

Let's do it ourselves!

**Urban Elites and the Negotiation of Infrastructure Challenges
in Masvingo, Zimbabwe**

By

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DECLARATION

I, John Mhandu, candidate number 13399803, declare that this mini-dissertation is my own original work. It is hereof submitted to fulfil the requirements of the Master of Social Science in Sociology [MSocSci (C/W) (Sociology)] at the University of Pretoria, Pretoria. This report has not been submitted for any other degree of examination at any other university. Where secondary material has been used, this has been carefully acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities, and University of Pretoria.

DEDICATION

Firstly I dedicate this work to the Lord God Almighty, who guided me throughout my academic research.

Secondly, to my parents, Rev. Bishop Noel Mhandu and Mrs Mhandu, *may “the Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!”(Ruth 2:12).*

Lastly, my late sister, Catherine Mhandu, I wish you had lived longer so we could celebrate this achievement together.

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Abstract

This research is situated within a broader urban sociology framework, and set against the background of a precarious economic and political milieu in Zimbabwe, as a result of which urban infrastructure deteriorated immensely during the post-independence period, in particular the third decade. Drawing on a literature on decentralization and urban governance (Reddy, 1999; Smit and Pieterse, 2014), with a specific focus on Africa (Ribot, 1999; Chigwata, 2010; Chigwenya, 2010), the study contends that the acclaimed decentralization and devolution of power by the central state in Zimbabwe can be described as phony and counter-productive in as far as urban infrastructure development is concerned. Through a focus on fragmenting urban infrastructure in contemporary Masvingo, Zimbabwe the study explores the challenges faced by the municipal council and the livelihood and survival strategies of local elites in combating service delivery and infrastructure challenges.

In this research, I argue that infrastructure conditions in urban Masvingo have deteriorated owing to rapid urbanization, decentralization devoid of devolution, political instability, human negligence, and macro-economic challenges, which in my view affects the municipality's prioritization of expenditures. The municipal council view the rise of government parastatals such as ZINARA as the biggest challenge undermining their ability to acquire resources for infrastructure maintenance. Furthermore, it is argued that the continued fragmentation of infrastructure and service delivery became an eyesore as well as a threat to elites, who embraced a "let's do it ourselves approach". As a result, urban elites in Masvingo constantly engage with key institutions, including the state and non-governmental organizations, to negotiate infrastructural challenges with a view to improve livelihoods and well-being. In addition, urban elites have been necessitated to implement a range of coping strategies at household level (such as use of borehole water, household generators, and access to countryside resources) to combat failing infrastructure. The study found that the coping strategies employed by the elite urban ratepayers varies depending on whether they reside in a low density or high density suburb.

The research deployed data source triangulation techniques, utilizing semi-structured interviews, document analysis and participant observation. A total of seventeen interviews were conducted with key informants including councillors and top representatives of the municipal council, a member of parliament, and selected elite urban ratepayers in Masvingo.

Keywords:

governance; decentralization; devolution; infrastructure; elites; livelihoods; survival strategies; service delivery; civil society; 'crisis' states; Masvingo; Zimbabwe.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Zimbabwe’s political economy after independence	3
1.2.1 First Decade: The Post-independence welfarist economy (1980-1991)	3
1.2.2 Second Decade: The blueprint economic policy (1991-1998)	4
1.2.3 Third Decade: A Precarious economic and political trajectory (1999-2009)	7
1.2.3.1 Dollarization in Zimbabwe.....	8
1.3 Government parastatals and the urban infrastructure nexus.....	9
1.3.1 The Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA)	10
1.3.2 The Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA).....	11
1.3.3 The Environmental Management Agency (EMA)	13
1.3.4 Zimbabwe National Road Administration (ZINARA)	15
1.4 Urbanization in post-independence Zimbabwe	16
1.5 Masvingo	19
1.5.1 Major developments in Masvingo after Independence (1980)	22
1.6 The Research Problem	24
1.7 Research Question.....	25

1.8 Conclusion	25
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	26
2.1 Introduction	26
2.2 Urbanization in historical context.....	27
2.3 The nation-state and the decentralization model of governance	30
2.3.1 The decentralization model in colonial and postcolonial Africa.....	35
2.3.2 Decentralization and recentralization in Zimbabwe	37
2.4 Urban infrastructure.....	41
2.4.1 Sustainable urban infrastructure development	43
2.4.2 Sources of income.....	44
2.5 Coping strategies	45
2.5.1 Coping, survival and resilience strategies in Masvingo	49
2.6 Urban elites	50
2.7 Civil society organisations & networks	51
2.7 Conclusion	52
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	53
3.1 Introduction	53
3.2 Research design and qualitative methodology	53
3.2.1 Rationale for adopting a qualitative approach	54
3.2.2 Rationale for data and method triangulation.....	55
3.3 Research Method	56
3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews	56
3.3.1.1 Selection of participants	60
3.3.1.2 Brief description of participants	61
3.3.2 Documentary review.....	65
3.3.2.1 Selection and description of documents reviewed.....	65

3.3.3 Participant observation.....	68
3.4 Research ethics	67
3.4.1 Insider and outsider status in qualitative research.....	67
3.4.2 Ethical considerations.....	68
3.4.2.1 Non-maleficence	69
3.4.2.2 Justice.....	69
CHAPTER 4: AN OVERVIEW OF MASVINGO’S URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE (2010-2015): Challenges and opportunities.....	71
4.1 Introduction	71
4.2 Understanding infrastructure challenges: Council and technocratic perspectives	72
4.2.1 Water.....	73
4.2.2 Sewer system.....	79
4.3 Urban infrastructure conditions on the ground: High Density Suburbs	83
4.3.1 Water.....	84
4.3.2 Sewer system.....	86
4.3.3 Lack of connectivity... ..	88
4.3.3.1 Bridges.....	88
4.3.3.2 Poor roads.....	91
4.3.3.2.1 ‘Dustification’ of tarred roads.....	94
4.3.4 Other social amenities.....	95
4.4 Low Density Suburbs (LDSs)	97
4.4.1 Densification of the low density space.....	97
4.5 Conclusion	100
CHAPTER 5:THE PRAGMATISM OF LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES: Surviving in a disintegrating urban infrastructure environment.....	101
5.1 Introduction	101
5.2 Investments in urban institutional networks.....	101

5.2.1 Masvingo Business Advisory Board (MBAB).....	102
5.2.2 Masvingo United Ratepayer's Association (MURRA).....	106
5.2.3 An evaluation of the municipal council's response to MBAB and MURRA....	110
5.2.4 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and civil society initiatives	111
5.3 Surviving electricity shortages.....	115
5.3.1 Access to countryside resources.....	115
5.3.2 Using alternative sources	117
5.4 Surviving inconvenient water supply	118
5.4.1 Borehole water	119
5.4.2 The efficacy of borehole water as a livelihood strategy	120
5.5 Ward-based and individual coping and resilience strategies.....	124
5.6 Conclusion	125
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION.....	127
6.1 Introduction	127
6.2 Summary of argument and concluding notes	127
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	132
APPENDIX A: Interview schedule: elite ratepayers.....	146
APPENDIX B: Interview schedule: key informants.....	147
APPENDIX C: Letter of permission key informants.....	148
APPENDIX D: Leter of permission elite ratepayers.....	150
APPENDIX E: Consent letter.....	152

List of Figures and Tables

Tables

Table 1: Zimbabwe population at large and urban population density.....	17
Table 2: Urban municipal structure established in 1995.....	20
Table 3: Masvingo urban population distribution after independence.....	23
Table 4: The decentralization framework.....	32

Figures

Fig 1: Lake Kyle/Mutirikwi.....	76
Fig 2: Bushmead water treatment plant.....	76
Fig 3: Fire engine to supply water to the urban residents.....	86
Fig 4: Main bridge connecting HDSs and the CBD.....	89
Fig 5: Car swept away at Chimusana Bridge.....	89
Fig 6: Roads in High Density Suburbs (HDSs).....	92
Fig 7: A typical household generator used by the elite urban ratepayers.....	118
Fig 8: Typical storage tank of household Borehole water in the LDSs.....	121
Fig 9: Borehole water in the HDSs.....	121

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
AHEAD	Applied Health Education and Development
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
BNR	Biological Nutrient Removal Plant
BSAC	British South African Company
CBD	Central Business District
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DDF	District Development Fund
DWMS	Demand Water Management System
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMA	Environmental Management Agency
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
HDSs	High Density Suburbs
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LDSs	Low Density Suburbs
MBAB	Masvingo Business Advisory Board
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDS	Medium Density Suburbs
MURRA	Masvingo United Ratepayer's Association
NASSA	National Social Security Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRZ	National Railways of Zimbabwe
PMDDs	Prime Minister's Directives on Decentralization and Developments

POSA	Public Order and Security Act
POTRAZ	Postal and Telecommunications Regulation Authority of Zimbabwe
RBZ	Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
RDCs	Rural District Councils
RFB	Road Fund Board
RTCP	Regional Town and Country Planning Act
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SSB	Salisbury Sanitary Board
UC	Urban Council
UN	United Nations
UPAM	United People's Association of Matabeleland
US\$	United States Dollar
WHO	World Health Organization
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZELA	Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association
ZESA	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority
ZETDC	Zimbabwe Electricity Transmission and Distribution Company
ZIMPREST	Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation
ZIMRA	Zimbabwe Revenue Authority
ZINARA	Zimbabwe National Road Administration
ZINWA	Zimbabwe National Water Authority
ZOU	Zimbabwe Open University
ZUCWU	Zimbabwe Urban Council Worker's Union
ZUD	Zimbabwe Union of Democrats
ZUM	Zimbabwe Unity Movement
ZW\$	Zimbabwean Dollar

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study foregrounds the significance of studying urban infrastructure decay and coping and resilience strategies in contemporary metropolitan cities. Focusing on post-independence Zimbabwe and the city of Masvingo in particular, the study aims at deepening existing scholarship in African urban sociology. Based on a chronological overview of post-independent Zimbabwe's economic policy and parastatal responses to the development and maintenance of urban infrastructure, it is argued that there has been a failure by the central state to provide basic socio-economic services to citizens at large. The study explores the role played by parastatals in service delivery and management systems. It offers an outline of Zimbabwe's political economy and the centrality of service delivery to creating an enabling environment or the lack thereof. In particular, the study explores the responses of elite urban ratepayers to infrastructure decline.

The chapter starts with a historical background to the socio-economic circumstances that have undermined the delivery of basic social services to urban residents in Masvingo, Zimbabwe, followed by an outline of the key agencies involved in service delivery in Zimbabwe and the implications thereof in relation to centralisation and decentralisation. The third part of the chapter focuses on urbanization patterns in Zimbabwe, with a specific emphasis on the consequences of the historical rural-urban divide. Finally, the research question, aims and objectives of this research project are outlined.

For a number of reasons, which will be unpacked in the literature, I argue that there is a relatively limited literature on coping strategies¹, perceptions and actions of urban elites

¹ In this research project, the words coping strategies will be used to refer to the amalgamation of necessary activities adopted to withstand prevailing extraordinary and often traumatic infrastructure failure. See chapter two on the conceptualization of key terms.

in response to fragmenting urban infrastructure. This research contributes to this knowledge gap with specific reference to elite urban ratepayers in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. Whilst many studies address survival and livelihood strategies in particularly of poor communities, relatively few studies focus on the coping and resilience strategies adopted by elite groups situated in urban areas. This is particularly important in order to grapple with large-scale economic crisis, such as recently in Greece and Zimbabwe, which affect both elites and the poor, although of course disproportionately. Little research has been done on the *coping strategies* elites use in a context of failing infrastructure. As such, less is known about the coping strategies adopted by elites generally as well as the broader social consequences of such strategies. This research project explored coping strategies employed by elites in Masvingo in response to ageing and under-funded infrastructure in the city in the context of severe economic deprivation. The study gathered urban elite ratepayers' perceptions about and actions in relation to failing infrastructure within the context of Masvingo. In addition, the input of key office holders in the Masvingo city council was sought, and public documentation scrutinized.

In this study, I argue that studying urban infrastructure is important because it connects residents to essential and indispensable services such as sanitation and health facilities, markets, places of production, education and recreational facilities. Furthermore, urban infrastructure enables the hauling of merchandise and the implementation of services such as the aforementioned which are the basic rudiments of a functioning city or town. From an economic perspective, I foreground that inadequate and undesirable infrastructure thwarts potential economic growth and impacts negatively on international competitiveness, thereby undermining a country's economic growth and adherence to international standards.

In the context of economic meltdown and state crisis, I argue that coping strategies support citizens to administer their own needs and expectations, thereby reducing conflicts and tensions between, for example, local governmental technocrats and authorities. In so doing, coping strategies assist urban elites to overcome the municipal

council's weaknesses in managing urban infrastructure as well as enabling citizens to deal with infrastructure problems through utilizing surrounding opportunities.

1.2 Zimbabwe's political economy after independence

This section presents an analysis of the Zimbabwean political economy since independence. In particular, it investigates a diverse range of socio-economic policies and the relationship between the country's economy and politics. In this regard, the analysis is divided into three key decades, namely the post-independence welfarist economy (1980-1991), the second decade blueprint economic policy (1991-1998) and the precarious economic and political trajectory that lead up to the economic crisis (1999-2009). In addition, the analysis focuses on pertinent global institutions (such as the IMF) and government parastatals, in particular ZINWA, ZINARA, ZESA and EMA along with their developmental contributions in transforming the socio-economic system. The four institutions are directly linked to urban infrastructure management systems and service delivery. The relationship between government parastatals and urban infrastructure is unpacked. In addition, controversies about urbanization and the rural-urban divide will be discussed.

1.2.1 First Decade: The Post-independence welfarist economy (1980-1991)

Following an agreement signed by President Mugabe and the North Korean President Kim Il Sung, a 5th brigade was formed in 1981 and trained by the North Korean Military for the Zimbabwean Army (Alao, 2012:81) in order to suppress civilians. According to Alao (2012:81), the period 1982-1987 was marked by unrest and political disturbances between dissidents (from Matebeleland) and the government of Mugabe. Mario (2009:19) concurs that soon after independence, integrating the Zimbabwe African National Army (ZANLA) and Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) into the Zimbabwe national army was a problem. To this end, Mugabe responded in various ways, the most important of which is referred to as "*Gukurahundi*", which was aimed at suppressing civilians and the opposition in Matebeleland. However, following the aforementioned civil unrest, on 22 December 1987, Mario (2001:21) notes that a Unit Accord was signed by Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, an agreement that merged

the opposition Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) with the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and amnesty for dissidents declared. In my view, the Unit Accord can be described as a winning strategy by President Robert Mugabe to structure a one-party state, although this idea was not successful, since a plethora of opposition parties were later formed in the second and third decades after independence.

