to citizens.*' As is the case with other civil society organizations, NANGO has not been spared state brutality in terms of operational space.

## 2.7 Chapter conclusion

The essence of this chapter was to provide conceptual and contextual clarity to the notion of social accountability. A global synopsis of the experiences that nations have undergone in scaling up efforts to integrate social accountability as an invaluable tool for ensuring participatory and responsive development was provided in this chapter. The focus of the chapter then zoomed in to the local (Zimbabwean) level. Particular attention was given on the politico-institutional arrangements that have shaped the social accountability in Zimbabwe. The legislative (including constitutional) dispensation that regulates local governance within the context of urban areas in Zimbabwe was discussed and sufficiently critiqued. The next chapter discusses, albeit in brief, the

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<sup>5</sup> Nehanda Radio, August 11, 2011

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methodological approaches that were used in generating data relevant to this study that are subsequently presented and analyzed in Chapter 4.

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## CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

*Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam, 2009)*

### 3.0 Chapter introduction

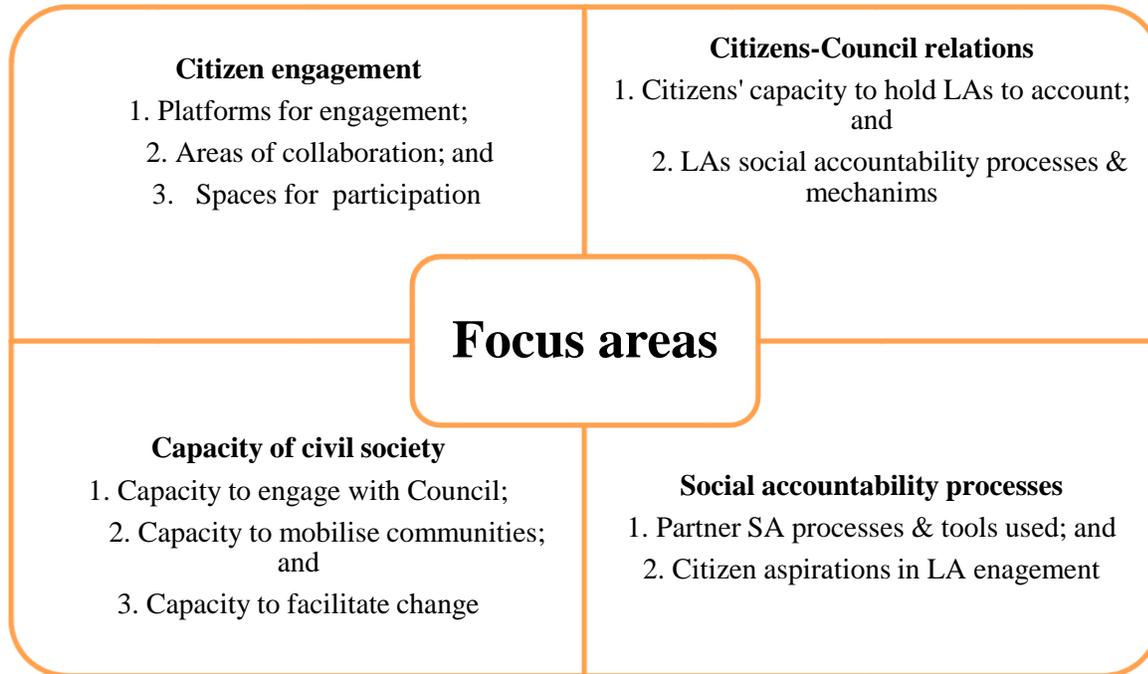
The preceding chapter gave clarity to the contextual and conceptual issues that affect the institutionalization and application of social accountability as a device for promoting participatory municipal governance at both the global and local levels. The attention of this chapter shifts to the methodological issues that guided the data generation process of this research. It begins by outlining the research design that informed the mechanisms through which relevant data in the research were generated. It subsequently engages in a discussion on the definition and tenets of the case-study approach that this research exudes. The target population of the study is discerned. The chapter goes further to elucidate how the sampling processes were carried out by detailing the attendant framework as well as how the relevant sample was drawn. This is followed by an analysis of how primary and secondary data, upon whose basis generalizations and conclusions were made, were generated.

### 3.1 Methodological design

A largely qualitative approach was adopted in assessing the status of social accountability in the delivery of services by the Harare City Council to residents within its jurisdiction. The tools used were modelled within the human rights framework. The focus areas that the tools sought to inquire included the participation of communities in the administration of the city of Harare and the local authority's social accountability processes. An in-depth assessment of the Harare City Council's capacity to foster social accountability in its service delivery models constituted the core of the data generation process. Furthermore, an evaluation of the relationship between citizens and the local authority was conducted as part of the study. An effort was made to ensure that the data generation methods were comprehensive and identified the strategic issues that the research sought to inquire. There was flexibility in the use of the methods. For instance, there were instances where covert and overt observation of social accountability processes by the Council necessitated the conducting of key informant interviews as a means for probity and clarity. Figure 2 below provides a summary of the main focus areas that informed the designing of the study methodology.

**Fig. 2: Substantive focus areas**

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### 3.2 Case study approach

The research was essentially conducted within the framework of a case-study approach. A case study has succinctly been defined in development literature as an empirical investigation on a particular contemporary phenomenon in its real life context (Strauss, 1995; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). Using the Harare City Council as the unit of analysis, the research studied the social accountability elements through a comprehensive description of the salient issues. An assortment of descriptive data generation approaches was triangulated to generate the relevant facts. This included the use of methods such as, *inter alia*, key informant interviews and questionnaires. A comprehensive analysis of relevant documents was done upon which summative conclusions and generalizations were made. Interestingly, the case study approach afforded this researcher the leeway to unpack the complexities that surrounded the social accountability discourse within the context of Harare. The case study was also deliberately chosen so that social accountability 'strands' would be specifically identified and analyzed in detail. It enabled this researcher to do a comparative analysis of the social accountability dynamics in study area (city of Harare) relative to sub-regional and global contexts. Thus, the case study approach constituted a solid foundation upon which social accountability issues in the area under review were analyzed.

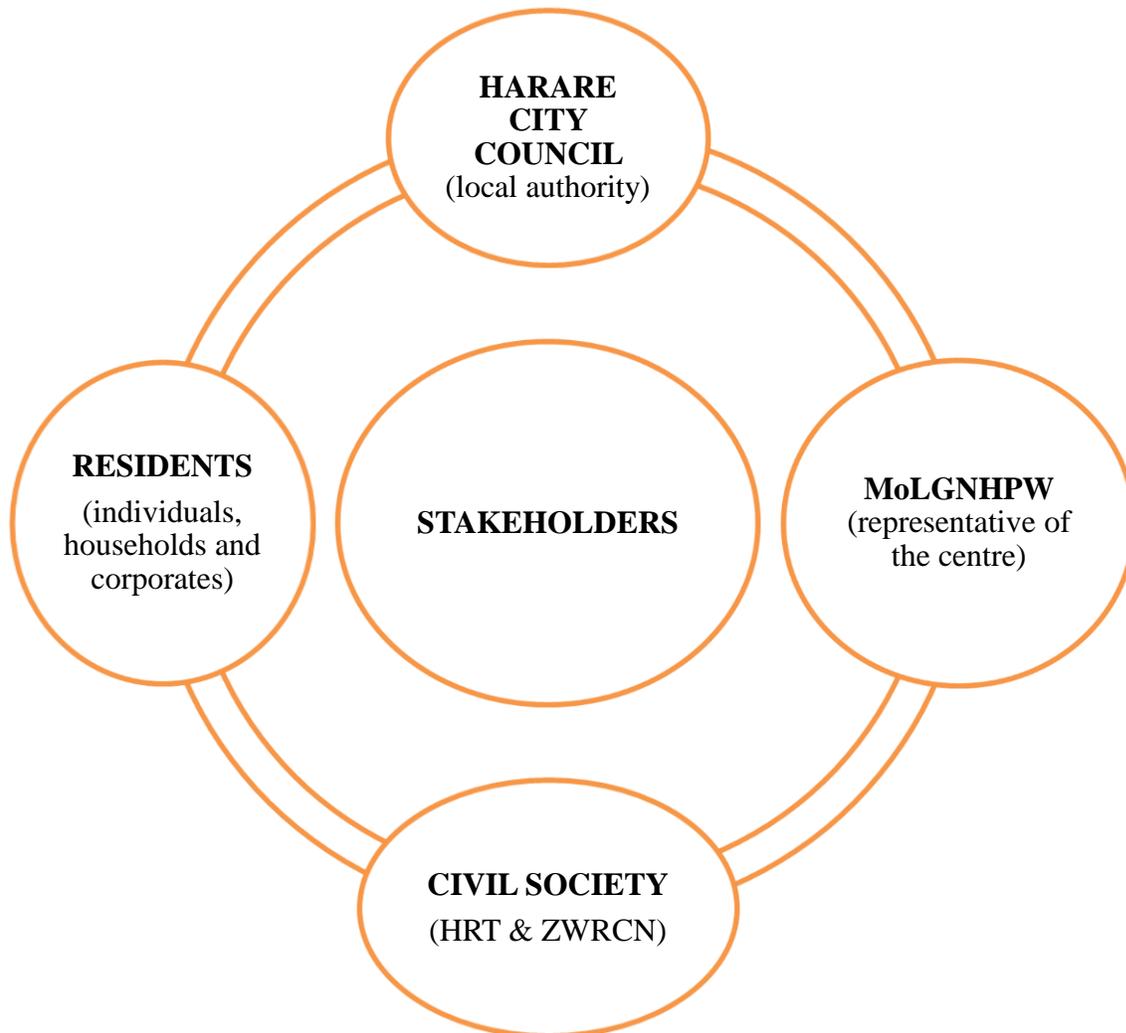
### 3.3 Target population

A complex web of sector agencies and actors constitute the social accountability field in urban governance in Zimbabwe. Amongst the most fundamental actors whose interests are at stake in the social accountability mechanisms and processes in the city of Harare include, but not limited to, the Harare City Council itself as the local authority, the MoLGNHPW as

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the representative of the centre, the civil society and residents. Figure 3 below is a diagrammatic illustration of these interest holders. In this instance, the focus is solely on stakeholder mapping. The subsequent analysis presented in Chapter 4 examines further the synergistic relations amongst these actors and how they antagonise each other in practice in terms of leveraging social accountability processes in the city of Harare.