Regardless of the aforementioned civil conflicts, throughout the first decade after independence, that is 1980-1990, the Republic of Zimbabwe had a stable and well established economy. According to Riddell (1984:463), for the period 1980-1984, the Zimbabwean economy performed much better than the economies of her neighbouring countries in the Southern region, with an average annual economic growth of 26%. Post-independence Zimbabwe registered superior growth in the agriculture sector, industry and the export of significant commodities like minerals (Riddell, 1984:463). Building from the works of Riddell (1984), I argue that the post-independence period supported an optimistic stance with regard to economic growth and political administration. Reasons for the political stability and economic growth during the period under review could be attributed to the fact that the nation state was emerging from a six year liberation struggle. As such, the new government focused more on production and economic growth in order to prove its capability and effectiveness in political administration. To this effect, the new government launched a “growth with equity and transformation” programme (Riddell, 1984:476), introducing economic policies aimed at increasing equity by creating a largely rural-based egalitarian society, which reflected a welfarist component of social welfarism (Dashwood, 2000:32). Thus the thrust of growth with equity and transformation was to achieve socio-economic stability.

1.2.2 Second Decade: Blueprint economic policy (1991-1998)

On 23 March 1990, Zimbabwe held the first Presidential and Parliamentary elections under the new Post-independence constitution of 1987 that put an end to the senate opting for an executive presidency. A plethora of opposition parties such as the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM), Forum Party of Zimbabwe (FPZ), Zimbabwe Union

of Democrats (ZUD), United People's Association of Matabeleland (UPAM), Zimbabwe Integrated Party (ZIP) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) were formed during the second decade of independence. I view the MDC as the strongest opposition party of the second decade. The second decade political landscape was dominated by the ruling ZANU-PF and later the opposition MDC.

In 1992, Zimbabwe experienced drought which was also recorded throughout Southern Africa (Maphosa, 1994:1). The drought had a significant impact on the economic performance of local industries, thereby affecting the country's economic strategies. To this effect, the nation, which used to be the bread basket of Southern Africa (Maphosa, 1994:2) prior to the 1992 drought, was left with no option but to apply for bailout funding which later resulted in the transformation to a new economic development strategy, from social-welfarist to structural adjustment programme (Dashwood, 2000:32) creating more reliance on markets. In my view, adopting the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was a transition from what Mucharambeyi (2001:60) describes as conventional socialism but what I would more accurately describe as welfarist to a new liberal society, an economic agenda enshrined within the Washington consensus. Thus the 1992 drought forced Zimbabwe to adopt an Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) as a complementary to economic and social problems bedevilling the nation at large. The reason for the adoption of ESAP was to rebuild Zimbabwe and support its economic recovery.

However, the negative socio-economic effects seem to outweigh the positive and intended benefits of the ESAP as it was adopted in Zimbabwe. Stiglitz (2002:282) notes that pre-conditions associated with IMF and World Bank loans are put in place to promote the expansion of Western capitalism in Third World countries. Seemingly, the conditionalities attached to the aforementioned loan agreement had a significant impact on the Zimbabwean national economy. I argue that conditionalities attached to the second decade neoliberal policies, ESAP in particular, reconstructed the state's agenda from a socialist strategy of transformation to a neo-liberal society pushing the opening up of the markets as per the advice of institutions such as the IMF and World Bank.

Zimbabwe had to spend the US\$3 billion in a free market approach (Saunders, 1996:8) which in my view later affected government's future plans in infrastructure development. According Saunders (1996:8), a bailout of US\$3 billion was meant to support government's plans for considerable private sector infrastructural development and the country's balance of payments. Zhou and Zvoushe (2012:215) argue that the ESAP was accompanied by conditionalities such as privatization, removal of state subsidies to sectors like education and health, expansion of non-traditional exports and liberalization of local prices and import controls. In my view, these conditionalities were also used as smokescreen and as valuable scapegoats for the abuse of resources and the embezzling of state coffers among other misdemeanours by the incompetent and corrupt politicians in Zimbabwe. Cumulatively, there were long-term consequences for the country's economic performance.

In this research, I note that although loan conditionalities fastened to the ESAP might have infringed on the country's economic and political sovereignty, with good governance and accountability the money could have been put to good use. Peet (2009:66) points out that indebted Third World Countries have proved their incapacity to repay IMF conditional loans. Loan conditionalities associated with the ESAP and bad managerial skills by the ruling elite in third world countries prove to be a hindrance to nations' economic development and incapacitated abilities to pay back loans. Furthermore, Stiglitz (2002) posits that Brettonwood institutions such as the IMF and World Bank, though preoccupied with the long term significance of their policy prescriptions, always overlook the short term effects of such policies which have a bearing on the supposedly long term benefits. Again, Stiglitz argues that the World Bank and IMF's obsession with free markets overlooks the understanding that markets often do not work well.

Stiglitz attributes the accumulation of Third World economic crises to such an oversight of the short term impacts of neoliberal policies. For example, the immediate impact of trade liberalization is loss of jobs as infant local industries, which do not have the competitive benefit against stronger foreign industries, close down under pressure from

international competition. Building from the works of Stiglitz (2002) as well as Zhou and Zvoushe (2012), I argue that the centralized and blueprint second decade policy-making processes, underpinned by the ESAP created socio-political challenges since there was no visible bond between policy-makers and the grassroots. ESAP was merely a blueprint economic strategy. As such, in the late 1990s, the short and long term effects of ESAP started surfacing, forcing the ZANU-PF government to act vigorously in order to meet the demands of its citizens. Economic policies such as ZIMPREST (1996-2000) were implemented in the second decade, but it was not successful. The socio-economic position of the nation was getting worse for both the government and its citizens. According to Gwiza and Hove (2012:285), in 1998 food riots erupted nationwide in urban areas. The state could no longer subsidize as it used to do and as such there was an exorbitant increase in food prices, forcing urban residents to embark on food rioting, looting and the destruction of urban supermarkets. Unemployment had increased drastically as compared to the previous decade.

1.2.3 Third Decade: A precarious economic and political trajectory (1999-2009)

The aforementioned socio-economic predicaments provided a fertile ground for the formation of an opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), in September 1999. The MDC attracted strong support and was closely allied to the trade union movement. According to Gwiza and Hove (2012:285), the MDC was believed (by ZANU-PF supporters) to be a white-driven party and for this reason the ruling ZANU-PF responded with a new economic reform launched in 2000. The Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), which is also known as the “Third Liberation-economic war” was formed in this regard. According to Moyo and Yeros (2005:189), throughout this struggle, most of the white-owned farms were seized by the war veterans of the 1970s liberation struggle. In addition, the spontaneous nature of the FTLRP exacerbated corruption levels as people who did not have farming skills, equipment and knowledge became beneficiaries of the FTLRP. According to Moyo and Yeros (2005:189), the State’s involvement in the FTLRP is criticized for contributing largely to the economic and agriculture decline which was evidenced after land acquisition/ land invasions. Zimbabwe was criticized for violating democracy and for this reason economic

sanctions and travel restrictions were imposed by some countries in the global North, which resulted in hyper-inflation which according to Gukurume (2011:183) was deemed to be the “highest in the world reaching beyond two million percent”. The prevailing economic instability came as a threat to municipal councils’ capacity to manage and control their urban infrastructure. Thus the third decade of independence was the time when a severe decline in infrastructure conditions was recorded owing to economic instability.

1.2.3.1 Dollarization in Zimbabwe

After the millennium period, Zimbabwe was faced with intensive socio-economic and political instability. There were political conflicts between the two strong political rivals, the ruling ZANU-PF and the MDC. The precarious economic and political instability in post-independence Zimbabwe weakened the nation’s ability to provide basic social services to its citizens (Gukurume, 2011:184; Sikwila, 2013:399). According to Koech (2011:2), for the period 2000-2008, Zimbabwe experienced hyper-inflation which saw the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) introducing the largest denomination of the currency, one hundred trillion dollars (ZW\$100 000 000 000 000). This was the largest denomination ever issued in the history of Zimbabwe. Inflation was estimated 9 000 000 percent in July 2008. The 2000-2008 hyper-inflation had significant impact on the country’s exchange rate, with the business community denying the Zimbabwean dollar. Sikwila (2013:398) notes that in July 2008, the value of the Zimbabwean dollar had dropped to ZW\$10 billion for US\$0.33, which made it apparent that the government had failed to stabilize their economy.

Thus, in order to resolve the prevailing economic crisis and political catastrophe, a Global Political Agreement (GPA) was established after the controversial election results of July 2008. Political parties in the GPA worked together with the intention of solving the socio-economic and political crisis. In February 2009 a Government of National Unity (GNU) was formed (Sikwila, 2013:399). In January 2009, the GNU transformed the monetary policy and the RBZ introduced the United States Dollar (US\$) as their official currency (dollarization) in order to stabilize a fragmenting economy.

Zimbabwe had reached a situation where the local currency had deteriorated and was no longer able to sustain the country's budget. For this reason the ZW\$ was dropped and the US\$ formally introduced instead. Gukurume (2011:185) argues that although the GNU introduced the US\$, services offered by government parastatals and infrastructure conditions in urban areas continued to deteriorate. In this research, I make a claim that although dollarization in Zimbabwe was very instrumental in solving a hyperinflationary environment, local municipalities and government parastatals are still struggling to provide basic social services. Although there are pockets with advanced infrastructure conditions stabilized by the dollarization, most of the infrastructure in urban Masvingo are either fragmenting or are in a disintegrated state. Municipal councils are financially strapped and for this reason they are unable to efficiently administer infrastructure problems.

1.3 Government parastatals and the urban infrastructure nexus

Service delivery and infrastructural development are responsibilities of the state and associated parastatal organizations. Infrastructure maintenance and development is therefore located at the intersection of political, financial and technocratic processes. The main government parastatals in Zimbabwe are the Environmental Management Agency (EMA), Zimbabwe National Road Administration (ZINARA), Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA), Zimbabwe Electricity Transmission and Distribution Company (ZETDC), Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA), Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA), National Social Security Authority (NASSA), National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ), Postal and Telecommunications Regulation Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ), National Oil Company of Zimbabwe (NOCZIM) and the District Development Fund (DDF). However for the purpose of this research, only four government parastatals, that is, EMA, ZINARA, ZESA and ZINWA will be discussed, as these are directly linked to urban infrastructure management systems and service delivery. These parastatals were established to provide vital services to urban residents and to provide a source of income revenue for the state.

1.3.1 The Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA)

According to Mapira (2011:259), the Zimbabwe Water Act (Chapter 20:25) of 1998 propelled the formation of a New Regional Water Act (Chapter 20:16), which came into operation in 2002. The New Regional Water Act (Chapter 20:16) fostered the formation of ZINWA which took over the responsibility of water supply and water disposal from the hands of urban councils and municipalities in May 2005. Musingafi (2012: 316) notes that the central authority ZINWA aims to facilitate convenient water supply to both municipal councils and local authorities specifically in urban areas. Therefore, ZINWA acts as an overseer that engages in a supervisory role and ensures equitable distribution of water nationwide. Interestingly, the decision to reassign governance of potable water from municipal councils to ZINWA was considered to be a political move (Mapira, 2011:258) since the majority of urban municipal councils were under the jurisdiction of the opposition party, that is, MDC mayors and councillors. The ruling ZANU-PF perceived it as a threat to their national sovereignty and decision-making process since they had lost popularity and reputation in urban areas since 2000. To this effect, the ruling ZANU-PF withdrew the conventional responsibility of urban councils (that is, water supply and waste disposal) and handed these over to ZINWA. Mabiza (2013:123) contends that the advocated takeover of urban water from local councils to ZINWA was not welcomed by the MDC opposition leaders. Opposition leaders believed that ZINWA did not have the capacity and competence to handle water and sewerage services and the issue was debated in parliament.

In May 2005, ZINWA took over the governance of water and sewerage disposal. It works intimately with the EMA in order to efficiently monitor water resources and prevent pollution. Based on the main river structures in Zimbabwe, ZINWA has partitioned the country into seven (7) catchment areas (Musingafi, 2012:180) namely: Manyame, Gwayi, Save, Mzingwane, Runde, Mazoe and Sanyati catchment area. The Masvingo urban area falls under Runde catchment area. The aforementioned subdivided catchment areas are administered by ZINWA with the intention to effectively govern water infrastructure. ZINWA carries out routine water management and

implements water statutory regulations in the seven sub-divided catchment areas in so doing working as a superintendent of water supply in Zimbabwe. According to the Water Act of 1998, water belongs to the government of Zimbabwe (Gukurume, 2011:187) and for this reason ZINWA sought to register all residential and commercial boreholes. Borehole owners had to pay a levy for water used.

However, ZINWA is criticized for the ineffectual, unimpressive service and for the inability to deliver essential services raising questions of poor urban governance (Gukurume, 2011:187). Three years following the establishment of ZINWA, the nation was hit by a cholera outbreak in August 2008 claiming over 4200 lives due to problems attributed to lack of potable water and urban waste management. For the past ten years the parastatal has failed to deliver potable water to urban residents. In Masvingo, residents are not at ease with the condition of water as discussed in chapter four. In some instances, residents specifically in Low Density Suburbs (LDSs) are required to pay exorbitant amounts for estimated water rates on a monthly basis (Gukurume, 2011:187). Thus the reassigned delegation of power from local councils to ZINWA has raised questions about urban governance.

1.3.2 The Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA)

The Zimbabwe Electricity supply authority (ZESA) is a government parastatal which has as its mandate the power to generate, convey and distribute electricity in and around Zimbabwe. Electricity is central to the kind of human existence found in urban areas and it is linked to economic growth. In this regard, ZESA is vital for the country's socio-economic growth, given that a lack of consistent electricity supply might result in a significant economic loss. Prior to independence, the parastatal was called the Rhodesia Electricity Supply Commission (Gaunt, 2003:173) which later changed to ZESA in 1985. It is the only government parastatal with constitutional and legal permission to generate and supply electricity in Zimbabwe. It owns five (5) key power stations in Zimbabwe, namely; the Kariba Hydro-power station, Munyati thermal power station, Bulawayo thermal power station, Harare thermal station and Hwange thermal power station. Following the Electricity Act [Chapter 13:19] of 2002, Bauer (2013:151)

argues that ZESA works together with two major subsidiaries ZETDC and ZPC. ZPC has the mandate to maintain the aforementioned five power stations in order to secure constant supply of electricity in Zimbabwe. However the two subsidiaries, ZEDTC and ZPC report back to ZESA. Chilunyika and Zhou (2013:263) maintain that ZESA collects monthly electricity rates from users, which are their main source of income revenue. ZESA has at present introduced a cash-based prepaid service following resident complaints concerning estimated electricity charges.

The parastatal ZESA is unable to meet an increasing user need. In order to cope with these predicaments, Bauer (2013:153) states that ZESA imports electricity from neighbouring DRC, South Africa, Zambia and Mozambique. Guant (2003:178) states that the parastatal ZESA has introduced these strategic plans in order to provide the best quality of services to consumers simultaneously operating profitably. Given that ZESA is a state-owned parastatal, negotiations to import electricity and all macroeconomic policies are endorsed by the State.

ZESA is one of the parastatals intensively affected by the hyper-inflation experienced in Zimbabwe (2000-2008) as discussed above. During the hyper-inflation, it was difficult for ZESA to raise foreign currency to pay for imported electricity. In this regard, Chikuhwa (2004:314) argues that ZESA is the most heavily indebted parastatal in Zimbabwe. In 2002 the total amount of its debt to South Africa Eskom, Suel of DRC, EDM and Cahora Bassa of Mozambique and Zesco of Zambia was amounting to US\$109.7 million. During the hyper-inflation (2000-2008), ZESA struggled to raise income to pay these debts and for this reason, the debts tripled to US\$410 million in 2004 (Chikuhwa, 2004:315). Not only is ZESA facing income challenges, it was also jeopardized by immense copper cable and transformer theft for the last decade. This has provided a complicated platform for ZESA to proffer fundamental electricity services to its clients. In order to cope with the aforementioned challenges, ZESA introduced load shedding just like any other Third World state facing the same problems. According to Chikuhwa (2004:314), load shedding has produced devastating results to critical sectors such as industry and agriculture, which used to contribute much to the country's

GDP. However there is nothing ZESA can do considering its constraining environment. Frequent power cuts seem to be the only possible way for ZESA to survive.

Constant power cuts (load shedding) affect service delivery sectors in urban cities specifically Masvingo. According to my study, the municipality of Masvingo has created a symbiotic relationship with ZESA so as to be assured of electricity supply to the Bushmead Water Treatment Plant resulting in a constant supply of potable water. Ironically, Gukurume (2011:189) observes that there is a constant “blame game” between ZESA and the municipal council. He notes that the Masvingo urban council authorities are of the view that interrupted supply of electricity has affected their pumping capacity, undermining the council’s ability to constantly supply water to its residents. Conversely, ZESA blames the municipal council for failing to pay their monthly electricity bills in order to secure a reliable supply of electricity. Another example relates to street lights. The municipal council argues that it’s the duty of ZESA to repair and maintain street lights, yet ZESA believes that urban street lights are under the jurisdiction of the urban municipal council. This has resulted in lack of street lighting due to poor maintenance and bureaucratic bungling.

1.3.3 The Environmental Management Agency (EMA)

Luken and Van Rompaey (2007:265) claim that for the first two decades after independence, Zimbabwe did not have a solid environmental policy; instead the policy was disintegrated and fragmented. After a six year liberation struggle, the new government prioritized economic growth and political administration, introducing policies such as growth with equity and transformation as discussed above. Very little focus on environmental issues was registered during the first two decades after independence. After the realization of the implication of environmental exploitation, the EMA was established 2004 in order to orchestrate and harmonize water and environmental problems. According to Du Plessis and Faure (2011:571), the EMA is responsible for environmental governance, collaborating with civil society, policy guidelines and strategic plans with the intention of ensuring that land and its natural resources are not exploited. In this regard, the parastatal works intimately with the Environmental Impact

Assessment (EIA), a government agency which focuses on the monitoring, implementing and assessment of relevant environmental projects in order to enhance a sustainable environmental growth. The EIA provides technical support to the EMA in order to circumvent potential environmental threats. In terms of technical support in the EIA process, public participation is minimal (Du Plessis and Faure, 2011:582). Accordingly, only relevant bodies such as the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association (ZELA) are consulted. However, in terms of socio-economic support in environmental related issues, the EMA involves local leaders, traditional leaders and civil society organizations in order to achieve grassroots participation in environmental related issues.

In my estimation, the EMA is a profit making organization. It champions the “polluter pay principle”, which indirectly offers confidence for the public and business community to pollute the environment through affluent discharge and solid waste disposal knowing, that they will pay for the damage caused as long they are making profit. Musingafi (2012:159) argues that environmental polluters are coerced to pay a compensatory fee for environmental degradation. However the fines are sometimes unrealistic. For example, any person found littering or disposing of any solid waste is required to pay a fine of between US\$1000-US\$2000 (R12 000-R24 000). The EMA has predetermined monetary penalties for causing environmental pollution. This has become the EMA’s main source of income revenue. Theoretically, these revenues are meant to help maintain the environment, but owing to economic instability, the funds are diverted to meet monthly expense line items such as salaries.

Although the parastatal is believed to be a profit making agency, and I have outlined some of the main criticisms, many of which I share, I also argue that it has played some role in promoting sustainable environment through effectual regulatory approaches, and that not all its failures can be ascribed to the entity itself. I concur with Yuen and Kumssa (2010:257) who argue that the institutional ability of environmental agencies to protect the environment is undermined by the prevalence of deviant actions in different social spheres. In this regard, violation and destruction of the environment transpire on

a daily basis. For example, according to the findings of this study, as discussed in chapter 5, residents in urban Masvingo continue to survive on firewood, which primarily indicates continuous cutting down of trees and this leads to more deforestation and degradation. In addition, the Municipal council of Masvingo has been penalized on several occasions for continuously polluting their main and only source of water through effluent disposal as discussed in chapter 4.

1.3.4 The Zimbabwe National Road Administration (ZINARA)

ZINARA was launched following the promulgation of the Road Act Chapter 13:18 of 2002 (ZINARA 2012:1) and took over responsibility in 2009. The parastatal has jurisdiction over the road network system, that is, the mandate to plan, develop and maintain road infrastructure in Zimbabwe. As part of the programme of recentralization, ZINARA was bequeathed the entire authority and power to control traffic revenues. Most of its income revenue comes from fixed road user charges such as vehicle tax, tollgates fees and fuel levies.

In order to assist local authorities to maintain road networks, ZINARA monitors the utilization of funds and allocates funds (from the road fund budget) to local authorities. As evidenced in this study, the parastatal is not remitting back to urban councils as it is supposed to, thus creating multifarious and complex difficulties for municipalities in repairing their roads. This has undermined the ability of local authorities, specifically municipal councils, to effectively manage their local road infrastructure services. Previously, local councils used to collect vehicle levies in order to supplement their income budget. However the designation of this task to ZINARA meant a reduction of the municipal council's income budget since they had to rely on ZINARA for downstream income. The extent to which ZINARA distribute funds to local authorities is open to questioning. The ZINARA Road Fund Board (RFB) distributes funds according to their own classified priorities. In this regard, just like any other local municipality in Zimbabwe, Masvingo is financially strapped, given that income generating projects have been compromised since the inception of ZINARA. In light of the above, the

establishment of ZINARA has not helped much in as far as road infrastructural development is concerned in Masvingo.

1.4 Urbanization in post-independence Zimbabwe

In this research, I argue that throughout the colonial era up until independence in 1980, urban areas appeared to be sanctuaries and safe havens for white settlers. The widespread socio-economic and political networks during the colonial era promoted the interests and ideological views of white settlers. Building on the works of Jaison (2014), I argue that the colonial regime fundamentally restructured Black Africans' relations to land creating an unexpected rural-urban divide. According to Shutt (1995:22) as cited by Jaison (2014:50), black people were forced to relocate to unproductive spaces such as Gwayi and Shangani (in Matebelaland region, which is unproductive and tsetse infected) with few relocated to urban areas where labour was needed. Jaison (2014:50) argues that in Zimbabwe (formerly known as Rhodesia in the colonial era) the colonial state created the Native Reserve Order of 1898 and ensured that land was owned by Europeans and Black people were pushed to reserves. White settlers created economic reforms such as the Cattle Levy Act meant to reduce the number of cattle owned by Africans as well as the Maize Control Act which limited marketing outlets for Black farmers (Jaison, 2014:54). This was meant to exacerbate rural-urban segregation in terms of economic inequality. In order to restrict rural-urban migration, I argue that the notorious Pass Law Act of 1902 and the Urban Registration and Accommodation Act of 1954 were established, accommodating multinational corporations and individual settler interests. I therefore augment the views of Jaison (2014) and Anderson (2001) on the fact that the aforementioned racial restrictions and segregation created intense and uneven rural-urban divisions during the colonial era.

The post-independence pattern of urbanization was directly shaped by rural-urban migration. Rural-urban migration is unswervingly allied to social networks and people's social security. For this reason, Anderson (2001:107) notes that citizens from both rural and urban areas work together in an organized manner to withstand the broader socio-economic predicaments bedeviling them. In so doing, the post-independence era

witnessed strong rural-urban linkages and interaction destroying the socio-economic boundaries created by the colonizers. In rural Zimbabwe, farming is the main source of income whereas urban residents rely on non-farming methods. As such, in times of drought and famine, urban dwellers remit back to their rural home villages to which they have access to agriculture harvests such as maize, soya beans, groundnuts and other traditional foods. Thus the post-independence Zimbabwe has evidenced extensive urban-rural linkages as people rely on each other for socio-economic and security reasons.

According to statistical information provided by the Zimbabwe Central Statistical Office (2014:2), it is evident that rural-urban migration intensified in the first decade after independence. Reasons for rapid rural-urban migration could point to the removal of colonial influx control legislations by the new government after the liberation struggle. Table 1 shows the Zimbabwean population at large and urban population density in particular for the past five (5) decades. The rationale behind the inclusion of colonial population figures in Table 1 is to provide a comparative approach with regards to the rate of urbanization in the post-independence Zimbabwe relative to the colonial era. Although urbanization in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the colonial era when the Pioneer column of the British South African Company (BSAC) settled in Rhodesia in 1890, prior to independence it was still very low.

Table 1: Zimbabwe population at large and urban population density

YEAR	ZIMBABWE POPULATION	URBAN POPULATION	Urban population in relation to gen. population
1960	3 752 390	799 910	21.3%
1982	7 289 069	1 948 841	26,7%
1992	10 412 548	3 311 128	31,7%
2002	11 631 657	4 362 145	37,5%
2012	13 061 239	4 950 000 +	37, 89%

Source: Zimbabwe Central Statistical Office (2014) – percentages in last column own calculation

As evidenced in Table 1, there was a considerable urban population growth soon after the liberation struggle and rapid urbanization in the second decade after independence. During the second decade after independence, the country faced drought, an economic quandary as well as economic restructuring as discussed. As such, during this period, I argue that there was extensive rural-urban migration, particularly in search for greener pastures resulting in 'over-urbanization', here meant to indicate numbers of residents outstripping infrastructure capacity, particularly after the millennium period following the aftermath of economic policies adopted to withstand the 1990 drought. To this effect, urbanization in most Zimbabwean towns and cities after independence outstripped the absorptive capacity of various metropolitan areas (including Masvingo) ushering an increase in informal settlement and resulting in urban infrastructure failing to meet an increasing user need. This also resulted in an increase in unemployment and underemployment in the aftermath of SAPs as discussed above.

In addition, the end results of rapid urbanization in Zimbabwe included an increase in informal foreign currency exchange dealings, illegal market transactions (due to high unemployment), an increase in informal settlement and environmental damages amplified by extensive urban farming (Jones, 2010:283). In the third decade after independence, the situation exceeded the capacity of municipal councils and for this reason the government introduced Operation *Murambatsvina* (Restore Order). On 25 May 2005, the operation was launched with an objective to clean up cities around Zimbabwe starting with the capital city Harare. The operation was initiated by the ruling ZANU-PF elites using violent means of evicting residents in informal settlements and flea markets. The state adopted vicious and brutal techniques such as the use of bulldozers combined with riot police and military forces to demolish illegal structures and illegal residential extensions and assaulted those who resisted complying with the Operation. Gilbert (2008:53) notes that the aim of the operation was to displace urban residents back to their rural homes since cities were evidently overpopulated in terms of infrastructure capacity and home to high numbers of formally unemployed residents. All was done in the name of a so called "rehabilitative phase". Nonetheless, from a political point of view, Vambe (2008:70) argues that the operation was not necessarily meant to

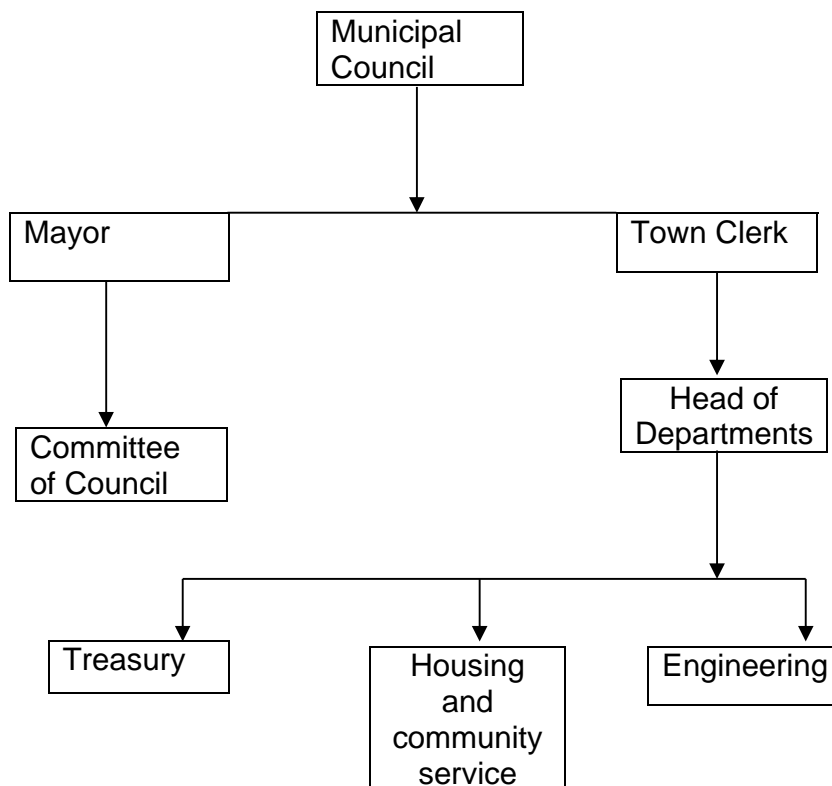
address issues arising from rapid urbanization but could be construed as a punishment for voting for the opposition MDC. I concur with Vambe (2008:70) for the reason that Operation *Murambatsvina* (Restore Order) was held 54 days following the 31 March 2005 elections when ZANU-PF lost the majority of urban seats. Following the 2005 elections, urban areas in Zimbabwe proved to be dominated by the opposition MDC with the majority of votes cast for the MDC. More than 600,000 urban residents were displaced, 133,534 households demolished throughout the country and approximately 2,500 000 million people directly and indirectly affected by the operation (Gilbert, 2008:53). In the aftermath of the operation, thousands of urban residents lost their livelihoods, in particular those who relied on flea markets, tuck shops and vending. Some of those left homeless had nowhere to go, since people they knew in rural areas had died and for this reason they had very weak urban-rural linkages.