**Fig. 3: Stakeholder mapping of social accountability in Harare**



It is apt to point out here that this stakeholder mapping is exclusive. This researcher deliberately identified the local authority, the Ministry, civil society and citizens as the core actors in the social accountability processes in Harare. This was done solely for analytical purposes. However, there is also a litany of other non-state and non-civil society actors that play a critical role in social accountability dynamics who were deliberately excluded from this itemization for the reason outlined above. One such actor is the commercial sector (for instance, banks, real property sector and private companies). In spite of this exclusivity, this

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researcher contends that adequate data were generated from among the identified stakeholders for purposes of analysis of the particular issues of inquiry in the research.

### **3.4 Sampling framework and approaches**

As a starting point it is, again, essential to re-emphasize the research geopolitical boundaries as had been attempted in the introductory chapter. In terms of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, there are two (2) urban- and eight (8) rural provinces in Zimbabwe. The Harare- and Bulawayo Metropolitan Provinces constitute the two (2) urban provinces. This research is located within the former. More importantly, the Harare Metropolitan Province itself comprises three (3) semi-autonomous local authorities namely the Harare City Council, Chitungwiza City Council and Epworth Local Board (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency Report, 2013). According to the 2012 National Census Report the two (2) cities, Chitungwiza and Harare, and the local board, Epworth, had a combined population of 2 098 199 then. Due to the smaller size of the province, in demographic terms, there have been spirited lobby efforts by lead local government researchers (Chatiza et al, 2013; Davies, 2014) to have the province managed under a single authority. The pros and cons of such a governance structure are beyond the focus of this paper. Zooming in to the specific area of study, the Harare City Council jurisdiction was the target space of this research.

In addition, the city-proper (Harare) comprises five (5) districts/regions and 144 formally planned residential suburbs. In addition, there are approximately sixty-three (63) slum areas in and around the city's greenbelt (Dialogue on Shelter, 2014). One-fifth (or 20%) of suburbs in each of the districts were sampled. In addition, twelve (12) informal settlements also constituted a significant part of the sample population in this study. Six (6) research assistants (five responsible for districts and one for slum settlements) volunteered to assist this researcher in generating data. The data generation process was conducted within one (1) month (February, 2016). Efforts were made to ensure that the data generated were comprehensive and generalizable to the wider urban context in Zimbabwe. A countrywide tour of all thirty-two (32) urban centres in the country was both impractical and financially onerous for the purposes of this paper. Nonetheless, Harare presents a strategic case from where general conclusions on the need to institutionalize social accountability in urban areas in Zimbabwe can be drawn.

More so, in order to justify the sample size it was essential to discern the estimated number of people living in Harare. The World Population Review estimated, in 2014, that the city had 1.56 million people. Again generating opinions from each of these residents was impossible. Consequently, 600 questionnaires were administered to residents in the five (5) residential regions plus the selected informal settlements in the city of Harare. This was done through systematic random sampling in the formally planned settlements where the tenth household of each particular household was administered with the questionnaires. The first sample was randomly selected at the discretion of the research assistant. The conducting of

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key informant interviews with the Council, Ministry and civil society (in this case, HRT and ZWRCN) was done through purposive sampling. This researcher took absolute control of holding key informant interviews. In some instances, the interviewees would identify and recommend other strategic informants who this researcher would, in turn, interview (snowball sampling). The data generation process was essentially an intensive process and many insights relevant to the study were learnt. Consequently, the data analysis process required sheer precision which this researcher abundantly exudes.

### **3.5 Generating primary data**

As part of generating primary data relevant to the study, this researcher held key informant interviews with officials from both the state and non-state agencies. With the assistance of research assistants, considerable primary data were also generated through questionnaire administration to 600 households. This researcher also held six (6) focus group discussions in the sampling areas. By attending full Council meetings, which are open to the public in Zimbabwe at law, this researcher was also able to covertly observe the local authority's social accountability processes.

#### **3.5.1 Key informant interviews and institutional self-assessments**

Key informant interviews were held with officials from the Council and Ministry (departmental level) as well as from HRT and ZWRCN. The interviews were facilitated through a key informant guide (see Annex 1) which focused on the interviewees' understanding of social accountability conceptual and contextual issues; the legal framework; issue identification, filtration and definition; obtaining citizen-local authority relations and broader engagement processes and capacity building needs. The institutional self-assessment forms (see Annex 2) were administered together with the conducting of the interviews. These differed from questionnaires in that they afforded the respondents to specifically introspect in terms of their capacity issues. Specifically the form comprised ten (10) questions which focused, among other things, on organizational core competencies; social accountability experiences and challenges, processes and tools; operational frameworks and capacity needs.

#### **3.5.2 Focus group discussions**

This researcher considered it particularly essential to generate demand-side data. As the ultimate clientele of service delivery programmes, the communities constitute a fundamental actor in urban governance by the Harare City Council. They are the rights-holders who reserve the right to demand the observance, recognition and fulfilment of rights in relation to service delivery issues from the local authority. The Council is essentially the duty-bearer with a lawful responsibility to respond to the rights of the residents through efficient and effective service delivery programmes. This research utilized public spaces in the targeted areas to hold discussions with the interested citizens. Whilst the focus group discussions generated considerable and relevant data to the issues under review, in some instances there was the challenge of the 'maverick voice.' This occurred where individual

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member(s) tended to dominate the discussions. However, this research steered the discussions expertly and ensured that all discussants were afforded the opportunity to air their grievances. A focus group discussion guide (see Annex 3) was used to direct the discussions.

### 3.5.3 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were administered to 600 households as part of generating data relevant to the research. Considerable efforts were made in this research to ensure that the questionnaires (see Annex 4) inquired a broad range of issues on the social accountability discourse within the context of Harare. Even though it (the questionnaire) was comprehensive, this researcher deliberately used comprehensible language to ensure that the respondents understood what the data generating tool sought to inquire. Where possible this researcher avoided the use technical jargon which, ordinarily, the layman could not understand. Among the challenges that were encountered in the administration of the questionnaire was the refusal to participate in the process by some residents, non-response, biased responses and logistical issues. In spite of these challenges, however, relevant data were generated through questionnaires.

### 3.5.4 Observation

Full Council meetings in Zimbabwe are open to the public. However, the public attend as *ex officio* guests forbidden from participating actively in the discussions. This researcher attended two (2) full Council meetings throughout the data generation phase of this research. Covert and overt observations were made on the processes that the Council utilizes in fostering social accountability within its operational frameworks. This researcher also attended community meetings by six (6) Councillors as an observer in a covert manner. In addition, this researcher also attended a community sensitization meeting by the HRT. Table 5 below is a summary of the models that were used in generating primary data in this research.

**Table 5: Data generation approaches**

Tool	Data source	Quantum
Focus group discussions	Harare residents	154 discussants (97 female)
Key informant interviews	Harare City Council officials	3 (1 elective official, 2 appointive staff members)
	MoLGNHPW,	1
	HRT	1
	ZWRCN	2
Questionnaire	Residents	600 (449 female)

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<b>Institutional form</b>	<b>self-assessment</b>	Harare City Council	3
		MoLGNHPW	1
		HRT	1
		ZWRCN	2
<b>Observation</b>		Harare City Council Full Council Meetings	2
		Harare City Council Community Outreach (by Councillors)	6
		HRT	1

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

### 3.6 Secondary literature Review

A comprehensive review of literature was done to provide conceptual and contextual insights on the institutionalization of social accountability processes within the city of Harare. In Chapter 14 the Constitution of Zimbabwe explicitly provides that citizens have an inalienable right to participate in local governance. In the same vein, principal pieces of legislation (notably the Urban Councils- and the Regional Town and Country Planning Acts) that regulate urban governance in Zimbabwe were reviewed. The Local Government and Provincial and Metropolitan Bills (current awaiting parliamentary scrutiny and presidential assent) provide governance frameworks that should guide institutionalization of social accountability in public institutions. At the Ministry level, policies and guidelines in relation to the notion of social accountability were evaluated. Within the Harare City Council, this researcher reviewed reports, memoranda, circulars, correspondence and meeting minutes and assessed their relevance to social accountability institutionalization. The local authority's Strategic Plan was analyzed to discern its short to medium term vision in fostering accountable and transparent governance. Strategic documents from international development organizations (such as UNDP and the World Bank) were examined and provided a comprehensive framework for assessing social accountability mechanisms. Global good practices on social accountability were learnt. For the HRT and ZWRCN, this researcher focussed on their evaluation reports, press releases and strategic plans. Thus, adequate secondary literature were reviewed and constituted an essential component of the data generation processes.

### 3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

The analysis of data in this research was thematic and/or issue-based. The analysis was done within a broader framework that sought to respond to the objectives of the research. Specifically, the thematic issues covered areas such as the obtaining citizen-Council relations;

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social accountability processes and mechanisms; institutional capacity; social accountability programming and alternative frameworks for building organizational effectiveness in contributing to optimal social accountability outcomes. On the basis of the research tools and explicit study needs, subthemes or indicators were developed under each particular theme. The findings are presented in the ensuing chapter to fulfil each of the research objectives. The recommendations are given based specifically on the salient study findings. More importantly, an effort was made to proffer context-specific recommendations. Consequently, broader generalizations were minimized.

To add on, an analysis of the organizational strengths, limitations, prospects and risks of each of relevant institutions was conducted. The overarching goal of this approach was to identify the capacity issues, at the institutional level, that the identified actors face in adequately institutionalizing social accountability mechanisms. It is on the basis of this analysis of institutional capacity issues that relevant lessons and good practices were drawn for learning and replication. Furthermore, emphasis was placed on identifying the structural causes and effects of institutional underperformance in terms of steering social accountability issues in urban governance in the city of Harare. Alternative courses of action to respond to these institutional challenges were suggested and are presented in the last chapter of this research report. Thus, an analysis of the institutional arrangements of the agencies that drive the social accountability processes in Harare constituted a fulcrum of this research.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations and study limitations**

This researcher made considerable efforts to ensure that the generation of data was done within the acceptable limits of professional research. Attempts were made to ensure that research participants volunteered information willingly without undue duress. The team explained the essence of the research to the participants prior to discussions. This researcher was solely responsible for organising focus group discussions and key informant interviews. It was ensured that the discussions were interactive and did not degenerate into impromptu or normative lectures of how the citizens are supposed to participate in local governance. This researcher spent the greater part of the discussions listening to the concerns of the residents. In order to avoid the ‘maverick voice’, this researcher utilized facilitative skills to ensure broad participation by all discussants. The essence of the study was thoroughly explained to the discussants and, indeed, all informants who took part in this research. There was no financial or material reward given to informants. They (the participants) volunteered information out of their own volition. Thus, reasonable ethical parameters were observed during the data generation phase of this research.