1.5 Masvingo

In this research project, the words town council, city council, municipality and local authority will be used interchangeably to refer to the municipal council of Masvingo. Existing urban areas in Zimbabwe are under the jurisdiction of urban and regional town councils. According to the Urban Council Act (UCA) and the Regional Town and Country Planning Act (RTCP) Chapter 29:12 of 1976, amended in 1998, town councils offer land registration, town planning and all surveying processes (Chitiza *et al*, 2011:9). In Zimbabwe, land is owned by the state and through decentralization, local authorities and municipal councils were given the mandate to protect and maintain urban amenities, safeguard urban buildings and trees and control land acquisition. Thus all housing schemes, housing cooperatives and housing trusts, commercial and residential buildings and stands are approved by municipal councils. The RTCP Act of 1998 does not allow the growth of informal settlements. In this regard, municipal councils have master plans which provide development plans, housing, servitudes (for example roads, electricity and sewer lines), commercial, industrial and open space for recreational facilities.

Masvingo, known as Fort Victoria prior to independence, is situated in the south-eastern region of Zimbabwe, approximately 300km away from the capital city (Harare). Muzvidziwa (1997:97) argues that Masvingo is the oldest town and largest colonial settlement in Zimbabwe. It was established in 1890 by the Pioneer column of the British South African Company (BSAC). Currently it is the fourth biggest city in Zimbabwe with the Kalanga shona being the largest ethnic group living in the province. Masvingo was accorded municipal status in 1995, twelve years after independence by President Robert G. Mugabe. The city structure was instituted to ensure that urban local authority had both administrative and political powers (Chigwenya, 2010:7) to protect and manage the urban environment. Since then, the municipal council has had a structure with different stakeholders responsible for the delivery of essential services to the public as shown below. Table 2 illustrates the (current) urban municipal structure established in 1995.

Table 2: Urban municipal structure established in 1995



Source: Chigwenya (2010)

According to Chigwenya (2010:7), theoretically, the Mayor and Committee of Council have both political and administrative power to influence every decision-making process of the municipal council. Chigwenya (2010:7) adds that the Committee of Council hold weekly meetings and normally individual political interests are set aside. All heads of departments report to the town clerk in case of any problems arising within their departments. Technocrats shown in Table 2 together with resident representation through the Masvingo United Residence and Ratepayer's Association (MURRA) and the Masvingo Business advisory Board (MBAB) play a crucial role in the budgetary processes.

The 2008 harmonized elections in Zimbabwe shows that the majority of people who voted in Masvingo urban are MDC-T opposition party supporters, since they won the majority of the votes cast. The July 2013 elections also supported this trend, with MDC-T supporters successfully winning the majority of the votes cast. As such, the city is currently under the jurisdiction of Masvingo mayor, Hubert Fidze who is the MDC-T leader (opposition ruling party) in the region. The Mayor works with a mixed group of councillors who are political affiliates, some from the ruling party (ZANU-PF) and some from the opposition (MDC-T). The Committee of Council is made up of ten councillors from the ten different wards representing the two strong political parties (ZANU-PF and MDC). Since the 2013 elections, MDC-T representatives hold six seats and ZANU-PF four of the ten seats reserved for councillors in the Committee of Council. These councillors are elected by the representatives of different wards as "mediators" between the community and the council at the same time serving the interests of urban ratepayers.

Geographically, the city is positioned in a drought zone which has an average rainfall of 600mm per annum, an annual minimum temperature of 19⁰C and sandy soil which is relatively poor in terms of agricultural productivity. This rainfall pattern creates water shortages since Lake Mutirikwi, the only lake in the region which serves the town, fails to cushion an increasing user need. For this reason the municipal council has

introduced water rationing so that residents share water equally in principle. However this rationing method has not been successful enough in solving water shortages as some residents go for days without water (Maponga, 2013:2).

Like other cities, Masvingo is divided into High Density Suburbs (HDSs) namely Mucheke and Rujeko, Middle Density Suburbs (MDSs), namely Target Kopje and Clip Sham as well as Low Density Suburbs (LDSs) namely Rhoden, Clovely and Eastvale adjacent to the city centre. This research is however not going to cover the entire city. Its focal point is the Rhoden LDSs, the Mucheke HDS and the city centre in order to understand the perception and actions of the elite residents staying in both low and high density suburbs.

The city is encircled by cattle ranching and A1 farms (small farms for subsistence agriculture) which were allocated to various underprivileged Zimbabwean families during the “Fast Track Land Reform Programme” in 2001. Apart from agricultural activities, Masvingo is 20 kilometres away from the Great Zimbabwe monuments (a world heritage site) and Lake Mutirikwi and hence it receives income from tourist activities.

1.5.1 Major developments in Masvingo after independence (1980)

Masvingo has witnessed an increase in population over the past three decades. Table 3 illustrates the Masvingo urban population distribution after independence according to the Zimbabwe Central Statistical Office (2014:1) with a total area of 71.88km². This population distribution shows rapid urban population growth in the city after independence hence the infrastructure failed to meet an increasing user need.

Given the increase in population distribution, the most important development since ‘independence’ in the city of Masvingo has been the funding of the Rujeko housing by the World Bank. The Bank has funded more than two thousand housing units in order to expand the city as well as to alleviate housing shortages bedevilling the residents (UN, 1991:84). The municipal council has in addition launched a plethora

of housing projects such as Clip sham, ZIMRE, Target Kopje extension, Chesvingo (with a total of 21642 stands) and Mucheke extension housing projects (known as 'West' houses) in order to reduce housing problems. The establishment of Masvingo State University in June 2002 (which became Great Zimbabwe University in 2007) in terms of the Act of Parliament Chapter 22.24 No. 11 of 2002 was aimed at boosting the education level in the entire province and in so doing they created employment for both academic and non-teaching staff as well as a tertiary education centre

Table 3: Masvingo urban population distribution after independence

YEAR	POPULATION	POPULATION GROWTH PER DECADE
1982	30,523	
1992	51,743	169,5%
2002	69,490	134,2%
2012	87,886	126, 47%

Source: Zimbabwe Central Statistical Office (2014) – last column based on own calculations

In addition, there are pull factors which attracted investors and companies like Steel Makers (Mining Company), Zimbabwe National Foods, Zimbabwe National Breweries (Chibuku) as well as commercial banks and building societies. These pull factors include the Masvingo General Hospital which is the largest provincial hospital situated in Masvingo city centre, the major centres of education, including Great Zimbabwe University and the Masvingo polytechnic, both state-owned institutions built for tertiary educational purposes.

The city is dwarfed, however, by the much larger Harare and Bulawayo, which has resulted in a relatively smaller investment base and hence less industrial investment (UN, 1991:73) than was expected. Given a lack of minerals and low agro-ecology (Chigwenya, 2010:6), the government has arguably become the biggest employer and

supplier of labour and the major agent in the labour market. To this end, most of Masvingo residents work in governmental organizations with relatively few employed in the private sector, industrial companies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the informal sector.

1.6 The Research Problem

As has been suggested, for the past three decades, the city of Masvingo has witnessed a significant urban population growth rate as discussed above as a result of which the infrastructure has failed to cope with an increasing user need. In areas such as Mucheke low density suburb, overpopulation has resulted in insanitary living conditions. Moreover, infrastructure around the city has not been expanded or has fallen into disrepair due to the lack of maintenance by the responsible authorities. This has resulted in poor drainage in some parts of the city, poor communication networks, a shortage of water and other problems that affect the quality of life and that impact negatively on the well-being of the inhabitants of the city. This research project rests on the assumption that the manifestation of 'overpopulation' relative to the amenities and infrastructure of the city requires further understanding of the social and physical infrastructure and conditions. It aims to explore the extent to which urban elite ratepayers cope with the infrastructure problems bedeviling them. In particular, it focuses on the coping strategies employed by elite urban ratepayers within a contested and underfunded infrastructural environment. The researcher is interested in urban elites because of their arguable potential to provide particular economic benefits and social capital given their location in the educational and economic ordering of the city.

The study considers the strategies adopted by urban elites, and assesses the extent to which such strategies are aimed at self-interest and/or broader benefit to the city of Masvingo and its residents. For this reason the study foregrounds an understanding of various ways in which elite urban ratepayers create and/or obliterate an enabling environment within a broader depreciating city. As has been suggested earlier there is a relatively limited literature on coping strategies, perceptions and actions amongst urban elites in the field of the social sciences.

1.7 Research Question

What are the coping strategies employed by urban elite ratepayers against the background of decentralization and in the wake of a fragmenting infrastructure in Masvingo?

This study answered the following sub-questions to complement the main question:

- i. What is position of council members and technocrats in relation to the condition urban infrastructure in Masvingo and their own role in it?
- ii. What is the condition of infrastructure in urban Masvingo against the background of the decentralization model?
- iii. What are elite urban ratepayers' perceptions and experiences *vis-à-vis* the public administration of their local infrastructure?
- iv. To what extent are the coping strategies employed by urban ratepayers useful in improving their services and livelihoods and that of residents more broadly within a contested urban infrastructure and a municipal management regime?

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented an overview of the political economy of Zimbabwe since independence. It explored the debates surrounding urbanization and provided a brief understanding of the urban-rural divide, which can be traced back to the colonial era. In this regard, the post-independence pattern of urbanization and its relationship to rural and urban linkages were discussed. In particular, an analysis of the economic reforms adopted for the past three decades and the attendant controversial political decision-making was provided. Furthermore, the chapter outlined the significance of studying the coping strategies of elite urban ratepayers in contemporary metropolitan environments.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses existing literature on urban infrastructure, coping, resilience and survival strategies in the context of economic deprivation and the decentralization model of urban governance, which is the key conceptual framework underpinning this study. I first provide a discussion of world and African trends of urbanization, followed by a historical account and a critical analysis of the decentralization framework and how it is contextualized in my research. I locate urban infrastructure development within the discourse of popular participation and effective decentralization accompanied by devolution which, in recent literature, has been designated as a panacea for infrastructure problems. The main argument made by proponents of this model is that there is a need to transfer administrative and political powers from the government, giving local authorities decision-making power in its fiscal and urban development strategies. Against this discourse, Smit and Pieterse's (2014) critique of decentralization as it was implemented in African countries for the past decades, in practice undermining effectual infrastructure development, will be discussed.

The penultimate part of the chapter focuses on an understanding of coping strategies, understood as mechanisms and strategies used to ensure access to services, particularly in domestic settings, in the context of failing infrastructure. I situate and articulate this concept in relation to recent research on livelihoods and survival strategies, particularly in Zimbabwe. I examine a plethora of coping strategies adopted in various settings. I argue that there is a relatively limited literature on coping and resilience strategies, as well as perceptions and actions amongst urban elites in response to fragmenting urban infrastructure in the field of the social sciences. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the conceptualization of elites that underpin this study, as well as a brief description of civil society organisations and networks.

2.2 Urbanization in historical context

In Britain, an intensified urbanization process started during the industrial revolution. Soon after the Second World War, a quarter of countries in the world had at least 45 percent urban populations (UN, 2004:37). Most of these countries were European, Asian, Latin America and Caribbean. African urbanization lagged behind at that point with most African states under colonial rule. For the period 1950 to 2000 the world experienced rapid urbanization from 15% to 37% respectively (Yameogo et al, 2014:4; UN, 2004). For the period 1950 to 2000, Papua New Guinea and Lesotho recorded the lowest levels of urbanization, whereas Singapore and China recorded the highest urban population despite their country sizes (UN, 2004:40).

I argue that between World War II and 2015, especially when one focuses on post-independence Africa, there has been a major urbanization drive and the rural-urban divide is constantly being put to test. Most states in Africa became independent in the 1960s and it is pertinent to note that even under colonial rule the urbanization drive had already gathered momentum. Since then, multitudes of people are migrating into cities following the removal of colonial legislation that prevented the movement of the black majority into urban spaces. Yameogo et al (2014:4) argues that urbanization in Africa has increased between 1950 and 2010. In addition to this big shift, Yameogo (2014:4) notes that the trend seems to be increasing because in the last 5 years there is an annual growth rate of 3 percent. To this end, Yameogo et al (2014:6) notes that currently Africa has a total urban population of 39.9% and rapid urbanization from 3.45million (1950) to 78.79million (2010). In Africa, countries with predominant urban population growth are located in the North and Southern African regions. According to Yameogo *et al* (2014:3), at present less urbanized countries in Africa are Burundi (11%), Ethiopia (17.6%), Rwanda (18.9%) and Uganda (13.3%). In the rest of Africa, countries such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Egypt have recorded rapid urban population growth of over 4% annually since 2000 (Yameogo *et al*, 2014:3).

I argue that one aspect of rapid urban population growth in Africa has been linked to fertility. In Africa, the UN (2004:33) notes that an increase in fertility rate combined with a declining mortality rate results in an increasing population growth. This has fostered the rise and growth of metropolitan populations in various African regions. However, Yameogo *et al* (2014:3) argues that a nation-state's urbanization trends are also directly linked to its political economy and historical background. In Africa, colonial states were more interested in conquering rural land with few resources devoted to broad-based urban development. The situation was intensified by the largely race-based rural-urban divide which exacerbated poverty among African citizens.

The interesting fact about urbanization in Africa is therefore not just that it is a trend that sees a shift in population density from rural to urban areas, but that it is also linked to worrying trends of poverty. My view is backed up by Yameogo *et al* (2014:5) who argues that in Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the year 2010 recorded 42% of the total urban population living in abject poverty and 62% in slums. For this reason, poverty in pre and post-independence African states has undermined the states' ability to generate revenue at local community level.

The worrying trends of poverty are exacerbated by one of the key points that Yameogo *et al* (2014:3) makes, namely that rapid urbanization in Africa is putting strain on infrastructure. Building on the work of Yameogo *et al*, (2014), I argue that infrastructure services offered to different residents vary and are premised on class interests and class differences. Due to class interest, high income areas such as low density suburbs and industrial areas may receive better quality of services relative to low income areas such as high density suburbs and slums. In Accra, the urban poor do not have access to potable water compared to high income areas in the same district (Yameogo *et al*, 2014:3). To this end, Yameogo *et al* (2014:3) therefore argues that elite groups, primarily those who control the economy, have greater influence with regards to the prioritization of infrastructure development resulting in selective infrastructure investment. For this reason, the continent is failing to equitably withstand infrastructural challenges arising from urbanization. Therefore the urbanization trend, as I have

discussed, has two consequences. One, there is too little income revenue because the urban populations are poor, and, two, there is pressure on infrastructure. In this regard, developing nations face significant economic challenges to withstand rapid urbanization resulting in the formation of informal settlements (slums) and poor urban infrastructure systems.

Therefore the key relief I can imagine for the problem of poverty in urban slums and low base of revenue would be industrialization coupled with effective industrial policies. However as Bongmba (2006:25) argues, African countries are dominated by international trade which slows down industrial growth due to 'dependent capitalism'. Building on the work of Bongmba (2006), I argue that most of African countries profoundly depend on First World knowledge systems (which include major manufacturers in the global North, Brazilian and other developed nations), investment and consumption that determine Africa's socio-economic modernization. Thus my argument is informed by Bongmba (2006:25) who concludes that this left African countries with a weak industrial base thereby exacerbating poverty. However it is interesting to acknowledge attempts introduced by African leaders with an eye to rejuvenate industrial growth. As noted by Bongmba (2006:28), attempts such as the Monrovia Declaration of 1979, the Industrial Decade for Africa (IDDA) adopted at the 6th Conference of African Ministers of industry in 1980, and the Lagos Plan of Action (LPA) adopted in for economic development in Africa 1980-2000 were launched by African leaders to address problems undermining industrial growth in the continent. Building on the ideas of Bongmba (2006), I argue that the attempt to rejuvenate African industrial growth is lagging behind as a result of ineffective industrial policies as evidenced by lack of technological transformation in most parts of Africa's industrial sectors. On the back of the lack of effective industrial policies, problems arising from rapid urbanization are exacerbated. In this research, I argue that the collapse of industrial growth ultimately jeopardizes the municipal income budget, as well as its capability to manage existing urban infrastructure to meet an increasing user need. This creates more challenges to urbanization in Africa when compared to First World countries.

It is therefore my argument that in order to understand the lack of industrial growth, which is a major factor, the problems created by colonialist policies are compounded by ineptitude, corruption and bad governance in many post-colonial African states. In some ways, most parts of Africa were not geared for industrial growth because of the colonial economy which was an extraction economy. I argue that in most African countries such as Zimbabwe, the early decades of independence saw industrial growth still on the back of the industrial economy built under the colonialism and largely controlled by white settler capital. In Zimbabwe, this extraction economy later declined due to a number of reasons discussed in the previous chapter.

Moreover, the question related to industrial growth in Africa is shaped very much by international institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as the conditions attached to the Brettonwood donor funding. African countries are indirectly excluded from the global economic network primarily due to conditions attached to donor funding and sanctions. As discussed in the previous chapter, evidence can be drawn from the conditions attached to the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) as adopted in Zimbabwe and the impact of SAPs in most parts of Africa, including countries such as Nigeria. However, the donor funding still affects not only Zimbabwe but every single nation – such as Argentine and Greece – that is on the receiving end of IMF. It is of interest to note that the failure of the IMF Structural Adjustment Programmes also owes a lot to the internal bureaucratic dysfunctions and lack of vision and focus on the part of the receiving nation, that is, Zimbabwe.

2.3 The nation-state and the decentralization model of governance

White (1959:53) cited in Reddy (1999:16) conceptualizes decentralization as the transference of administrative, judicial or legislative authority from the central government to the lower level. Chigwenya (2010:2) adds that the term decentralization “...rose out of the philosophy of the rejection of the idea of elitism and is founded on the belief in the important role and capacity of local people”. Building on the work of Chigwenya (2010:2); Reddy (1999:16); Ribot (1999:5); White (1959:53) and the UN

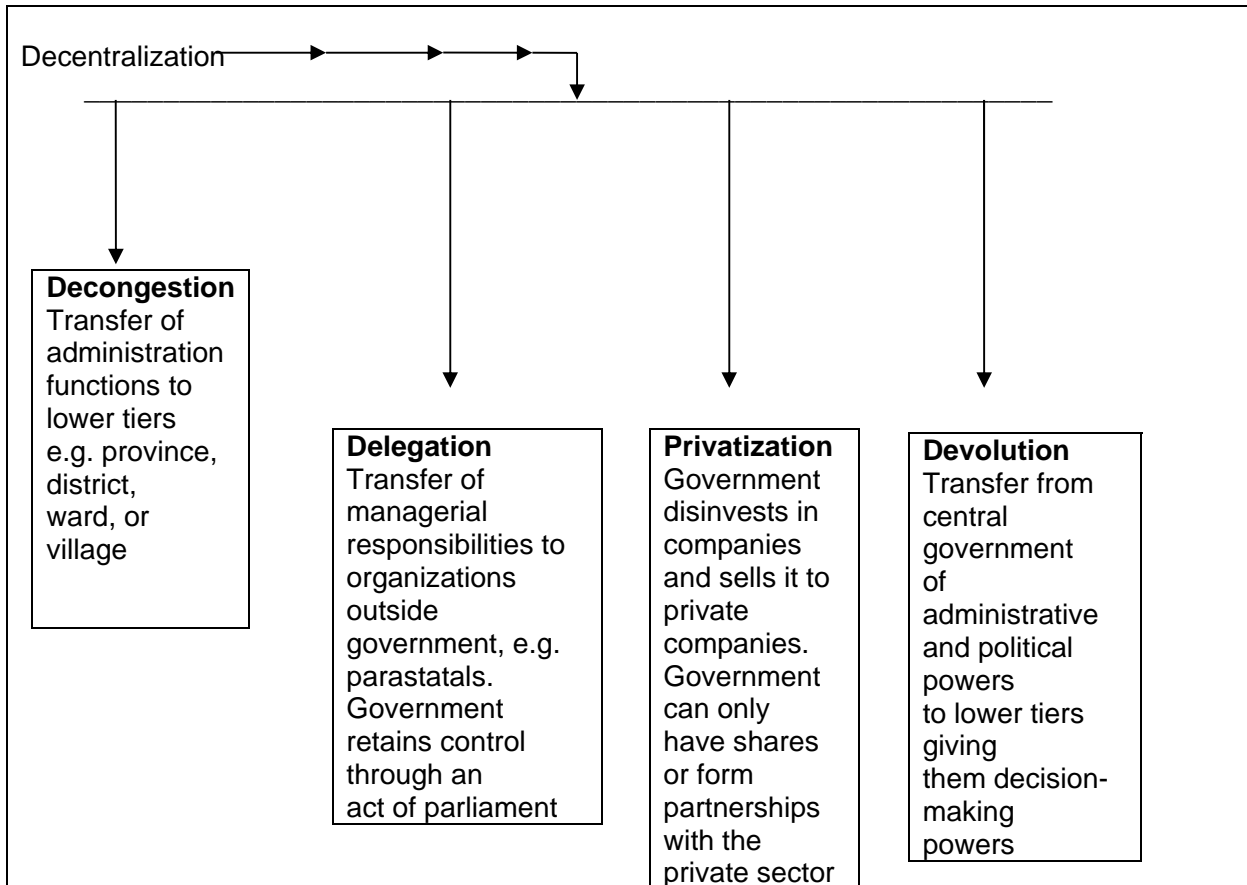
(2006:35), I argue that the decentralization model is a system, operation or performance whereby a nation state or central government officially relinquishes some political, fiscal, administrative and other forms of decision-making powers to local actors and established institutions at lower levels such as municipal councils, NGOs, and private bodies, in a territorial chain of command.

As noted by Meenakshisundaram (1994:11) cited by Reddy (1999:17), there are four discrete forms of decentralization, namely delegation, devolution, decongestion (de-concentration) and privatization. I argue that the four forms underpinning the model were developed in response to the realization of the inflexibility, costly and burdensome centralized structure of governance. Table 4 shows an ideal decentralization model as proposed by Kasere (1999), as cited by Chigwenya (2010:2). The model displaces a bureaucratic central government, giving local people greater access to governmental decisions. The idea of the model is that popular participation in government's development plans is achieved. Building on the ideal decentralization model developed by Kasere (1999), in Chigwenya (2010:2), I argue therefore that citizens are understood to be motivated and enthused to participate in local development strategies through the decongestion phase (be it ward-based or at district or provincial level) as shown in Table 4, simultaneously reducing the administrative burden from the central government.

Reddy (1999:17) states that the four components of decentralization shown in Table 4 provide a fertile ground for democracy as strong local authorities are able to control and influence the decision-making power of the central government. For this reason, I argue that local authorities, through the decentralization model, localize institutional capacity and competence to synchronize local public services and infrastructure on behalf of the central government. I argue therefore that this strengthens the relationship between the state and local citizens. Thus as shown in Table 4, depending on the extent and quality of local democracy, local authorities and different actors could add to levels of responsibility and accountability in a democratic decentralization process through direct participation in local problems. In order to ensure that the decentralization model is

flourishing and successfully implemented, Reddy (1999:27) noted that it must be accompanied by human resource (administration and technical capacity) and financial support. To this end, the central government must establish institutional support and relevant developmental reforms in order to strengthen the process.

Table 4: The Decentralization Framework



Source: Chigwenya (2010), adapted from Kasere (1999)

In my view, the model is normally put in place for both socio-economic and political reasons. There are predetermined conditions that stimulate the existence of the process. Depending on a country's socio-economic and political environment, I argue that some of problems require community participation in order to be overcome. For that reason, Reddy (1999:16) notes that only full decentralization, not just limited focus decentralization, offers a bottom-up approach and popular participation in the decision-making process which ultimately regulates the multifaceted demands.

Decentralization can also be introduced for financial reasons, for example, I argue that the decentralization framework is often suggested at moments of financial crisis as shall be evidenced below. However, these are then linked to international financial organizations and neoliberal economic policies, which means it is not introduced primarily for political reasons but also for financial reasons that comes at the back of donor funding. In order to make neoliberalism look attractive, Ribot (1999:5) argues that the decentralization model is endorsed and supported within the pluralist discourse framework, accentuating superior representation of the local as well as state reforms towards market-based development strategies allied to the Wall Street structural adjustment programmes (i.e. the IMF in this regard). Furthermore, in order for the model to be implemented, the UN (2006:37) notes that there must be strong civil society organizations working in response to financial crisis. A state financial crisis requires an extension and spreading out of state responsibilities, adopting new economic reforms. For example, the precarious economic trajectories in most African states saw many countries adopting neoliberal policies in order to stabilize their economies. However as discussed above, conditionalities such as decentralization in particular, are partly attached to structural economic reforms.

In addition, I argue that most of the environmental problems require socio-economic assistance from NGOs and the international community. Depending on a country's political environment and the capacity of the central administrative system, some solutions to these problems do not require the central government to actively participate. I argue that they require local-based support which enhances social integration at the level of each territory.

In a nutshell, decentralization can be viewed as an outcome of the conditions attached to donor funding, pressures from local elites and sub-national groups, a collapsing central government with regards to the performance of administrative duties (Ribot, 2002:9), as a system to reduce administrative burdens. In my view, decentralization can also be a supra-national institutions' outlook of political achievement.

According to Reddy (1999:19), decentralization processes have positive outcomes if implemented successfully. These include efficiency, enabling mass participation, creating different means of decision-making, promoting flexibility and creative management and a way of promoting political stability (Reddy, 1999:19). For that reason, I therefore argue that, in many African states, given the ineffectiveness, inefficiency and incompetence of the central government, decentralization could convincingly augment both managerial and administrative efficiency relative to centralization framework. The manner in which it is implemented allows the local authorities to take responsibility in decision-making, internalizing costs and benefits. Cumulatively, this seems to produce more of the positive than negative outcome with regards to local development. In addition, Ribot (2002:10) adds that model increases service delivery giving more power to local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private companies as providers of local infrastructure services, which increase competition and efficiency since the aforementioned actors work very close to residents.

However, as noted by Reddy (1999:20), to some extent, the decentralization process is criticized for ineffectiveness (due to insufficient resources), as well as corruption and nepotism in the prioritization of local development initiatives. In addition, the model exacerbates political separatism due to devolution of power (Reddy, 1999:20) for example silencing views and developmental contributions of the ethnic minorities in order to serve particular class and ethnic interests. Building on the work of Reddy (1999), I argue that decentralization allows minorities that are the majority in particular areas to suppress other minorities. African states are multi-ethnic, multilingual and regional differences also matter. Against this backdrop, I argue that minority views are sometimes not successfully integrated in Africa's development paradigms. However, in my view, despite these critiques, the salient feature of decentralization which includes local participation still remains justifiable, legitimate and ideal in the local development process.

2.3.1 The decentralization model in colonial and postcolonial Africa

Decentralization in Africa can be traced back to the pre-colonial era. Some decentralization features were ambiguous, and the form it took varied in different localities. During the colonial era, a diverse range of Anglophone, Lusophone and Francophone African states were set up on the basis of colonial decentralization, although some decentralized only after independence. According to Mamdani (1996) as cited in Ribot (2002:4), during the colonial era, decentralized governments were set up by white settlers in order to infiltrate and manage the 'primitive societies'. Instead of offering African citizens' rights to vote and representation in parliaments, decentralization was established to administer the black majorities under strong administrative rule. This was a form of indirect rule creating both institutional and racial segregation. To this end, the introduction of the decentralization system during the colonial era was to create indigenous institutions through which European settlers were able to rule colonized people through coercive exploitation. In order to administratively manage urban infrastructure and rural affairs, local governing institutions were established. However, as noted by Ribot (2002:5), the key feature of this kind of decentralization is that during the colonial era there was no popular participation in local government decision-making processes.

Ribot (1999:5) argues that the decentralization process introduced by white settlers in countries such as Angola, Nigeria, Mali, Cameroon and Zimbabwe, was the same system inherited and reproduced by most post-independence African governments. Building on Ribot's work (1999:5), it is important to note that the majority of post-independence African governments, such as Zimbabwe and Nigeria, inherited the same colonial decentralization structure, but subsequently revisited the role of customary authorities, giving more authority to the local leaders with the intention of extending local level participation in the administration system. According to Therkildsen (1993:82) cited by Ribot (1999:5), post-independence decentralized local governments sought to manage sub-national political administrative and local level public affairs in particular. For this reason, local authorities such as urban and rural councils have been created as administrative apparatuses for the nation state. In order to achieve this ambition, a

plethora of functions were transferred to the local level within the decentralization framework.

To some extent, decentralization policies can be credited for exacerbating infrastructure problems in most African countries. I argue that African states should not be treated as a homogeneous entity. They are not identical insofar as efficiency, accountability and competence are concerned due to different socio-economic and political environments. In post-independence Nigeria, for example, lack of coordination between local governments, traditional leaders and the state brought escalating difficulties to urban management systems (Smit and Pieterse, 2014:55; UN-Habitat, 2008:13). To this end, in Nigeria, local government's capability to generate income revenues has collapsed immensely owing to lack of coordination between the aforementioned leaders. Some African states are corrupt such that the way decentralization is established will intensify rather than reduce the rate of corruption and embezzlement of funds. I therefore argue that in some countries such as Nigeria, decentralization can be attributed for causing civil conflicts and war due to a polarization gap created by corruption (UN-Habitat, 2008:13), thereby undermining the accountability between the state and local authorities with regards to local infrastructure development.

Nonetheless, in countries such as South Africa and Namibia, democratic decentralization is embedded in their constitutions (Smit and Pieterse, 2014:71). For this reason, local governments have more responsibility for infrastructure development, planning, and maintenance of roads. In Johannesburg for example, Smit and Pieterse (2014:56) note that during the adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) plan, the city was restructured and a plethora of agencies as well as corporatized utilities such as the Johannesburg Property Company, Johannesburg City Parks and Johannesburg Water were established. As such, urban infrastructure development functions are better at all levels of development relative to Zimbabwe. According to Smit and Pieterse (2014:70) reasons could be pointed to the fact that responsibilities of urban infrastructure developments in South Africa are distributed to designated provinces and local authorities.

The next section considers the implementation of decentralization in post-independence Zimbabwe.