An array of operational and administrative challenges was encountered in this study that could affect, albeit marginally, the credibility of the data generated. Foremost amongst the latter was the debilitating administrative burden of managing documents in the study. It was solely the responsibility of this researcher to ensure that the completed questionnaires

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were kept safely and not misplaced. In addition, questionnaires administered in the same area had to be kept together for ease of analysis. Second, the research entailed considerable financial costs to meet the expenses of printing the relevant materials as well as catering for the daily allowances of the research assistants. Considering that the research was not funded, this researcher met all the attendant costs from limited savings available. Third, logistical challenges were also encountered as the research assistants and this researcher had to use public transport for mobility in the study area. This was very inconvenient. Fourth, securing interviewees with some key informants was particularly onerous as some of them cited busy schedules and mundane bureaucratic protocols. This required sheer determination on the part of this researcher. Fifth and finally, mobilizing communities for the focus group discussions required tact and this researcher had to identify focal persons (particularly Councillors) to organize the events. Notwithstanding these challenges, the processes of data generation were intellectually stimulating, interesting and enjoyable.

### **3.9 Chapter conclusion**

The essence of this chapter was to discuss the methodological foundations that guided the generation of the relevant data in the research. The research design was purely qualitative. Sampling was done purposively where this researcher deliberately chose key informants to inform the study. Through a snowballing approach, the key informants identified other strategic actors in the social accountability realm that this researcher, in turn, interviewed. Both primary and secondary data were generated in this study. The former was obtained through the use of key informant interviews, covert and overt observation, questionnaires and focus group discussions. Text- and non-text based sources of information were reviewed to generate secondary data. In addition, internet surfing played a key role in terms of generating secondary data in this research. The data were analysed through an issue- and/or theme-based approach. This enabled this researcher to pay attention to detail and analyze the salient issues under review. The data generation phase of the research was also blighted by a range of operational and administrative challenges. However, this researcher effectively manoeuvred past these obstacles. It is also instructive to point out that the process of generating data in this research was done in an ethical manner. Thus, credible data were obtained. The ensuing chapter presents and analyzes these data.

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### CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

*“The suspension of the Town Clerk [Harare City Council] comes...amid reports the city’s 18 directors were gobbling over half a million [US] dollars in salaries every month at a time service delivery has plummeted to levels where Council fails to replace street light bulbs.” The Herald, February 3, 2014*

#### 4.1 Chapter introduction

In the preceding section of the report this researcher focuses on the methodological framework that guided the data generation processes that inform this research. This part presents the key findings of the research. Specifically, this section provides an analysis of the obtaining citizen-Council relations; the local authority’s social accountability policy and practice and the attendant frameworks for institutionalizing participatory governance.

#### 4.2. Obtaining social accountability policy and practice

The existing citizen-Council relations in Harare can best be analyzed from two (2) vantage points. First, the engagement between the local authority and residents can best be conceptualized as evolutionary and dynamic. An analysis of case histories of ‘senior’<sup>6</sup> residents in the city intimates that the relationship has undergone cycles of ‘love-and-hate’ dynamics. The two protagonists’ current relationship is one characterized by mutual hatred and suspicion. Second, the role that civil society has played, in terms of ingraining participatory governance in the city that is responsive to residents’ rights, also warrants analysis. Civil society organizations continue to play a critical role in ensuring that Council’s service delivery programming becomes participatory and inclusive (of the multiple, and often conflicting, interests that are at stake). They (the civil society) have acted as an essential linkage between the ‘downtrodden’ residents and the ‘predatory’ Council. Interviews with HRT and ZWRCN staff members revealed that institutionalization of social accountability policies and practices is still perceived as ‘alien’ within the Harare City Council. The Council, they contend, feels as if it is being benevolent in providing services, albeit sub-optimally, to citizens yet it is their lawful obligation (in terms of the Constitution of Zimbabwe) to do so. Table 6 depicts the obtaining citizen-Council engagement processes and mechanisms within the jurisdiction of the city of Harare.

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<sup>6</sup> This researcher uses this term casually to refer to residents of the city, not less than eighty (80) years old, who have entirely spent their adult life in Harare

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**Table 6: Citizen-Council engagement processes and mechanisms**

Region	Sampled suburbs	Key engagement processes & mechanisms
<b>Northern</b>	Alexandra Park; Gunhill and Mount Pleasant	Budget Consultations, Councillor Ward Meetings, Residents Associations' Outreach
<b>North-Eastern</b>	Ballantyne Park; Mandara; Hatcliffe; Highlands; Rhodesville and Chishawasha Hills	Complaints Desk, Expenditure Tracking
<b>Eastern</b>	Mabvuku; Msasa and Tafara	Routine and periodic road maintenance, Clean-up Campaigns
<b>Southern (incl. South-Eastern and South-Western)</b>	Braeside; Budiro Glen Norah; Glen View; Hatfield; Highfield and Mbare	SMEs, Community Public Health Campaigns, Crime Control
<b>Western (incl. North-Western)</b>	Avonlea Dzivarasekwa; Kambuzuma; Kuwadzana; Mufakose and Budiro	Housing Cooperative Schemes, Underground and Overhead Trunk Infrastructure
<b>Slum settlements</b>	Hopley; Hatcliffe Extension; Cassa Banana and Dzivarasekwa Extension	In-situ Slum Upgrading Initiatives, Personal, Household and Community Hygiene Campaigns

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

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### 4.2.1 Customer discrimination in service delivery

This research found nuanced and context-specific citizen-Council engagement processes in Harare. In other words, there is a fundamental difference between how the Council engages with the wide spectrum of residents in Harare based on the socio-economic and political strata they (the citizens) belong. The generated data show, on the one hand, that the 'affluent' residents in the northern suburbs of the city wield considerable politico-economic power which they use in the bargaining processes of negotiating for responsive governance by the Council. On the other hand, the data also reveal that citizens in the western suburbs, which are predominantly low income, feel the Council does not respond to their social accountability concerns in the same manner the local authority does to their northern counterparts. Ironically, besides waste collection and physical infrastructural (such as roads) services, the northern residents consume comparatively less Council services than those in other suburbs. This is because they (approximately 80% of the households) now meet their own service delivery needs due the Council's inability or unwillingness to do so. However, the Council is using budget consultations, albeit citizens rubberstamping technocratic budgetary propositions, to reach out to residents. Anecdotal evidence from senior citizens' case histories revealed that residents loathe this mechanism of engendering participatory governance. Hence, scaling up institutionalization of social accountability by merely consulting residents as a way of fulfilling legal obligations in terms of urban governance laws is unlikely to be viable.

In addition, the data show that slum upgrading and participatory community planning is slowly fostering inclusive municipal governance in slum settlements such as Dzivarasekwa Extension and Hopley. Through the Harare Slum Upgrading Programme<sup>7</sup> the Council has begun, since 2012, to interface with slum dwellers who had been entirely ignored in the service delivery programming processes. However, it is instructive to point out here that this engagement has essentially been top-down. Strictly speaking, the Council has perceived the ultimate recipients of the programme (the poor slum dwellers) as mere beneficiaries rather than partners in the development processes. Whilst in areas that were sampled ward meetings by Councillors have been the main interaction medium between the residents and the local authority, these are not only infrequent but are also not deliberative. The data reveal that about 82% of these meetings do not deliberate adequately on residents' issues but are merely political mobilization processes. As one focus group discussant aptly puts it:

*"We stay with the Councillor here but the meetings that he has been calling this year have been empty. I suspect he is simply mobilizing us for political reasons. Mind you, 2018 [next local government elections] is now by the corner."*

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<sup>7</sup> This is a multi-actor low income housing delivery initiative that is financially being supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation under the auspices of the Global Governance Programme on Inclusive Cities. Similar programmes are being implemented in four (4) other African cities namely Luanda (Angola), Cairo (Egypt), Monrovia (Liberia) and Lilongwe (Malawi).

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This constituency in the eastern part of the city (Tafara) has gone for more than five years without access to municipal water services<sup>8</sup>. According to the information generated from the focus group discussion there, the area is a ‘political hot-potato’ that has been characterized by incessant interparty political violence. Thus, politicians have begun mobilizing their supporters to the detriment of bona fide social accountability processes.

### Fig. 4: Case history

#### What is life like in the slums of Harare?: Anecdotes of a senior citizen (aged 87) from Hopley Slum Settlement

*“I do not know when exactly I was born. I think it was in 1928, 1929 or 1930 here in Harare [then Salisbury] in here in Zimbabwe. My polygamous father was a migrant worker working in [one of the] industries. I am a qualified boiler operator. I worked for 46 years until 1992 when I lost my sight. I saved a lot of money as a worker with my late first wife. We completed our house in Mbare in the 1990s. Unfortunately, it was demolished by the government [possibly during the urban ‘clean-up’ exercise by government in 2005]. The house was big and had three rooms in total. I lived there with my two wives and eight children. My first wife died in 2007. I am now living with my [other] wife and two grandsons in this shack. All my children, except two, are dead. As you can see my shack is made of scrap plastic. I am sure these people [government] will come again [to demolish the structure]. My lease agreement is not yet processed because I do not have the US\$52 payment required per year. My grandsons are not going to secondary school and support us through their firewood vending business. Since I started staying here I have never seen these [Council] people here as we used to in Mbare. They should come and see us lest we die of hunger here. My grandson has also married a poor daughter of Mai Tendai [neighbor]. I don’t know what will happen. My wish is for Council people to come and give us food here as what an [unnamed] NGO had been doing. In Mbare Council had several beer outlets but here there is none. Our water is from this shallow [unprotected] well. My wife is down with a disease due to this water. She is asleep in there.”*

### 4.3 The role of civil society organizations in fostering social accountability

From a context-specific perspective, civil society organizations have played a fundamental role in efforts aimed at institutionalizing social accountability processes in the Council. The HRT revealed that the main conduits that the organization uses in its efforts to foster participatory and inclusive urban governance in Harare include, among others, basic service delivery monitoring and community based planning. In addition, the organization continues to mobilize its members to participate in budgeting and expenditure tracking as well as monitoring. However, as one Council official working in the finance department concedes, the local authority has been fundamentally ineffective in terms of fostering accountable and transparent financial management. This mainly relates to the flouting of the 30-70% expenditure threshold<sup>9</sup> between remuneration and service delivery costs respectively. The official admitted that the Council expenditure threshold is salary-driven and he estimated that more than 80% of the generated revenue is spent on paying salaries of mostly the higher level departmental managers and senior staff members.

<sup>8</sup> The Zimbabwe Independent, July 31, 2015; The Daily News, March 28, 2015; The Financial Gazette, July 3, 2014

<sup>9</sup> In terms of the governing Act, Councils are not supposed to use more than 30% of their revenue on meeting remuneration obligations. The official estimates that the Council spends 80% on salaries

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Predictably, this illegal expenditure anomaly has attracted fierce media condemnation<sup>10</sup>. The data from the multiple sources that inform this research also corroborate corruption allegations raised by the media against the Council. Thus, financial mismanagement continues to be an area that the residents feel short-changed by the local authority.

Institutionalization of social accountability within the Harare City Council, the ZWRCN contends, is a fairly new phenomenon. The organization rated the Council's ability to internalize social accountability very lowly. An official from the organization (ZWRCN) said the capacity of Council to steer participatory and inclusive governance is 'extremely low.' She argues that Council outreach programmes meant to harness the participation of city residents in both modelling service delivery approaches as well as suggesting alternative courses of action to implement them has not 'matured even 35 years after attaining political independence.' She goes further to state that the Council has not adequately gendered its service programmes to ensure that they dovetail well with the concerns of the feminine gender. The key informant cites the disproportionately fewer number of female workers across all levels (whether managerial or operational) of the organizational structure of the Harare City Council as a classical case in point. This is despite that the feminine gender outnumbers the masculine one (51:49% respectively). Thus, institutionalization of social accountability policy and practice within the Council administrative and operational architecture, she suggests, will need to incorporate gender concerns. Table 7 below summarizes civil society activities for engendering participatory urban governance in Harare.

### **Fig.5, ZWRCN: Gender perspectives to social accountability**

- I. Gender responsive service delivery;*
- II. Feminization of poverty;*
- III. Capacity building of public organizations;*
- IV. Knowledge generation and sharing;*
- V. Participation of women in all spheres of life;*
- VI. Coalition building; and*
- VII. Research, advocacy and lobbying*

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<sup>10</sup> The Herald (September 13, 2014); The NewsDay (January 28, 2014); ZimEye (February 26, 2014), Nehanda Radio (February 11, 2014); NewZimbabwe (February 5, 2014)

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**Table 7: Civil society social accountability engagements**

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Organization	Focus Areas	
<b>Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive and participatory urban governance;</li> <li>• Gendered service delivery programming;</li> <li>• Justiciable rights promotion and observation in programming;</li> <li>• Scaling up delivery of social services at ‘user-friendly’ price regimes; and</li> <li>• An enabling legislative framework for people-centred development trajectories.</li> </ul>	
<b>Combined Residents (CHRA)</b>	<b>Harare Association</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency and accountability and allocative efficiency in resource management at Council level;</li> <li>• Responsive service delivery;</li> <li>• Community-based development planning and implementation;</li> <li>• Participatory budget tracking and monitoring; and</li> <li>• Democracy and community mobilization</li> </ul>

As part of advocating for the internalization of social accountability processes within the Council, civil society institutions utilize an array of approaches. These include gender watch group platforms, community scorecards, services survey satisfaction surveys, stakeholder surveys and petitions as shown by Table 8 below.

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**Table 8: Civil society social accountability tools and approaches in Harare, Zimbabwe**

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Key issues and effectiveness</b>
<b>Social Service Charter</b>	Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Affordable, high quality and regular municipal services;</li> <li>❖ Client (residents) satisfaction;</li> <li>❖ Participatory and inclusive governance;</li> <li>❖ Local government sector reform; and</li> <li>❖ Confrontational in terms of approach</li> </ul>
<b>Advocacy and lobbying</b>	National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Child-centred budgeting;</li> <li>❖ Responsive governance;</li> <li>❖ Rationalization of legal frameworks;</li> <li>❖ Good practices replication and organizational learning; and</li> <li>❖ Internal coordination and consensus building among members</li> </ul>
<b>Sensitisation meetings</b>	ActionAid International Zimbabwe (AAIZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Gender perspectives to social accountability institutionalization;</li> <li>❖ Community mobilization and enhancement of active citizenry;</li> <li>❖ Egalitarian service delivery approaches;</li> <li>❖ Rights-based development programming; and</li> <li>❖ Political impediments to outreach</li> </ul>
<b>Corruption investigations</b>	Transparency International Zimbabwe (TIZ)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Building integrity systems;</li> <li>❖ Systems-oriented good governance mechanisms;</li> <li>❖ Volatile and repugnant political context;</li> <li>❖ Does not 'name names' which is a strategic weakness; and</li> <li>❖ Skewed towards national rather than local level governance</li> </ul>

Source: Fieldwork 2016

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### Fig. 6: Hostility between Council appointive staff and residents (Case of Street Vending)

Following a government moratorium on street vending, there were violent clashes between vendors and municipal police on July 9, 2015 in Harare's CBD. The straw that broke the donkey-back came as the Council staff began dismantling makeshift vending stalls belonging to vendors. About 26 vendors were arrested, brought before the courts and fined US\$25 each. The municipal police applied excessive force (indiscriminately beating vendors and passersby with baton sticks) in a bid to control the restive crowds. The National Vendors Union of Zimbabwe national director lament:

*"Six of them [vendors] were injured, one serious, I think he was hit with a blunt object."*

The local authority, through its principal communications officer, however, vowed:

*"There is no going back...There were skirmishes in the morning caused by people refusing to adhere to the city bylaws."*

The callous eviction of these breadwinners (vendors) in a country whose unemployment rate is in excess of 90% was justifiably roundly condemned by local and international media organizations and human rights houses.

### 4.3.1 Context specificity in utilization of tools

Again, and as elucidated above, the effectiveness of approaches in Table 8 is context-specific. For instance, despite CHRA's utilization of bench-marks in fostering responsive service delivery, mobilizing communities to partake in this endeavour is risky. The organization has often been accused of playing politics by masquerading as change agents in the local government reform process. More importantly, the residents themselves are especially unwilling to participate in processes that endanger their personal security due to vindictive political context. This researcher emphasizes, again, that the relationship between the Council and the residents is characterised by mutual suspicion and hatred. That the state itself, at the macro-level, has an awful human rights record<sup>11</sup> further buttresses the unwillingness of residents to participate actively in local government affairs fearing for their security. Apparently the frontline professionals themselves, just as their political counterparts, in the Harare City Council also do not have a convivial relationship with the residents. The recent suspension of the Town Clerk at the behest of residents (through their political representatives, the Councillors) serves to illustrate this point. Ordinarily, Council appointive staff members are supposed to be servants of the residents as a matter of global good practice. In Harare, however, the obtaining situation is that the professionals do not tolerate bona fide criticism from residents. They (the workers) perceive performance appraisal by the communities as a threat to their job security. The most obvious shield they have used to rebuff this criticism is the use of regulatory and/or guiding local government laws to justify their incompetence. This researcher contends that the current reform of the local government legislative framework must serve as an essential conduit for institutionalizing social accountability processes as well as enhancing the performance of professionals.

## 4.4 Inhibitive partisan politics

Having largely focussed on social accountability practice in Harare, it is essential to look at the policy side. This should be done through an evaluation of the politico-legislative environment. Domination of one party (ZANU PF) in the political terrain, the

<sup>11</sup> The NewsDay May 18, 2015; The Human Rights Watch, March 8, 2011; The Standard, June 7, 2015; The Independent, January 17, 2009; BBC News, March 12, 2007

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repressive legislative regime and the stifling of the emergence of a vibrant civil society sector have all militated against the achievement of optimal social accountability outcomes. The history of state brutality on civil practices further aggravates the already fragile local government sector in Zimbabwe. A cursory review of the case histories generated as part of this research shows that citizens fear political institutions (both at local and national level). Ghastly narrations, during fieldwork, of how some residents have ‘disappeared permanently’ due to their political activism for national and local governance reform justify the unwillingness of citizens to hold those who lead them to account. Archaic and restrictive laws (such as Public Order and Security- and Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Acts) have often been used by the authorities to deny citizens of their bona fide civil liberties and freedoms. For example, community mobilization requires lengthy bureaucratic protocols that often yield no meaningful results. The police authority that is supposed to grant ‘clearance’ for citizens to organize themselves to undertake civil activities has been alleged to be subservient to the state. Allegations have bordered on that the authority dabbles in politics, is partisan and ‘ruthlessly crashes’ civil processes<sup>12</sup>. This, therefore, has an adverse impact on efforts aimed at institutionalized social accountability in local governance.

However, the enduring resolve by citizens to demand accountability from duty bearers (Harare City Council in this case) cannot be overemphasized. Evidently, by strengthening the capacity of civil society through, for example, legal reform, there is scope for institutionalizing social accountability. Undoubtedly, such capacity is critical for ‘enabling the poor to monitor and discipline service providers’ (World Bank, 2004). Since most of the residents are not enlightened about the role and obligations of the Council, vibrant educational campaigns offer a ray of hope towards participatory governance. The unavailability of basic services themselves due to the Council’s incapacity or unwillingness to deliver is in itself sufficient justification to ‘mobilize communities for action.’ The *raison d’être* of Councils throughout the world is to offer their residents affordable, high quality and regular services. When the authorities fail to do so, citizens have an incumbent obligation to spring into action for the fulfilment of their inalienable rights. This is the obtaining global good practice. In addition, most citizens are not aware of their rights. The flip side of the coin dictates that the Council itself has to self-introspect and promptly ceases forthwith the *laissez faire* approach to local governance issues in Harare.