2.3.2 Decentralization and recentralization in Zimbabwe

Decentralization in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the colonial era. According to Vasloo *et al* (1974:184) as cited by Chigwata (2010:20), through decentralization, the Salisbury Sanitary Board (SSB) was the first local government established by white colonial settlers in 1891. The colonial decentralization was characterized by effective devolution. However as I have discussed in the previous chapter, 'separate development' was pervasive as white citizens enjoyed more social and infrastructure benefits than the black majority. To this end, Chigwata (2010:21) argues that the Urban Council Act of 1973 was established in order to exclude the Black majority from urban governance. Against this backdrop, I describe colonial decentralization in Zimbabwe as a technique used by the Smith regime to exploit and further marginalize the Black majority.

In 1984, that is, in post-independence Zimbabwe, decentralization was implemented in order to transmit good governance, that is, transparency and accountability (Chigwenya, 2010:4), ensuring democratization of power to local authorities in both fiscal and development processes. Soon after independence, the new ZANU-PF government saw the need to redress racial inequalities produced by the colonial mode of governance. Building on the work of Gasper (1997), Makumbe (1998) and Chakaopa (2001) as cited by Conyers (2003:115), I argue that the objectives and nature of the decentralization model in post-independence Zimbabwe has changed over the past three decades. During the 1980s, for example, Conyers (2003:115) argues that the main thrust of the decentralization model was to rationalize and restructure different agencies involved in sub-national development in a hierarchy of provincial, district and local elected and appointed officials. Chigwata (2010:30) adds that in 1984 the Prime Minister's Directives on Decentralization and Development (PMDDs) established intergovernmental hierarchies of committees, that is, provincial and district governments to enhance grassroots participation. Distinct characteristics of the 1984 post-colonial

decentralization include well established Urban Councils (UCs) and Rural District Councils (RDCs). The main source of income revenue of local governments and new ministries established in 1984 were from license fees (vehicle, dog and shop licenses), user pay charges, and service delivery such as hospitals and clinics operated by councils (Coutinho, 2010:73). Given that the decentralization process empowers local actors, authorities and institutions, in this research I argue that the democratic decentralization framework as implemented in Zimbabwe during the first decade after the liberation struggle was a strategic investment with the aim of rebuilding public infrastructure.

In the second decade (early 1990s,) decentralization in Zimbabwe was proclaimed as a major way to promote democracy (Conyers, 2003:115) on the terms set by the Wall Street economists, when the state adopted a new economic development strategy. Building on the acclaimed works of Conyers (2003:115) I concur that in the second decade, the decentralization model was part of the conditions attached to the structural adjustment funds, ESAP in particular, where the state was obliged to rationalize all public sectors following the adoption of neoliberal policies (1991-1992).

As discussed in the previous chapter, what we saw in the third decade is a recentralization and the use of government parastatals to reorient the governance framework. In the itinerary of recentralization, government parastatals such as ZINWA, EMA, ZIMRA, and ZINARA were bestowed increasing authority and power that enabled the control of much of the income revenues which, together with monetary penalties, are able to supplement the government's income budget. According to Conyers (2003:115) in relation to the third decade decentralization in Zimbabwe, there exists a contested gap between rhetoric and reality. I view the post-independence third decade decentralization as synonymous to what I term '*phony decentralization*', or, more accurately, deceptive form of delegation. What the government describes as decentralization through most of its government parastatals is contentious. Parastatals such as ZINARA are state institutions of containment that the central government uses through this type of decentralization (or the delegation form of decentralization) which

amount to centralization of power using micro-management. In addition, the Institute for a Democratic Alternative in Zimbabwe (2010:24) as cited by Chigwata (2010:26) argues that through the Urban Council Act [Chapter 29:15] of 1995, revised in 1996, Zimbabwe's post-colonial local government system is based 'on a delegator-*delegatee*' relationship, in which the central government is the delegator of both political and fiscal decision-making to lower tiers mainly through government parastatals.

I argue that the main obstacle to effective decentralization, since its inception, is the reluctance of the national government to relinquish both political and fiscal decision-making power to lower tiers, which Chigwenya (2010:4) argues amounts to a decentralization without devolution. Chigwenya (2010:3) notes that decentralization in Zimbabwe is only visible in terms of decongestion (transfer of administration functions to lower tiers), delegation (transfer of managerial responsibility to other institutions and parastatals) and privatization (government disinvestment from companies and sell-offs to private companies). The transfer of administrative and political powers from the government, giving local authorities more decision-making power (devolution) in both fiscal and all development decision-making is therefore compromised, making local authorities semi-autonomous. Thus the division of power and function in the decentralization process is problematic in Zimbabwe due to decentralization devoid of devolution. As such there are limited powers for the Masvingo municipal council to raise revenues to complete infrastructure development goals, since their fiscal policies are weakened by a lack of devolution in the decentralization process as adopted in Zimbabwe. To this end, the efficacy of the decentralization in post-independence Zimbabwe is undermined by lack of financial resources and political support. According to Conyers (2003:116) evidence can be drawn from the allocation of development funds, which has remained centralized, thwarting sub-national levels' ability to make development initiatives.

Theoretically, decentralization was a noble development framework. However, the manner in which the process has been adopted in Zimbabwe is problematic. Smit and Pieterse (2014:51) state that the implementation of decentralization processes in Third

World countries has underperformed due to lack of support from political, national and local technocrats. In Zimbabwe, the efficacy of the democratic decentralization process is undermined due to different political identities, interests and ideas. Political conflicts discussed in the previous chapter, aggravated by intergovernmental conflicts, affect the country's fiscal system simultaneously undermining the local authority's ability to rehabilitate infrastructure problems. To this end, satisfactory urban infrastructure development and local governance is jeopardized by ineffectual implementation of the decentralization process.

As a result, service delivery and infrastructure have deteriorated not only in Masvingo but in most parts of Zimbabwe. Chigwenya (2010:5) blames the recentralization of political and fiscal decision-making power for the reduction of a range of infrastructure services provided by cities. The main aim of the recentralization of (political decision-making) power into the hands of central government was to increase the efficiency of service delivery. The latter has however proved to be a disaster with regard to infrastructure and service delivery. The management of waste and infrastructure development such as roads and water supply has deteriorated to an unprecedented level due to the recentralization of power.

Sustainable urban infrastructure development is accomplished through active participation of the local actors (Smit and Pieterse, 2014:71) such as Mayors, local authorities, the business community and civil society organizations. However as discussed above, equal distribution of power, function and authority amongst the aforementioned actors is contentious. Decentralization as it was implemented in Zimbabwe needs to be understood in the context of the government's intent and relationship to socio-economic and infrastructural development. Against this backdrop, citizens and civil society should be engaged in the decentralization framework, that is, in political decision-making power (devolution).

However, not only have Zimbabwe's urban infrastructure standards been deteriorating as a result of the recentralization of political and economic powers to the central

government, but also because of conflicts between the municipality and workers, which have played a significant role in exacerbating poor infrastructural conditions. According to Maponga (2012:2), workers at Masvingo municipality were sabotaging work as the municipality owed its workers US\$3.5 million in wages and salaries. The workers sabotaged equipment meant to be used to upgrade the infrastructure. During this strike, the Zimbabwe Urban Council Workers' Union (ZUCWU) impounded a range of properties on behalf of the workers. Thus, ongoing contestation surrounding the administration of the Masvingo urban infrastructure assisted the researcher to identify various coping strategies employed by elite urban ratepayers in the wake of a collapsing and underfunded infrastructure.

2.4 Urban infrastructure

Hanson (1984:4) describes urban infrastructure as 'the sinews of the city; its road, bridge and transition networks; its water and sewer lines as well as water disposal facilities, power systems, public buildings, parks and recreation areas.' Eberhard and Bernstein (1985:5) argue that there are five private and public components which make up urban infrastructure. The five components identified by Eberhard and Bernstein (1985:6) are *water* (dams, reservoirs, pipes, and purification), *energy* (transmission lines, electric power), *waste disposal* (sewers, sewage, dumps, and garbage), *communication* (satellites, broadcasting stations, telephone lines and other buildings) and *transportation* (bridges, highways, railroads, trains). Smit and Pieterse (2014:47) distinguish *economic* (such as roads, stations, information and communication networks), *public* (resources and space such as streets, pavements, parks, community halls and social amenities) and *household* (such as water, energy and sanitation) infrastructure. These major elements will be explored and considered throughout the mini-dissertation in order to understand the different coping strategies advanced by urban elite ratepayers in coping with the speed at which they are collapsing.

There are a plethora of models that help in the understanding of urban infrastructure. Khan (1996) and Eberhard and Bernstein's (1985) make key claims in this regard. Their models highlight the problems of an ageing urban infrastructure that exist not only in

Zimbabwe but to some extent in all developed and developing cities across the globe. Khan's (1996:508) analysis, which concurs with some of Hanson's work (1984:18), makes it clear that environmental and infrastructural problems that bedevil Third World countries are primarily a reflection of urbanization with its distinct feature of urban population growth. It is within this context that growth in the urban population has resulted in over-stretching existing resources, thereby affecting environmental quality (which includes infrastructure) and the functioning of the cities as 'economic hubs'. Poor infrastructure management impacts negatively on residents' safety, health and education.

In order to understand reasons for the degradation of and change in urban infrastructure, Eberhard and Bernstein (1985:10-11) delineated three propositions. The initial proposition supports the view that overpopulation, coupled with change in employment and lifestyle patterns, impact negatively on urban infrastructure. The second proposition is that industrialization intensifies the need for the availability of raw materials, transportation, labour and energy which impacts on infrastructural conditions. The third proposition acknowledges that the change in socio-political views about public participation has a significant impact on infrastructure management. In addition to these propositions, Khan (1996:517) suggests that the management of urban infrastructure in most developing nations is undermined by inappropriate pricing of resources and services, inappropriate economic and policy initiative systems and institutional constraints which includes functions of power between various public agents and government authorities. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, in the third decade post-independence Zimbabwe (for the period 2000-2008), this has resulted in the exorbitant cost of services.

Studies demonstrate that there is a correlation between infrastructure management and overall quality of life. In Pakistan, Khan (1996:507) argues that overpopulation and existing strained resources have resulted in extreme pollution resulting in inhabitants being prone to diseases such as diarrhoea, typhoid and hepatitis. The unhealthy conditions have influenced residents to introduce new coping strategies in order to

withstand these pressures. However, rules for determining what is believed to be a workable and feasible environment differs from place to place since societies are not a homogeneous. In this regard, this study seeks to examine the extent to which the three propositions outlined by Eberhard and Bernstein (1985:10-11) are applicable to the Masvingo urban environment.

2.4.1 Sustainable urban infrastructure development

In order to promote and achieve sustainable urban infrastructure development, there is a need to consider government policies, urbanization, technology and the system of urban planning in contemporary metropolitan environments (Teriman *et al*, 2010:3). Regardless of the socio-economic and political challenges, the sustainability of urban infrastructure remains important in estimating a municipality's relative success in relation to development on a comparative basis with other local authorities in Third World countries.

Teriman *et al* (2010:3) notes that the sustainability of urban infrastructure depends on the integration of municipal planning, residents' cooperation and the development process. In the context of contemporary urban environments, this kind of integration promotes sustainable urban infrastructure development through the use of limited available resources in a way that does not jeopardize future generations. Theoretically, sustainable urban infrastructure development is a noble idea. However, as discussed earlier, in developing nations, inappropriate urban development strategies and lack of investments as well as weak institutional capacity undermine the efficacy of sustainable urban development resulting in infrastructure dilapidation (Yameogo *et al*, 2014:157). It is therefore my argument that the aforementioned attributes identified by Yameogo *et al* (2014:157) have impinged on municipal councils' fiscal capacity and capability to provide infrastructure development, social services and facilities to the public. In this regard, the quality of urban life is destabilized as residents (mostly in Third World countries) have no access to the best quality of social services.

Urban infrastructure predicaments bedevilling Third World countries is worsened by the pervasiveness of conflicts, wars and collapsing national economies. Building on the work of the UN (2008:158), I argue that governments that support centralization accumulate decision-making power to the core, implementing top-down policies, whereas governments fostering decentralization distribute power, influence and control to sub-national bodies, urban authorities and government parastatals. As noted by Mbiba (2014:83), there is always inconsistency and conflicts with regards to the financial relationship between local authorities and the state. Urban authorities work on behalf of the state, but sometimes allocated funds come late and by the time they are dispatched to local authorities, will already be swallowed by high inflation and time related costs. As a result, urban authorities in Africa, Zimbabwe in particular, are financially strapped such that they are failing to provide basic social services such as sanitation, potable water, road upgrading and waste removal which should be placed as the core of infrastructure development agenda. For example, in Zimbabwe, following decades of political and economic crisis as discussed in the previous chapter, the country needs US\$215 million annually for the next five years to recuperate and restore urban infrastructure yet only US\$45 was available for 2010 (Mbiba, 2014:83). This illustrates a considerable gap between the country's income budget and infrastructure expenditure needs in particular.

2.4.2 Sources of income

Mbiba (2014:85) notes that land-based revenues such as land and property taxes, rent on land fees and user pay fees (from water, electricity and sewer) are the major sources of income revenue for municipal councils. Municipal councils rely to some extent also on government grants that are channelled to residents through the committee of council and ward councillors. In addition, Mbiba (2014:85) states that in Zimbabwe, water contributes more than 40 percent of municipal councils' income revenue. However as discussed in the previous chapter, African countries and Zimbabwe in particular, are faced by rapid urbanization and growing informality, resulting in the loss of income rates from user pay fees. For this reason, Maponga (2013:2) argues that financial constraints are a major threat to service delivery and infrastructure management due to rapid

urbanization. To this end, Maponga (2013:2) notes that Masvingo city council needed almost US\$50 million to finance the upgrading of its waterworks so as to reduce water shortages. The population growth in Masvingo (30,523 in 1980 to 80,554 in 2012) underpins the need to double water purification and pumping capacity from 30 mega litres to 60 mega litres per day (Maponga, 2013:1). The infrastructure development strategy is undermined by financial challenges bedeviling the city at large.

Despite economic predicaments that undermine the efficient delivery of basic social services and infrastructure development, local authorities have supplementary income generating projects. Mbiba (2014:87) notes that in Bulawayo, the municipal council is involved in the marketing of opaque beer and breeding of peri-urban livestock. Seemingly in Masvingo, local authorities have established community/council beer halls such as the *Manhede* night club in order to increase their income revenues. Furthermore, depending on their bargaining power to attract external partners, local authorities are eligible to negotiate loan agreements with external donors and building societies. However, in African countries, lending rates are very high and local authorities cannot afford mortgage rates (Mbiba, 2014:90). Nonetheless, the municipal council of Masvingo has approached private financial institutions to sponsor and subsidize their water works as a result of the lack of state funding. This financial crisis has become a national structural problem in which the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) has failed to cope. It is therefore within these ambits that this research paper takes into cognition financial constraints and population growth as major challenges facing Masvingo town council in the quest to effectively administer its infrastructure.