### 4.5 Community aspirations

Communities living in the five (5) regions of the city of Harare where data that informs this research were generated passionately aired out their aspirations for the optimal engagement processes with local authorities they yearn for. In particular, the residents believe that the local authority must ‘open up’ and be the ‘people’s’ Council’. From an analytical point of view, citizen aspirations revolve around participatory

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<sup>12</sup> The NewsDay, May 8, 2014; The Daily News, April 3, 2014; Amnesty International May 26, 2012; The Guardian, May 9, 2009

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governance and responsive service delivery. Any attempt, therefore, aimed at internalizing social accountability processes with the Council’s administrative and operational architecture must incorporate these demand-side perspectives. Table 9 summarizes residents’ aspirations within the city of Harare.

**Table 9: Harare residents’ aspirations in social accountability**

Area	Citizen aspirations for effective social accountability processes
<b>Northern</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council-citizen partnership in infrastructure maintenance;</li> <li>• Council feedback on development plans; and</li> <li>• Effective citizen-local authority engagement platforms</li> </ul>
<b>North-eastern</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prompt response to service delivery complaints;</li> <li>• Participatory Budgeting; and</li> <li>• Joint planning and review meetings</li> </ul>
<b>Southern (including South-eastern and South-western)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular service delivery;</li> <li>• Participation in local politics and governance; and</li> <li>• Personal security and crime reduction</li> </ul>
<b>Western (including North-western)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparent allocation of municipal land;</li> <li>• Security of tenure; and</li> <li>• Accurate billing systems of municipal services</li> </ul>
<b>Eastern</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to municipal water;</li> <li>• Containing interparty violence and intimidation; and</li> <li>• Safe and affordable public transport</li> </ul>
<b>Slum settlements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to municipal services;</li> <li>• Land ownership and legal title; and</li> <li>• Containing incessant epidemiological outbreaks</li> </ul>

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

Whilst the obtaining situation in Harare exudes a dominance of the ‘long route to accountability’ through policy-makers (Councillors), citizens, through their collective action, prefer the ‘short route.’ This conduit links them directly with local authority professionals who are mandated, at law, to provide them with services and spaces to participate in how their affairs are managed. Undoubtedly, collective action by citizens will be critical in addressing situations where the Council has proved consistently unresponsive to the rights of its residents. Councillor-citizen engagement is a necessary but insufficient mechanism for fostering participatory local governance in Harare. This is precisely due to the weak feedback mechanisms where Councillors are unable to respond to residents’ concerns in a meaningful manner. They (the Councillors), instead, ‘hibernate’ for long periods of time only to become active during election seasons. In order to have effective residents-driven checks and balances mechanisms of accountability, the generally progressive local government legislative framework has to be enforced. This, consequently, will have a positive effect on efforts aimed at internalizing social accountability within Council.

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### **4.6 An assessment of current and emerging Council capacity issues**

#### **4.6.1. Centre-local relations**

The supervision of Local Authorities in Zimbabwe falls within the purview of the Ministry responsible for local governance. The responsible Minister is empowered, in terms of the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15), to relieve both appointive and elective offices of Councils of their duties whenever he/she deems fit. The Minister is a presidential appointee. Key informant interviews with two (2) departmental heads in the Council exposed the political constraints that have made institutionalizing social accountability a particularly onerous task. They revealed that the Minister interferes unduly with the operations of the Council. The ministerial office has, since the attainment of political independence in 1980, been occupied by incumbents from the ruling party ZANU PF. However, with the emergence of a vibrant opposition (Movement for Democratic Change- Tsvangirai) in 1999, many Councillors elected into office have been from the MDC-T. Herein lays the problem. The successive Ministers have been accused of firing elected Councillors with reckless abandon for political expediency. The appointment of the Mrs Sekesai Makwavarara-led commission in 2002 to run the affairs of the city after the elected MDC-T mayor, Mr Elias Mudzuri, and his team were summarily fired by the then Minister, one Mr Ignatious Chombo, is a classical case in point. Mudzuri and his team of Councillors had been duly elected that year. The same Minister was also criticised for ‘shielding’ the suspended Town Clerk<sup>13</sup> (an alleged ruling party apologist), one Mr Tendai Mahachi, by the current MDC-T administration ‘just to spite his political foes and flex his muscles’. As at January 31, 2015 the then Town Clerk was earning US\$37 642 per month which was unrealistically high. Allegations of blatant and unwarranted interference from the centre in the administration of the city continue to this day.

#### **4.6.2. Vertical and horizontal coordination**

Silo compartmentalization is one of the fundamental issues that have made institutionalization of social accountability within the Council untenable. The Council currently has seven departments. These are Corporate Affairs, Finance, Health, Human Resources, Water, Public Safety and Works. Although this number of departments is reasonable, they function as silos in practice. Horizontal coordination amongst departments is weak. Internal cohesion within separate departments is poor. There is also role incompatibility. For instance, the Department of Corporate Affairs comprises housing and community services and chamber secretarial functions. Housing and community services are operational whilst the secretarial functions are administrative. What then is the rationale of combining these two internal functions? Consequently, does the departmental head have adequate competences and sector experience to be able to superintend the department in an effective manner? Is it not operationally prudent to separate operational and administrative functions? In addition, there seems to be a ‘missing middle’ between the lower level staff members (who are mostly operational) and the departmental heads, the administrators. As a result, mentoring and coaching for sustainable

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<sup>13</sup> New Zimbabwe, May 16, 2014; The Daily News, February 9, 2014; The Herald, February 3, 2014; Nehanda Radio, July 9, 2015; The Standard, February 2, 2014; The News Day, February 1, 2014; The Financial Gazette, February 13, 2014

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organizational performance is lacking. This has an adverse impact on social accountability processes.

### 4.6.3. Macro-economic fundamentals

Zimbabwe is currently undergoing a tumultuous economic crisis. Several industries have closed<sup>14</sup>. The ones that remain are operating below 20% capacity utilization. Power outages are commonplace. Foreign direct investment inflows are at their lowest. Poor quality imports have flooded the market. Deflation remains a challenge. There is no incentive for ‘indigenous’ firms to produce due to severe exogenous competition. The majority of companies have gone for several years without paying their workers. Both state enterprises and private sector companies are downsizing and firing workers without moral restraint. Youth unemployment is at 90%. The majority of able-bodied men and women with university education are vegetable

#### **Box 3: Remuneration structure at Harare City Council**

- *US\$0.5million salaries for 18 Directors per month;*
- *Diverted US\$144.4million loan by China to buy luxury cars for management;*
- *Town Clerk earned US\$37 000 per month;*
- *Directors earned between US\$33 000 and US\$36 000 each per month; and*
- *Overseas holidays and boat cruises.*

street vendors. The same proportion of people lives below the Poverty Datum Line (currently at US\$584 for a family of 5<sup>15</sup>) and less than US\$2 per day. In all probability these are consequences of failed national governance regime superintended by Mugabe. The net effect of these and other factors has been the inability of residents to meet their financial obligations to Council. This is the principal reason why the Council has

not been responsive to the rights of the residents. The local authority estimates that it is owed in excess of US\$300 million by residents<sup>16</sup>. This is despite that the then responsible Minister wrote off residents’ debts to Council which had amounted to US\$350million<sup>17</sup> on the eve of national and local authority elections in 2013. The reason why this was done is obvious. Ironically, whilst the local authority perennially pleads bankruptcy, its managers have been gobbling nearly US\$0.5million every month in salaries and overseas holidays and luxuries amongst themselves.

### 4.6.4. Political polarization

Partisan politics within the Council are threatening efforts towards internalizing social accountability. A Councillor who was interviewed as part of the data generation process in this research reveals that two (2) distinct ‘political divides’ are recognizable in the Council. The majority of Councillors belong to the MDC-T (main opposition party) whilst the professionals are perceived to be appendages of the ruling ZANU PF by virtue of being government appointees. The Councillor states that the current hullabaloo surrounding the

<sup>14</sup> The News Day, February 21, 2014; The Independent October 18, 2013; The Financial Gazette, February 20, 2014

<sup>15</sup> ZIMSTAT, 2015

<sup>16</sup> The Herald, June 25, 2015

<sup>17</sup> Nehanda Radio July 25, 2013; New Zimbabwe, July 22, 2013; The Chronicle, August 10, 2013; The Daily News, July 24, 2013

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dismissal of the Town Clerk by the Mayor shows how partisan politics can affect efforts towards strengthening social accountability in Harare. Partisan politics have also shaped how the Council staff members relate with residents. It is not uncommon for organized residents' groups (such as CHRA and HRT) to be dismissed as 'agents of the opposition seeking illegal regime change' even when they bring to the attention of the local authority legitimate residents' complaints. Civil society organizations have also been successfully stifled through the use of repressive laws. Residents who are 'outspoken' pose a risk to their own security, which the state is unable to guarantee. In the absence of primitive politicking, positive social accountability outcomes can be achieved in Harare.

### 4.6.5. Appointive versus elective offices

The acrimonious working relationship between politicians and technocrats in Council has been emphasized repeatedly by this researcher in this chapter. The case of the recent dismissal of the Town Clerk has been given to substantiate that the working relationship amongst the professionals and politicians in the Council is not cordial. An interesting dimension to this institutional dynamic relates to academic qualifications (relevant for effective local governance). The office of Councillorship in Zimbabwe does not require any minimal educational (or academic) qualifications. In other words, one becomes a Councillor solely on the basis of the popular will of their constituents and also servitude to the parent political party. On the contrary, the Council management is 'fairly educated.' This has been a source of hatred between the Council elective and appointive staff members. The former contend that the latter 'do not take them seriously' because of their apparent lack of academic competence in the realm of local governance. Ironically, the management is supposed to account to the politicians as elected representatives of the residents. On the other hand, this researcher learnt that the professionals themselves squarely blame the politicians for the weak social accountability processes obtaining in the Council. They often complain that they are unable to deliver optimally on their mandate (of providing services to residents) due to 'political interference'. Whilst this may seem accurate at face-value, this researcher concludes that the sector professionals have mastered the art of habitually apportioning blame elsewhere even for their own incompetence. These 'turf wars', resultantly, have affected efforts towards internalizing social accountability in an adverse manner.

#### Box 4: Harare City Councilors' Fact-file

- *46 Councilors elected in 2013;*
- *15% female;*
- *Seven (7) standing committees;*
- *Council top managers earn 52 times more than Councilors;*
- *Mayor earns US\$450 per month; and*
- *Elected for 5 year terms*

### 4.6.6. Revenue streams

As has already been alluded to earlier in this report, the Council continues to plead bankruptcy. In terms of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, Councils are entitled not less than 5% budgetary allocations from the national fiscus every year. They (the Councils) are also empowered, in terms of the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15), to levy charges to residents for a litany of 'services rendered'. In practice, however, and as one official in the Finance Department notes, central government has been unable to adhere to the aforementioned constitutional obligation.

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And as if to add insult to injury, the centre usurped the traditional funding streams of local authorities notably the vehicle licensing function. Central government is also legally obliged to disburse funds to Councils under the Public Sector Investment Programme for infrastructural development. Unfortunately, that the government is illiquid and that it is even failing to pay its own workers is an open secret. Consequently, the Council has shifted the burden to the poor urbanites. It has even gone to the immoral extent of attaching properties<sup>18</sup> owned by ‘defaulters’ as a means of recouping ‘its debts’. Again, this has been roundly condemned, justifiably so, in both the local and international media. Table 10 below shows the main revenue sources of the Harare City Council in 2010.

**Table 10: Harare City Council 2010 budget**

Revenue source	Amount in US\$ (millions)	Percentage
Supplementary charges	13.53	5.9
Water income	77.33	33.6
Rates	47.96	20.8
Sewerage charges	14.69	6.4
Refuse collection and sewer	24.87	10.8
Quarry station (income generating project)	8.39	3.6
Street signs and advertising	1.65	0.7
Vehicle licencing	4.85	2.1
Cemetery fees	1.35	0.58
Parking fees and parking fines	4.75	2.1
Rentals (Council properties)	2.39	1.0
School fees	1.07	0.5
Health fees	4.93	2.1
Shop licences	2.44	1.1
Other licences	1.24	0.5
Hire of stadia	0.58	0.3
Other income	18.07	7.85
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>230.09</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Harare City Council, 2010 Budget

### 4.6.7. Inertial factors

The trait of loathing change is an inherent human characteristic. When officials and management loathe change it becomes an organizational curse. On February 5, 2014 the Harare City Council Finance Committee Chairperson resigned ‘in protest’ over the management’s refusal to release to him the salary schedule of top managers in the local authority. In his resignation letter addressed to the Mayor he laments:

*“It is with regret that I tender my resignation as chairman of the finance committee and indeed the committee itself. I do not believe that anyone with any self-respect would chair the Harare City Council finance committee as it stands and runs today. For over six months*

<sup>18</sup> The Herald, June 25, 2015; The Standard, November 11, 2012; The Daily News, December 11, 2014; The NewsDay June 9, 2015; The Zimbabwean February 16, 2012; The New Zimbabwe

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*we have been waiting for contracts of grade one to four employees...The band alone accounts for nearly 10 percent of our wage bill.”*

That a mere Council employee withholds lawfully requested information by a political principal as part of the routine checks and balances processes of accountability boggles the mind. As residents' representatives, Councillors reserve the right to request information from the management that they deem to be in the public interest. The refusal by the responsible department to provide the information as duly requested by the principal is an expression of organizational inertia and unwillingness to embrace the change agenda. To whom are the professionals accountable to? On what basis would the responsible department withhold information from a principal? Why is it that no punitive action was taken for this blatant disregard of authority? Do the 'culprits' have protection of powerful figures 'behind the scenes'? What is clear, though, is that such inertial behaviour is detrimental to efforts aimed at institutionalizing social accountability in the Council.

**Fig. 7: Resignation letter of the Finance Committee Chairperson**

4.6.8.

*“An amazing folly which I cannot accept is a budget of US\$1.6 million to sponsor a football club in the current economic crisis. Yet the Harare City Council cannot afford any support to its amenities and associated residents. I shudder at the water rehabilitation deal that has been signed in the deal. Information technology equipment is covered in this contract which I have not seen for the tune of over US\$1million. Yet in the HCC budget, we also had a similar budget placed for similar equipment.”*

**Communication and feedback**

Communication and effective feedback mechanisms constitute critical means by which a local authority can engage with its residents. The communication conduit must be two-way. First, in order to foster social accountability, the Council should inform its residents about the alternative ways in which they (the citizens) can participate in local governance. This communication must go beyond invoices and requests for payments for ‘services rendered’ by the local authority. It must deliberately raise awareness on how residents should partake in social accountability processes and activities. This is because the residents are the ultimate consumers of ‘services’ provided by the Council. Second, the residents themselves must always be an informed lot concerning social accountability issues at the local level. An informed citizenry is able to hold the Council, as the duty-bearer, to account and to be responsive to their rights and needs. Again, communication from the demand side must go beyond mere complaints and agitations. Indeed, meeting financial obligations to Council is in itself a way of communicating with the local authority. The Council has been unable to communicate effectively with the recipient communities of their ‘services’. The Council website, which signals an essential leap towards e-governance, is so lean on social accountability information that would be beneficial to residents. There is no meaningful information on the platform to enable an in-depth critique of its social accountability processes. This researcher argues that

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the website has been set merely to satisfy ‘global trends’ in municipal governance. Surfing for information in the voluminous and dusty files domiciled in Council offices is an arduous task. Thus, and suffice to say, effective communication strategies remain absent within the Council.

### **4.6.9. Capacity to engage**

A cursory analysis of the data obtained through the self-assessment method reveals that the Council’s capacity to engage with its strategic stakeholders is weak. Engagement, in this instance, means the ability to foster and sustain effective communication between the Council and all stakeholders in the social accountability processes. The Council admitted that a sizeable number of residents in its jurisdiction do not even know what the mandate of the local authority as an institution is. At the Council level, this researcher found that the local authority’s mandate is understood merely as that of being a service provider. The Council has not been effectively duty-bound to raise awareness to the communities of its role in local governance. There are no deliberate efforts at the Council to tap into the indigenous knowledge streams of ‘senior’ residents as a way of organizational learning. The recent dismissal of some long-serving operational and managerial staff does not augur well for sustaining institutional memory. In addition, the Council’s relationship with the parent Ministry has been a subservient one. Consequently, it is arm-twisted incessantly by the centre in a manner that exudes political overtones rather than the need to foster and internalize social accountability. The Council seems, to this researcher, oblivious of the fact that they are a lawful and constitutional institution that must utilize its juristic existence to rebuff undue interference from the centre. They must, therefore, utilize judicial channels to obtain legal recourse whenever they are aggrieved by unreasonable directives from the centre. The inertial behaviour of the Council will not contribute to this preferred end-state in a meaningful manner. And, as always, it is the proverbial grass (residents and social accountability systems) that suffers when the elephants (Council and the Ministry) fight. Table 11 assesses the Council’s institutional capacity.

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**Table 11: Assessment Harare City Council capacity**

Capacity issue	Rating	Current practice	Capacity Needs
<b>Internal coordination</b>	Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Departmental silos;</li> <li>• ‘Turf wars’;</li> <li>• Role duplication; and</li> <li>• Weak mandate clarification at departmental level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad engagement spaces;</li> <li>• Role clarity;</li> <li>• Leadership; and</li> <li>• Strategic management</li> </ul>
<b>Citizen engagement</b>	Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vendor eviction;</li> <li>• House demolitions;</li> <li>• Full Council meeting; and</li> <li>• Budgetary processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community mobilization;</li> <li>• Participatory governance;</li> <li>• Stakeholder inclusion; and</li> <li>• Communication</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge management</b>	Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Website;</li> <li>• Press releases;</li> <li>• Files; and</li> <li>• Formal correspondence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-stop information centre;</li> <li>• Website systems upgrade and updates;</li> <li>• Vernacular communication; and</li> <li>• E-governance</li> </ul>
<b>Service provision</b>	Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systems failure (obsolete water and sanitation distributional networks);</li> <li>• Impassable roads;</li> <li>• Abandoned community facilities; and</li> <li>• Inaccurate billing (overstatements)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership approach;</li> <li>• Private sector driven delivery;</li> <li>• Routine and periodic infrastructure maintenance; and</li> <li>• Outsourcing</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional memory</b>	Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrenchments;</li> <li>• Downsizing;</li> <li>• File-based recording; and</li> <li>• Staff redeployments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-based knowledge generation and storage;</li> <li>• Engaging retired professionals;</li> <li>• Consulting senior citizens; and</li> <li>• Introspection</li> </ul>
<b>Autonomy</b>	Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subservient centre-local relations;</li> <li>• Political interference;</li> <li>• Arm-twisting by the centre; and</li> <li>• Internal professionals-politicians squabbles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal recourse;</li> <li>• Professionalism;</li> <li>• Effective systems; and</li> <li>• Rule of law</li> </ul>
<b>Resource mobilization</b>	Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliance on residents’ contributions;</li> <li>• Attaching defaulters’ properties;</li> <li>• Loss-making income generating projects; and</li> <li>• Inadequate central support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broadening twinning arrangements;</li> <li>• Confidence building;</li> <li>• Good governance; and</li> <li>• Rationalizing remuneration</li> </ul>

Source: Fieldwork, 2016 (Self-Assessment Forms)

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### **4.7 ActionAid International Zimbabwe: A civil society lead actor**

ActionAid International Zimbabwe (AAIZ) deserves credit for the contribution it has made in the social accountability cause in local governance. Its Accountability Programme Objective Plan (2014-2018) focuses on how impoverished residents can participate in ensuring sustainable access to high quality, equitable and gender responsive public services. The organization envisages a scenario whereby educational, health, water and sanitation services are provided to residents in an egalitarian manner. This could be achieved through focussing on five (5) key actions namely skills training and capacity building, reflection/action, coalition building, policy research/evidence gathering and advocacy and campaigning. Through a partnering approach with grassroots organizations the organization has played a critical role in narrowing the chasm between residents and the Council. Social accountability issues are at the core of AAIZ's development work. More importantly, the international non-state organization has been advocating for a paradigmatic shift from contextualizing service delivery as 'needs' to 'rights' of recipient communities. According to them, denial or sub-optimal delivery of services by the Council is an injustice. Duty-bearers such as Councils have a lawful and justiciable obligation to provide services to their constituents in a responsive manner. Thus, the thrust of fostering a rights-based approach to service delivery by AAIZ is commendable.