2.5 Coping strategies

In this research, the concept of coping strategies will be used to refer to the amalgamation of activities and mechanisms adopted to withstand prevailing extraordinary and traumatic infrastructure conditions. Coping strategies is a general term that needs to be distinguished from two other terms regularly deployed in the literature, namely livelihoods and survival strategies, both of which focus on resource-acquisition strategies adopted by individuals and households, usually in impoverished

settings, and with a particular focus on sustainability in the case of the livelihoods literature.

Gilbert (1998:595) defines survival strategies as the everyday decisions and practices of the deprived and the underprivileged people who attempt to ensure their economic and emotional well-being and the well-being of their families. Muzvidziwa (2001:147) contends that survival strategies are activities adopted by people for livelihood purposes which include the mobilization of material and non-material resources. I argue that this definition underlines individual participation in the daily reproductive system of a society which includes the institutionalization of particular societal roles. Rahmato (1991:16) suggests the need to distinguish anticipatory survival strategies and crisis survival strategies '... the former being adopted during times of normalcy and the latter in times of stress'. The above suggests that it would be difficult to use the notion of 'survival strategies' in relation to elites, unless such elites are understood as former elites rendered impoverished by sudden set of circumstances.

I have therefore opted to use the notion of coping strategies instead, because the study does not explore the resource acquisitions strategies of its study population and focuses instead on the way in which participants ensure access to basic services in urban settings. In other words, this study does not focus on the diverse economic strategies that elites use to diversify their income and resource-base during times of economic crisis, but focus more specifically on strategies used to ensure basic services. Moreover, the focus here is not on working class or poor households.

There is a substantive literature on livelihoods, focusing in particular on sustainability and diversified forms of resource-acquisition adopted by poor communities and households. Whilst this is not the focus of the study, the findings of recent research is relevant for this study in terms of setting out a broad range of strategies adopted to withstand economic deprivation, particularly as this relates to societies that have been affected by major economic crisis. As has been suggested earlier, a need to diversify

income and ensure access to services in times of economic crisis is not peculiar to Africa.

A study by Verner (2010) in Northeast and Northwest Brazil as well as Southern Bolivia concludes that these societies adopted a plethora of livelihood strategies following a rapid and dramatic economic turmoil that I argue is fairly identical to most African countries. For example, in the Northeast and Northwest rural Brazil, Verner (2006:5) concludes that residents undertake three types of livelihood strategies, namely off-farm, farming-based agriculture and both (that is, a combination of both). Verner (2006:6) adds that non-farm livelihood strategies in Northeast and Northwest Brazil are related to educational attainment. To this end, Verner (2006) examines different ways in which education affects livelihood strategies and argues that the likelihood to be employed in the informal sector, non-farming sector in particular, is determined by an increase in education levels. In addition, doing research in Bolivia, in the state of Ceara, Verner (2010:284) notes that people relied extensively on natural capital as key livelihoods strategies owing the country's economic predicaments. Residents in the state of Ceara benefit from their natural environment extracting both renewable and non-renewable resources to withstand prevailing economic challenges. In addition, societies in Bangladesh also experienced economic quandary which resulted in increasing unemployment. To this end, Siddiqui (2003:3) notes that the poor of South-eastern Bangladesh in Chittagong rely on migration as an important livelihood strategy. They export contract labour to parts of Southern Asia and Middle Eastern countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and Brunei. As noted by Siddiqui (2003:3), reasons could point to better education and employment opportunity as well as opportunities for self-actualization in destination countries. Thus, international migration is indicated as a long-term livelihood strategy to which the poor of Chittagong intermittently resorted.

In Zimbabwe, the extent to which the current social crisis is recognized by the state is evidenced from its focus on crisis programmes. The Zimbabwean government has to some extent introduced a number of crisis programmes in order to cater for the needs of the disadvantaged in the society. In December 2010, Zimbabwe launched a child crisis

programme at national level against the high infant mortality rate. According to the WHO (2010), *“Together we can realize child survival and development”*, was a programme which sort to refurbish the health system with the quest towards shrinking child mortality. It was aligned to the UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 4 which seeks to diminish child mortality rates amongst children under the age of five by two thirds. In so doing, power to achieve this goal was invested in local communal leaders and politicians. According to the WHO (2010), these stakeholders are playing an active role in looking after abandoned babies who need clinical and healthcare before placing them in foster homes.

Also of importance and adopted at national level owing to economic quandary in Zimbabwe is the Jones logic of *‘Kukiyakiya’*, a survival strategy which referred to *“multiple forms of making things do”* (Jones, 2010:285). The *‘Kukiyakiya’* economy is a response to socio-economic fluctuation in which citizens exploit whatever resources available with an eye on self-sustenance. This form of survival strategy, researched by Jones (2010), is viewed not only as typical but basic and essential tool for survival. During the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe, development was delayed and in some instances deferred for political reasons and residents adopted informal means of survival. This intensified the rate of home industries, production (for example bricks and furniture) at every corner of the street, backyard tuck shops and the aforementioned economic activities were done with an eye to fulfil basic needs (Jones, 2010:289). The urban elites were also part of those involved in this form of survival strategy, but Jones views this survival tool as typical of poor residents. The researcher shall utilize the *‘Kukiyakiya’* concept notwithstanding in order to probe the livelihood strategies employed by the elites in their endeavour to militate against the infrastructural collapse bedevilling the community.

Furthermore, urban destitute and disadvantaged city dwellers maintain strong linkages with the rural areas as their means of survival (Baker, 1990; Muzvidziwa, 1997; Lesetedi, 2003). The intensification and adjustment of urban-rural connections denotes imperative safety valves and welfare options for urban people who too are vulnerable to

economic fluctuations. According to O' Connor (1991), urban-rural linkages as socio-economic survival strategies have assumed new importance with rising urban poverty across developing nations. In other words, precarious economic fluctuation in Zimbabwe has intensified rural-urban ties as an economic survival strategy.

However, urbanites are not a homogeneous group and the coping strategies employed by elites might be different from those of poor people within the same locale. This research project therefore aims to probe this gap with specific reference to the elite urban ratepayers. It argues that elite urban ratepayers are active and knowledgeable agents who have the capacity to respond to constraining structures around them.

2.5.1 Coping, survival and resilience strategies in Masvingo

As suggested, elite urban ratepayers have received little attention with regard to our understanding of coping strategies in relation to infrastructure challenges in particular. In the Masvingo urban community, quite a number of studies have examined the survival strategies of the poor and destitute in the community. However, none have scrutinized coping (i.r.t infrastructure conditions) or resilience strategies of the elites that I could find.

Chazovachii *et al* (2013) have researched the urban fuel wood business as a vital survival strategy adopted by poor urban residents in order to reduce their poverty levels and to cope with load-shedding. The urban poor in the transport business are employed and engaged in fetching firewood from uncultivated areas and the forests surrounding the city. This survival strategy has been a panacea to the financial problems facing some of the urban poor. Other survival strategies employed by the Masvingo urban poor include forex dealing, the selling of manure, the selling of second hand clothes and the selling of perishables (Chazovachii *et al*, 2013:68).

These findings are in tandem with those identified by Muzvidziwa (1997:102). He found that poor women use different survival strategies in order to maximize their life chances. These survival strategies include the selling of carrier bags and of used clothes, of cross

border trading and of hairdressing. In addition to the aforementioned, during the economic downturn, Muzvidziwa (2001:147) has found that the majority of poor women in Masvingo have adopted '*mapoto union*' (informal marriage or cohabitation) as their survival strategy. The majority of poor women are failing to cope with urban life and in so doing they have resorted to manifold strategies of accessing the means of survival.

Survival strategies of Masvingo residents have of late been studied within the context of the country's high inflation. The galloping inflation in Zimbabwe has significantly encroached on pensioners who are currently receiving a stipend of US\$40 (R400) per month. The Government of National Unity (GNU) did not do much towards alleviating the economic challenges vexing pensioners. Instead, prior to the GNU, the Mugabe regime officially introduced unbudgeted gratuities and monthly pensions for war veterans and not the general pensioners at large (Nhodo *et al*, 2013:29). Thus pensioners who are not politically affiliated have become economically marginalized not only in Masvingo but across the nation. In so doing, pensioners have retreated back to their rural homes where living expenses are relatively low (Nhodo *et al*, 2013:33). This type of income strategy has proved to be economically effective as they have managed to put lodgers in their urban homes as a way of topping up their monthly stipends. In addition to this, these pensioners believe in the spirit of *ubuntu* (Nhodo *et al*, 2013:34) in which an individual is part of the whole community and for this reason they assist each other in times of crisis.

2.6 Urban elites

Liu (2013:95) conceptualizes urban elites as privileged and influential residents that play an important role in community organization and adopt leading positions in different social spheres. As noted by Burton and Higley (1980) as cited in Liu (2013:95), relative to other residents in the same neighbourhood, urban elites are able to solve problems more effectively owing to their leadership exposure and socio-economic status. Building on the works of Burton and Higley (1980), I argue that there is a visible hierarchy of influence and power in which decisions done by local authorities depend on the privileged group – urban elites. To this end, urban elites have the ability to exercise

power, authority and control over other members of the same organization, ward, community or any given institution. Building on the works of Liu (2013), I conceptualize urban elites as a relatively small subset of high status people in urban Masvingo who are relatively independent and powerful due to their individual and institutional capacity to take decisions. Most of the urban elites, as I argue in this research, have access to the socio-economic and political benefits of the city at large and at the same time pay a regular charge for the use of public services.

2.7 Civil society organisations & networks

According to Dodo and Mabvurira (2012:1867), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are institutions with strong networks that seek to represent the interests and will of their members and have no defined lifespan. Building on the works of Dodo and Mabvurira (2012), I argue CSOs by nature tend to lead most societal development programmes. CSOs include non-governmental organisations, volunteer organizations, community-based organizations (CBOs), social movements, and human rights movements seeking to improve community welfare. Building on the works of Dodo and Mabvurira (2012:1868), I argue that CSOs emerge as a result of grassroots participation and that their objectives depend on their *modus operandi* and formation. To this end, I argue that CSOs' goals, objectives and agendas are formulated and accomplished independent of the state. In my view, the effectiveness of urban CSOs, particularly in Zimbabwe, is directly linked to democratization issues as well as the management of urban spaces. My argument is informed by Dodo and Mabvurira (2012:1869) who notes that in urban Zimbabwe, the struggle for democratization and lack of experience in multi-partyism, as well as poor linkage between grassroots, elites and political leaders affect the efficiency of civil society organisations. Although independent of the state, the state can facilitate or impede the role of CBOs in society. According to Chabal and Daloz (1999) as cited by Dodo and Mabvurira (2012:1869), evidence can be drawn from countries such as Eritrea, Libya, Sudan, and Zimbabwe where the state used its discretion over registration of CSOs, or delaying registration, thereby creating latitude for the central government to determine which CSOs should operate. This is a *modus operandi* that I view as thwarting democratic governance. In my view, democratic governance offers

good quality support to development projects. This can only be achieved through engaging CSOs at all levels of development.

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed existing literature on urbanisation, urban infrastructure, coping strategies and the decentralisation model of urban governance, which is the theoretical framework underpinning this research. In order to understand contemporary debates and the significance of urban infrastructure, I have engaged with key scholarly ideas such as those of Teriman *et al* (2010), Yameogo *et al* (2014), Mbiba (2014) and Smit and Pieterse (2014). This chapter concludes that sustainable urban infrastructure can only be achieved through planned development strategies, popular participation, and a kind of decentralization that is coupled with devolution of power and responsibilities. Municipal councils should be empowered with both administrative and political power to make fiscal and development decisions without any interference from the nation state. As evidenced in this chapter, little research has been done on the responses of elites situated in urban areas to prevailing infrastructure problems.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the data collection methods and the methodological frame that I used to answer the research question: What are the coping strategies employed by urban elite ratepayers in the wake of a fragmenting infrastructure in Masvingo? In this chapter, I give an account of qualitative methodology, the triangulation of data sources and the selection approach used. The three techniques, that is, semi-structured interview, documentary review, and participant observation, which were used to capture the experiences and actions of the study group and the context in which the research took place will be discussed. Furthermore, some methodological challenges that I faced during the data collection process, fieldwork, as well as strategies used to overcome these predicaments will be highlighted and discussed. Pertinent ethical issues that I observed prior to entry into the research field up until the writing-up of the findings will also be explored.

3.2 Research design and qualitative methodology

Myers (2009:23) states that qualitative researchers aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour. Qualitative methodology involves the use of various empirical materials such as interviews, personal experience, life stories, visual texts and observation. Creswell (1998:15) argues:

“Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.”

In light of the above, I argued that the qualitative research method explains human interaction in different social structures and social settings. This method assisted me to

understand coping strategies employed by elite urban ratepayers in depth rather than breadth. Usually, qualitative data is of utmost importance in interpreting social action that can only be understood by making recourse to the meanings and motives of the study population. Thus, by assuming a more interpretive approach, this methodology enabled me to analyse experience and perceptions of urban elites. In this regard, this methodology assisted me to capture experiences and actions of the study group and setting that I could not quantify or easily express in numbers.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Eisner (1991) and Merriam (1998) as cited by Creswell (1998:16) reiterate the implication of a “natural setting as source of data” in qualitative research. According to Creswell (1998:17), this entails “going into the field of study, gaining access and gathering material” whilst, at the same time, taking care to limit the researchers’ presence with regard to the action of the participants. Therefore, in the process of collecting data, I immersed myself into the research setting without influencing actions of the elite urban ratepayers on coping strategies employed.

3.2.1 Rationale for adopting a qualitative approach

It was not my intention in this research project to compare and contrast qualitative and quantitative methodology. These two traditions are equally important in social science research. In some instances, qualitative and quantitative methods can be used together complementary in order to understand the same phenomenon. I chose qualitative rather than quantitative methodology because the former rests on the assumption that it reveals a much more nuanced picture of people’s experiences, attitudes, values and beliefs. In this regard, the method supported me in understanding the creation of meanings attached to social action. The scope of the study also limited the extent to which I could combine qualitative and quantitative methods. The salient strengths of qualitative methodology were effective in identifying coping strategies employed by the urban elites.

3.2.2 Rationale for data and method triangulation

Denzin (1970) as cited in Bryman (2014:2) conceptualizes data triangulation as “the gathering of data through several sampling strategies, so that slices of data at different times and social situations, as well as on a variety of people, is gathered...” He further distinguishes four forms of triangulation namely; investigator triangulation, data triangulation, theoretical triangulation and methodological triangulation. Hussein (2009:2) adds that the use of multiple data sources (data triangulation) in the same study is done primarily for validation purpose. Therefore, in this research project, the use of several techniques was done for validation and verification purposes with an eye to capture diverse social action. For example, I wanted to get councillors’ perspectives, but if I did not look at the documents as well, I would not know to what extent what they were saying is accurate and how that reflects on and articulates with the reports and their strategic plans. Also, if I only interviewed elite participants, I would likely get only one specific perspective on the nature of predicaments. However, by combining individual views and the council’s perspective, I managed to get access to more diverse positions.