Moreover, AAIZ's Country Strategy (2014-2018) focuses on strengthening citizens' actions against poverty. Poverty is, indeed, the single most important factor that has militated against the active participation of residents in how their issues are administered by Councils. The strategy is premised on three (3) key objectives. These relate, first, to promoting improved livelihoods and enhanced rights to land. Second, advancing the political influence of women, men and children to hold government and corporates to account is emphasized. Finally, ensuring that women and girls break the cycle of violence is the other strategic objective. The feminine gender is particularly critical in social accountability by virtue of their demographic superiority. The means through which AAIZ operationalizes these objectives include, inter alia, sensitization meetings, Training of Trainers courses (for implementing partners), networking and coalition building. The organization collaborates with public institutions, does participatory research, advocacy and lobbying and capacity building as part of its implementation framework. Collective action and citizen agency of rights-holders (citizens) and responsiveness by duty-bearers (state institutions) also constitute its work. Hence, AAIZ has contributed to the social accountability cause in a fundamental way.

### **4.8. Chapter conclusion**

This chapter, perhaps the most significant of all, presented and analyzed the data that were generated during the fieldwork phase of the research relative to the issues under review. It starts by analysing the policy and practice of social accountability processes in the city of Harare. The role of several civil society groups in leading the advocacy efforts for the institutionalization of social accountability within the Harare City Council is emphasized throughout the chapter. Several case studies from an array of civil society organizations are provided to assess the status of social accountability within the city. The guiding question, of

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course, relates to whether the Council has adequately institutionalized social accountability issues within its administrative and operational architecture. Good practices by these organizations were learnt and are detailed in this chapter. The focus then shifts to the contextual (operational and administrative environment) issues affecting the internalization of social accountability in the Council. Partisan politics are particularly identified as one of the most fundamental inhibiting factors. There is an apparent rift between the Council professionals and politicians pertaining mainly to their functional spaces and internal accountability mechanisms. The roles and obligations of the residents themselves in achieving optimal social accountability outcomes in Harare are identified and analyzed. Finally, this researcher refocuses on the Harare City Council's capacity from several vantage points. The following chapter provides summary conclusions to the issues under review and offers some alternative courses of action, from both the demand- and supply-sides, that can be explored to internalize social accountability in Harare.

## **5.0 Summary Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Chapter introduction**

The preceding chapter presented the findings that were generated during the research and provided an in-depth analysis of social accountability processes and mechanisms in the city of Harare. A demand-supply side analytical framework was employed to evaluate the extent to which social accountability has been institutionalized as part of the governance architecture of Zimbabwe's capital city. In this chapter, this researcher draws conclusions from the analysis of data that were generated during the empirical study. It should be stated from the onset that this researcher, based on rigorous data analyses, concludes that the Harare City Council, as lead actor and duty bearer, has failed to steer social accountability processes in an effective manner. Whilst all the blame cannot be apportioned to the local authority, this researcher contends that the Council has abrogated on its constitutional obligation of providing decent services to the residents of Harare at reasonable price regimes. It could be argued that this is deliberate. How can local authority that perennially pleads bankruptcy afford to spend US\$0.5million on paying salaries of eighteen (18) 'directors' every month? This researcher proposes an alternative model for institutionalizing social accountability in the Council. The operationalization of this model is founded on some express assumptions. Some suggested options for rejuvenating the Council's governance mechanisms are provided herein.

### **5.2 Study conclusions**

Through a scientific analysis (using the STATA computer software) of the data that were generated in the study, this researcher makes several conclusions which are fivefold.

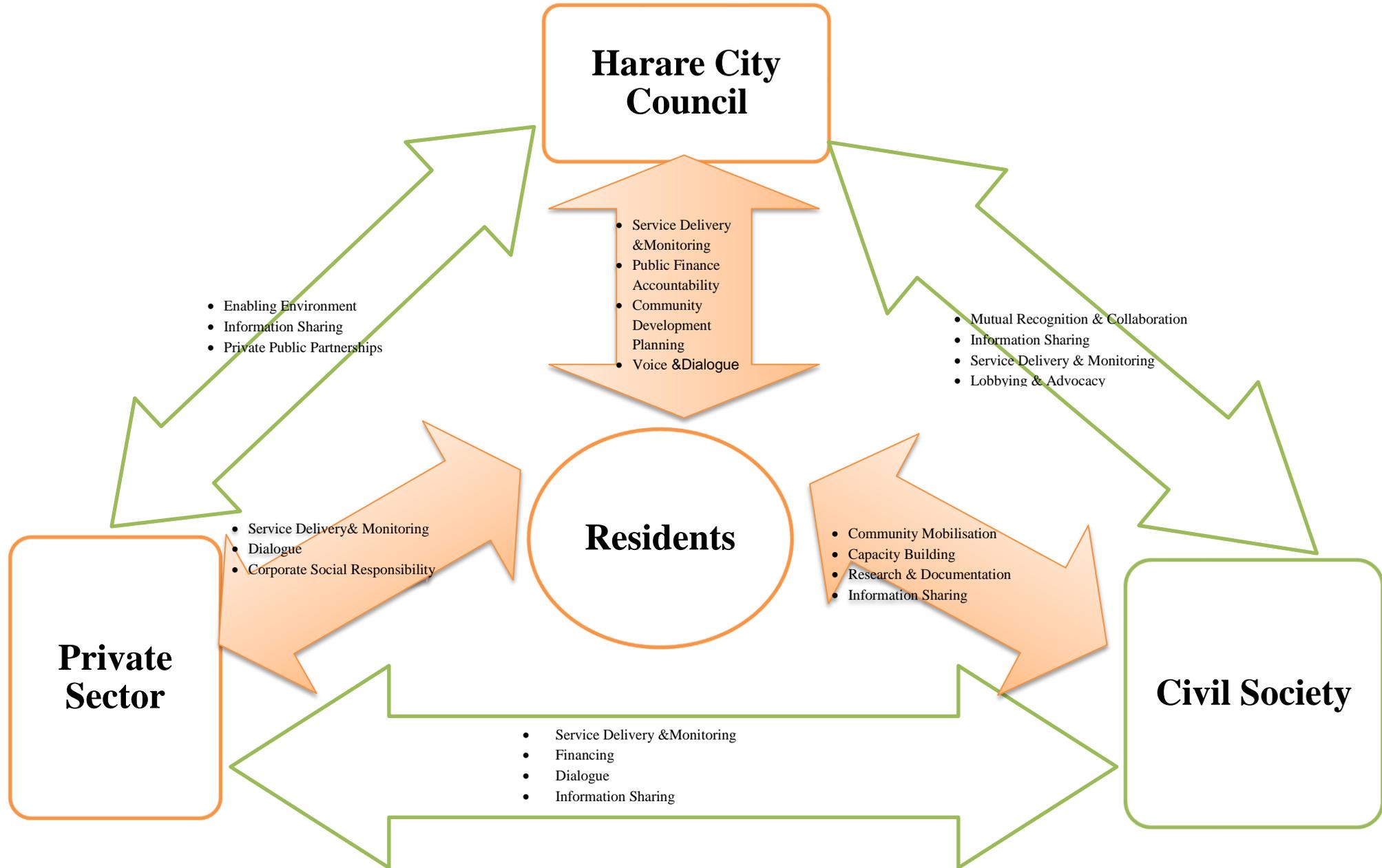
- ❖ First, the Harare City Council does not have effective engagement spaces where the 'city fathers', and the few 'city mothers' there, interact robustly with the residents. The data show that the officials engage in complex information hoarding from the residents to shield themselves from bona fide scrutiny;
- ❖ Second, the means through which residents are involved in municipal governance processes by the local authority are merely tokenistic. For instance, the residents attend budget-making sessions by the Council to rubberstamp financial management decisions made exclusively by the technocrats and politicians;
- ❖ Third, whilst the role of various civil society organizations operating within the local authority jurisdiction is evolving and strategic, these actors face internal capacity challenges to effectively engage with the Council. This relates mainly to their inability to meaningfully mobilize communities to partake in local governance;
- ❖ Fourth, a gamut of legislative shields continues to militate against participatory governance in Harare. For example, civil society organisations (such as residents' representatives) only attend full Council meetings by the local authority as *ex officio* members. Consequently, they (civil society) are unable to effectively leverage Council social accountability and decision-making processes that have adverse ramifications on residents' livelihoods; and

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- ❖ Fifth and finally, there are no deliberate efforts by the Council (as the duty-bearer) to harness contributions of local communities, as rights holders, in the governance architecture. This has affected institutionalization of social accountability in an adverse manner.

### **5.3 Proposed model for institutionalizing social accountability in Harare**

**Fig. 8: Proposed Social Accountability Model**



### 5.3.1 Underlying assumptions

The functionality of the proposed model is founded on the assumptions that the social accountability processes, driven by Council as lead actor, will be:

- Inclusive and participatory;
- Balanced in terms of demand and supply side considerations; and
- Dynamic and responsive to residents' rights.

Table 12 below provides definitional clarity to the proposed multi-actor processes and mechanisms in the model.

**Table 12: Model Accountability Relationships**

Relationship	Operational connotations
<b>Local authority – Citizens</b>	Primary focus of the model in which citizens and local authorities engage through defined processes and tools
<b>Civil society – Citizens</b>	Processes that civil society must prioritize to build the capacity of citizens in engaging with local authorities
<b>Civil society-Local authority</b>	Mutual collaboration between the local authority and civil society provides an enabling environment for citizens to demand accountability
<b>Citizens - Private sector</b>	Processes that bring in, and capitalise on, private sector initiatives to social accountability.
<b>Private sector – Local authority</b>	Processes that assist both local authorities and private sector in providing services to citizens
<b>Civil society – Private Sector</b>	Processes that assist both civil society and private sector in providing services to citizens

Source: Analysis, 2016

### 6.4 Recommendations

This researcher proposes a gamut of alternative courses of action to reconfigure the social accountability system in Harare with a dual focus. On the one hand, the Council, as the duty bearer, has a lawful obligation to provide affordable, regular and high quality services to residents in a sustainable manner. This is the supply-side dynamic. Citizens, on the other hand and as right holders, must engage Council to be responsive to their rights (demand side considerations). Table 13 below is summarizes the recommendations.

**Table 13: Supply-demand side recommendations**

Supply side (Harare City Council)	Demand side (citizens, civil society and private sector)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Reconfigure the governance processes progressively, and yet radically, to ensure effective engagement with all stakeholders.</b> Positive social accountability outcomes will only be achieved in Harare if the local authority actively promotes inclusive and accountable governance regimes;</li> <li>❖ <b>Cease, forthwith, token consultations (<i>laissez faire</i>) of residents in significant processes (such as budgeting) by promoting active citizenship and strengthening citizen voice.</b> Residents have an inalienable right to participate meaningfully in how their affairs are managed by the Council;</li> <li>❖ <b>Provide a facilitatory and enabling institutional environment for other actors to thrive.</b> The use of archaic legislative shields and statutory barriers to rebuff bona fide criticism from residents and organizations that represent them must end;</li> <li>❖ <b>Lead the reform agenda to ensure that local governance within the city becomes participatory and egalitarian.</b> Inertial behavior and resistance to change does not augur well with efforts aimed at democratizing the management of public affairs; and</li> <li>❖ <b>Reduce administrative overheads (particularly salary excesses) as a way of channeling the scarce resources towards improving service delivery and enhancing social accountability mechanisms.</b> The illegal violation of the 30%-70% remuneration-service delivery threshold must be accounted for and attendant justice applied.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Assume active citizenship by meeting financial obligations to the local authority for services rendered.</b> The residents must substantiate their concerns for accountable governance through evidence of paying rates and other service delivery charges;</li> <li>❖ <b>Demand services through a rights-based approach.</b> This could be done by conceptualizing service delivery and social accountability concerns as citizen rights rather than routine institutional obligations of the Council;</li> <li>❖ <b>Make institutionalization of social accountability an overarching objective of lobbying and advocacy efforts.</b> Appropriate institutional arrangements that are legally enforceable, especially by non-Council stakeholders, need to be put in place;</li> <li>❖ <b>Build own capacity to partake in the governance of the city meaningfully.</b> This includes the capacity to engage in, leverage, lobby and mobilize effectively in local authority social accountability processes by the Council (as the lead agency); and</li> <li>❖ <b>Replicate global good practices by learning lessons from other jurisdictions around the world.</b> This replication must be done within the specific contextual differentials of the city of Harare as a distinct political space and be adapted to dovetail well with obtaining local conditions.</li> </ul>

Source: Analysis, 2016

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## 6.5 Chapter conclusion

The essence of this chapter was to articulate the specific conclusions that this researcher drew from the analysis of data that were generated in the field. Whilst some critics may interpret the conclusions as adverse and unpalatable, they (the findings) undoubtedly illustrate the status quo in terms of governance within the Council's jurisdiction. In order to reconfigure the administration of the city so that it is inclusive and responsive, a robust model was proposed. It was suggested that the local authority, as the lead agency in steering social accountability processes, must take a proactive role in operationalising the model. The *laissez faire* approach to local governance that the Council currently exudes has aggravated the defective management of the city. A sustained reform agenda has to be pursued with equal promptitude. More importantly, the capacity of civil society, residents and the private sector has to be built in order to implement the dynamic model that this researcher proposes. There must now be concerted efforts to ensure that the institutionalization of social accountability processes becomes an overarching goal of all actors whose interests are at stake in the administration of Harare.

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1. Regional Town and Country Planning Act (Chapter 29:12) Revised Edition of 1996.
2. Urban Council Act (Chapter 29:15).

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## **Annexes**

### **Annex 1: Focus group discussion guide**

1. How do you, as residents, participate in Council affairs?
2. In what ways have you contributed to service delivery in the city?
3. Which organized community groups represent residents at Council level?
4. What is your perception on governance of this area?
5. How do you relate with the Council?
6. Do you have any challenges engaging with Council? If so, specify.
7. What needs to be done to improve the relationship between residents and Council?

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## **Annex 2: Key informant guide**

1. Is social accountability an integral part of municipal governance in Harare?
2. Which specific mechanisms illustrate the engagement platforms between the Council and residents?
3. How do you rate the Council's social accountability policy and practice?
4. Are there lagging areas that require urgent redress at Council level?
5. Has citizen participation in governance been promoted by the Council?
6. What are the major factors behind the deterioration of service delivery in Harare?
7. Does partisan politics have a role to play in scaling up social accountability processes?
8. What can be done to improve social accountability in Harare?

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### Annex 3: Institutional self-assessment tool

This tool<sup>19</sup> is aimed at assessing the capacity of the organization to foster and sustain social accountability as part of the governance of the city of Harare.

#### Name of Organization

.....

#### Position of Person completing the form

.....

#### 1. How do you define social accountability?

.....  
.....  
.....

#### 2. What are your views on social accountability in Harare?

.....  
.....  
.....

#### 3. Please indicate the rating of your organization's competences

Competence	Rating					Comment(s)
	1	2	3	4	5	
Information dissemination						
Policy research						
Advocacy and lobbying						
Community capacity building						

#### 4. Explain the social accountability strategies that you use as an organization.

	Rating	Comments

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<sup>19</sup> For any rating 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest.

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<b>Social accountability strategy</b>	1	2	3	4	5	

5. Assess the effectiveness of the specific social accountability tools that you employ

<b>Social accountability tool</b>	<b>Rating</b>					<b>Comment(s)</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	

6. How do you describe you social accountability processes over the years?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

7. Assess the conduciveness of social accountability contexts in Harare

<b>Filter</b>	<b>Rating</b>					<b>Explain</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Political</b>						
<b>Economic</b>						

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<b>Institutional</b>						
<b>Technology</b>						
<b>Legal</b>						

**8. Share the strategic lessons that your social accountability processes have generated**

.....

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**9. Comment on the role of citizens in municipal governance within the context of Harare**

.....

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**10. State the challenges you have faced in promoting social accountability in Harare**

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**11. What must be done to improve social accountability in Harare?**

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**12. Internal capacity issues (Rate weak or strong)**

<b>Capacity issue</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Current practice (Comment)</b>	<b>Capacity Needs (Comment)</b>
<b>Internal coordination</b>			
<b>Citizen engagement</b>			

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<b>Knowledge management</b>			
<b>Service provision</b>			
<b>Institutional memory</b>			
<b>Autonomy</b>			
<b>Resource mobilization</b>			

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## Annex 4: Household questionnaire

### A: INTRODUCTION

Thank you for participating in this study. This questionnaire seeks to obtain residents' opinions on the governance of the city of Harare by the authorities (Harare City Council). Your responses will be used for purely for academic purposes.

### B: GENERAL

**1. Date**

.....

**2. Name of neighbourhood**

.....

**3. Type of neighbourhood (Tick appropriate category)**

Low density  Middle density  High density  Slum

### C: SOCIO-ECONOMIC

**4. Sex of respondent (Tick appropriate gender)**

Male  Female

**5. Sex of household head (Tick appropriate gender)**

Male  Female

**6. Age of respondent (Tick appropriate category)**

21-40 years  41-60years  61-80 years  81 years and above

**7. Household size (Tick appropriate category)**

1-3members  4-6members  7-9 members  10 members and above

**8. Employment status of breadwinner (Tick appropriate response)**

Formally employed  Informally employed  Partially employed  Unemployed

**9. Monthly income, in US\$, of breadwinner (Tick appropriate response)**

Less than 200  201-600  601-1000  1001 or more

### D: SERVICE DELIVERY AVAILABILITY, REGULARITY AND SATISFACTION

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**10. Which Council services do you receive (Tick appropriate response)**

Service	Availability	
	Yes	No
Water		
Refuse collection		
Street lighting		
Health		
Education		
Community facilities (e.g. halls)		
Road maintenance		
Planning services (e.g. housing designs)		
Leisure facilities		
Other (specify)	..... ..... .....	

**11. Rate the quality of services delivered by the Council (Tick appropriate response)**

Service	Quality of services provided		
	High	Satisfactory	Poor
Water			
Refuse collection			
Street lighting			
Health			
Education			
Community facilities (e.g. halls)			
Road maintenance			
Planning services (e.g. housing designs)			
Leisure facilities			

**12. Rate the regularity of services delivered by the Council (Tick appropriate response)**

Service	Regularity of services provided	
	Regular	Not regular
Water		
Refuse collection		
Street lighting		
Health		

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<b>Education</b>		
<b>Community facilities (e.g. halls)</b>		
<b>Road maintenance</b>		
<b>Planning services (e.g. housing designs)</b>		
<b>Leisure facilities</b>		

**13. Rate the affordability of services delivered by the Council (Tick appropriate response)**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Affordability of services provided</b>	
	<b>Affordable</b>	<b>Not affordable</b>
<b>Water</b>		
<b>Refuse collection</b>		
<b>Street lighting</b>		
<b>Health</b>		
<b>Education</b>		
<b>Community facilities (e.g. halls)</b>		
<b>Road maintenance</b>		
<b>Planning services (e.g. housing designs)</b>		
<b>Leisure facilities</b>		

**E: GOVERNANCE**

**14. Participation in Council processes (Tick appropriate response)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Elections		
Budget making		
Clean-up campaigns		

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Service protests		
Road maintenance		
Awareness campaigns		
Full Council meetings		
Other (specify)	..... .....	

**15. Familiarity with social accountability tools (Tick appropriate response)**

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Citizen audits		
Citizen juries		
Public hearings		
Study circles		
Public forums		
Public revenue tracking		
Budget analysis		
Expenditure tracking		
Procurement		
Report cards		
Others (specify)	..... ..... .....	

**16. State some of the challenges that you face with interacting with Council**

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**17. What can be done to improve relations between the Council and the residents**

.....  
 .....  
 .....

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Governance**