In my study, I did not employ investigator triangulation, because I conducted all the research myself. I also did not employ theoretical triangulation, but I utilized data source triangulation in the sense that I selected for my study councillors and municipality technocrats as well as the general group of elite urban ratepayers. In terms of the selection of elite participants, I made sure that they came from two different densities, that is, HDSs and LDSs. While I did not combine qualitative and quantitative strategies, I did triangulate different methods in terms of using semi-structured interviews, observation and documentary review.

Furthermore, I triangulated qualitative data collection methods with an eye to twin the desirable qualities of reliability and validity which produce trustworthy data. There is debate about validity and reliability, and the limitations of these concepts when working with qualitative data, and a lot of these, such as those aligned to experimental methods, are linked to quantitative framework. My argument is informed by Golafshani (2003:596)

who argues that validity and reliability are frequently used in quantitative research although they are also likely to be considered in qualitative research. In this research, I focus on questions around reliability and validity in terms of trustworthiness and the accuracy of the data. In addition, Jakob (2001:5) argues:

“By combining multiple methods, and empirical materials, researchers can hope to overcome the weakness or intrinsic biases and the problems that come from single-method... Often the purpose of triangulation in specific contexts is to obtain confirmation of findings through convergence of different perspectives. The point at which the perspectives converge is seen to represent reality.”

From the foregoing, I argue that a combination of different data sources presents a more certain representation of perceptions and actions of urban elites. I used single observer, a combination of semi-structured interviews and documentary review. This assisted me to verify and confirm the reliability and validity of data gathered in the field to some extent, thereby increasing trustworthiness and understanding of the study phenomenon.

3.3 Research Method

3.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

According to Kumar (2011:160), a semi-structured interview is a face-to-face repeated interaction between the researcher and informants. It provides the researcher with data and understanding of the topic under study. Blumberg *et al* (2005:386) adds that semi-structured interviews are more flexible in that they enable the researcher to probe the respondent's view point, feelings and experiences. This technique facilitates the extraction of data directly from respondents in a face to face situation. The researcher can in principle probe deeply, and seek clarifications and elaborations on information provided by participants (May, 2011:134). This assists me in gaining more information on the topic at hand.

In this research, I took into cognition the limitations of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews at times produce biased information as a result of the interviewer effect. Furthermore they can be time consuming as the conversation can go on and on if the researcher fails to successfully focus the dialogue with the research participant. In order to prevail over these predicaments, I made use of an interview schedule listing a number of key themes which emanate from the research questions and sub-questions.

All interviews were preferably conducted in English since both elites and technocrats are mostly fluent in English. However, in four (4) instances where they were done in *Shona* (local language), I did translations into English. Fourteen interviews were recorded and transcribed. The other three respondents did not want to be recorded for personal reasons. In these cases, I made notes after the interviews. A detailed consent form that I prepared was signed by each participant for ethical reasons. Since there were two categories of interviewees (that is, the elites and representatives from the committee of council), I prepared two research schedules. The first had open-ended questions addressing perceptions and actions of the coping strategies employed by the urban elites. The views of the elites were sought through the first interview schedule. The second research schedule focused on the more technocratic views on the management of urban infrastructure.

May (2011:140) argues that in order to conduct a good interview, there is a need to consider characteristics such as race, sex, age, and language. Although my intention was to select participants on a 50-50 sex ratio in order to have equal representation of the study group, recruiting participants was a very difficult task. I therefore managed to interview a total of ten men and seven women. I first went to the field and conducted twelve interviews (eight men and four women). After transcriptions were done, I realized my data was thin and not yet good enough. After four weeks I went back into the field and conducted five more interviews (I interviewed two men and three women). Thus a total of seventeen interviews were conducted in this research project. One interview session took an average of one hour.

In my study, I draw a distinction between key informant interviews, conducted with members of the Masvingo City Council, and household interviews with urban elites. Whilst the latter was the main focus of the study, for reasons of data triangulation discussed above as well as to ensure that the household interviews are framed by a deeper understanding of the context of service delivery, interviews with key informants were required. I drafted separate interview schedules for each type of interview. (Refer to Appendix A and Appendix B at the end of this study).

Key informants interviewed include five top representatives of the municipal council. Among the five municipal representatives interviewed, I interviewed four men and one woman. The aforementioned five representatives from the municipal council accounted for their personal views on the management of the council infrastructure from a technocratic point of view. The interview schedule included questions on the status of infrastructure management, complaints received from ratepayers, the ways in which complaints have been taken up as well as the broader set of projects that the municipality has embarked on to address infrastructure challenges.

Twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted with the elite urban ratepayers Rhoden, Mucheke and the city centre since the main aim of this research project was to gain insights into their coping strategies. The interview schedule included questions about general infrastructure challenges encountered at household and ward level, as well as perceptions about the quality of service delivery and the municipality's responsiveness. It also focused on collective action in relation to the improvement or monitoring of service delivery quality as well as the impact of the broader political context on services. Finally, a key aspect of the interview schedule focused on household level strategies for coping with infrastructure and service difficulties.

The seventeen interviews were conducted at their residential areas, workplaces or any area arranged at the request of the interviewee. In the context of the research, these helped me to capture the range of actions and perceptions with regard to the coping strategies used by elite urban ratepayers. Among the twelve elites interviewed, I

interviewed eight men and four women, and at least four persons from each area². This integration of different sexes and people of different attributes enabled the absorption of different views on the topic under study. This integration of multiple perspectives assisted me to provide a more detailed description of the study matter.

In my view, one of the most important characteristics of using open ended questions is that they allow an unrestricted number of possible and detailed answers. Roulston (2010:13) argues that open-ended questions are endowed with a wide-ranging parameter in which respondents can formulate answers in their own words. In this research, I probed interviewees further with the intention of understanding and grasping their ideas and opinions. Building on the works of Roulston (2010:13), in the process of 'transforming aspects, recording and deleting unnecessary information', I summed up what has been said by the interviewee in his own words. This was done in order to give participants the opportunity to explain their opinions and understanding of the topic at hand.

In this research project, I used open-ended questions because these allow facilitating a variety of information. I draw from Kumar (2005:135) who argues that open ended questions allow respondents to express their personal views freely resulting in diversity of information obtained. Not only do open-ended questions provide variety of information, they also provide in-depth information should the respondents feel comfortable in expressing their personal opinions. Thus in this research project, open-ended questions helped me gain in-depth information on the perceptions and actions of elite urban ratepayers and technocratic views on the management of urban infrastructure.

There are five key issues which I considered in formulating open-ended questions:

²As indicated above, the three areas under study include Rhoden, Muccheke and the City centre.

- i. I did not ask questions in a random way but “...followed a logical progression based upon the objectives of the study” (Kumar, 2005:140). This facilitated a flow and focus in the discussion.
- ii. I was conscious of asking leading questions or any question which may be judgmental. For example, “*The committee of council has failed to achieve its goal, hasn’t it?*” In a question like this, the interviewee might think it is wrong to disagree, forcing him or her to reply positively to the question. To this end leading questions were avoided in my fieldwork process.
- iii. In my interview schedule, I used clear language. This enabled participants to understand the topic at hand. Furthermore, it also assisted me to get in-depth information on the topic under study.
- iv. Furthermore I was asking one question at a time. According to Kumar (2005:136), researchers should avoid the use of ‘double-barrelled’ questions (a question within a question)’. If used, these may confuse respondents on which question to give the first priority.
- v. Since there were two different categories of interviewees, I constructed two interview schedules. The two schedules had different open-ended questions. The use of ambiguous questions was avoided in both interview schedules.

3.3.1.1 Selection of participants

Instead of using sampling, I used selection. Although my study is not generalizable, I still wanted to have broad representation, trying to have gender equality, recruiting people from different political parties and making sure I cover a different variety of elites as part of making a group of people more broadly representative. I selected respondents to participate in this study not on the basis of their availability but on how they satisfy the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Only respondents relevant to the focus and goals of the project were included and those who did not suit the purpose of the study were deliberately excluded. These respondents were selected from two distinct groups, that is, the elite group and representatives of the municipal council. Participants were then grouped according to preselected criteria relevant to the research question.

Although the legal age of consent in Zimbabwe is 16 according to the UNICEF (1995), I purposively selected the participants aged between 30-65 years because this age group comprises businessmen, policy makers, politicians, academics and professionals, managers and representatives of the committee of council. In other words, it is assumed that majority of the elite urban ratepayer falls within 30-65 years of age. Any participant above 65 years old was purposively excluded since this is the statutory retirement age in Zimbabwe and in the committee of council the researcher did not find any respondent above the age of 65. Most retired professionals relocated to small and medium farms during the fast track land reform in Zimbabwe 2000 and only a few are still in town. Although Zimbabwe is a patriarchal society, the constitutional amendments No. 14 of 1996 and 17 of 2005 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of gender and sex respectively. As such, I selected participants from both sexes in order to account for possible gender issues although I did not accomplish the 50-50 ratio that I was expecting.

3.3.1.2 Brief description of participants

I used pseudonyms for all participants. In the case of public office holders, i.e. the mayor and town clerk, participants are identified in terms of their position, but pseudonyms are still used. In the case of ward-based councillors as well as elite participants, I have left out some biographical information that would make them easily identifiable.

Key informants

1. Austin Masutu

Austin Masutu is an older man and a politician in his mid-60s. He served two terms in office as the MDC-T mayor of Masvingo. Mr Masutu has lived in Masvingo for almost 45 years. He has lived in a particular ward (a low density suburb) for 22 years and owns the house he lives in.

2. Noel Tavirimirwa

Noel Tavirimirwa is a man in his early 50s. He is the current town clerk for the past 12 years and has lived in Masvingo for 23 years now. He has lived for almost 11 years in the particular ward in which he now lives. He owns a number of properties in Masvingo.

3. Munashe Gambiza

Munashe Gambiza is a woman in her late 50s. She is a councillor who has been staying in Masvingo for almost three decades years and more than two decades in the particular ward in which she now lives.

4. Johannes Machinya

Johannes Machinya is a man in his early 60s. He has been staying in Masvingo for 31 years now and 17 in the particular ward in which he lives now. He has been serving on council for the last few years.

5. David Madzimure

David Madzimure is a man in his late 40s. He is active in civil society. He was born in Masvingo and has been staying for 41 years in the particular ward that he lives now. He is a councillor of a particular HDS ward.

Elite participants

6. Joyline Dube

Joyline Dube is a woman in her mid-50s. She is currently an office holder in the ruling ZANU-PF Women's league in Masvingo as well as an active member of the SHINE club, a local community based organization in Masvingo. She is an elite urban ratepayer from the LDSs who has lived in Masvingo for 30 years and 19 years in the particular ward in which she lives now. Furthermore, she is also an active member in the Masvingo United Residents and Ratepayers Association as determined by her membership subscription.

7. Stanford Malava

Stanford Malava is a man in his early 60s and engineer by profession. The respondent has lived in Masvingo for 25 years and 16 years in the particular ward (LDSs) for 16 years now. He is a local businessman who has stayed in a low density suburb for more than 15 years.

8. Tichaona Nyere

Tichaona Nyere is an elite urban ratepayer and an active member of the MBAB committee. He is a local businessman who has been staying in Masvingo for more than a decade, the last few years in an LDS ward following his relocation from a HDS.

9. Tafadzwa Ndebvu

Tafadzwa Ndebvu is a man in his mid-30s who has been staying in Masvingo for almost two decades and 15 years in the HDSs ward in which he lives now. He is a medical doctor by profession. He owns a number of properties and is an active member in the MURRA who has paid his membership in full.

10. Vimbai Chirandu

Vimbai Chirandu is a woman in her late 40s who works in the informal sector, cross border trading in particular. She is an active member of the ZANU-PF women's league. She has lived in Masvingo for almost four decades in the particular HDS ward in which she now lives. She owns the house in which she lives.

11. Jessica Ngore

Jessica Ngore is a woman in her 50s and an academic by profession. She has worked as a facilitator in a number of municipal training programmes. The respondent has lived in Masvingo for 17 years and 8 years in the particular HDS ward in which she lives now.

12. Nyasha Madzivanyika

Nyasha Madzivanyika is a young woman in her early 30s and a secretary by profession. She has been staying in Masvingo for 7 years now following her appointment as office

holder in the MURRA committee in mid-2008. She does not own any property in Masvingo and for this reason she rents the house in which she lives now. She has lived 7 years in the particular ward in which she now lives.

13. Charity Hama

Charity Hama is a woman in her mid-40s. She works in the informal sector (in particular, cross-border trading). She is an elite urban ratepayer from a LDS who have been staying in Masvingo for 13 years and 5 years in the particular ward in which she lives now.

14. Edmore Chitukutuku

Edmore Chitukutuku is a pensioner from the HDSs in the early 60s. The respondent has been staying in Masvingo for 45 years and 32 years in the particular ward he is staying now. He owns a number of properties in the HDSs and is an active member of the MURRA.

15. Kudakwashe Zwana

Kudakwashe Zwana is a man in his mid-50s. He is an elite urban ratepayer from a HDS who have been staying in Masvingo for 21 years; 15 years in a particular ward in which he is staying now. Kudakwashe Zwana is an active member of MURRA. The respondent works in the informal sector as a valuables trader.

16. Clarity Mangena

Clarity Mangena is a woman in her early 40s. She has been staying in Masvingo for 11 years and 6 years in the particular ward in which she lives now. She is an active member of the MBAB.

17. Joseph Govo

Joseph Govo is a man in his late 50s born in Zimbabwe. He stated that he had lived in the United Kingdom (UK) for approximately four decades before returning to Zimbabwe.

He has been staying in Masvingo for 2 years, 1 year in the particular ward in which he lives. He is in the transport business in Masvingo.

3.3.2 Documentary review

Bowen (2009:27) argues that documentary review is a systematic procedure of collecting data in which a researcher uses material or data collected by someone or a group or people. Any material analysed exists independently from the researcher's actions. Major documents which I used in this research include both published and unpublished records of the city council's activities, annual reports, strategic plans, policy manuals government reports, memoranda, agendas and administrative documents.

Unlike in participant observation, where participants can change behaviour if they are aware that they are being studied, documentary review is well credited for 'non-reactivity'. Although it depends on the data, information obtained from documentary review provides historical data that cannot be produced using primary research. To this end, this method was the most important in trying to see to what extent the council is really addressing infrastructure challenges and also to get accurate reflection of the nature of infrastructure and changes over time. However, documentary review is not always reliable and the validity is subject to debate. Sometimes data may be outdated. Therefore, in order to curb these demerits, I traced the key sources verifying whether each document was of secondary or primary importance. This helped me compare information from different documents in order to increase the validity of the findings. The validity and authenticity of the documents analysed was done through comparing written documents and data collected in the field.

3.3.2.1 Selection and description of documents reviewed

This was not the most important part of my study but provided me with important background. They were very vital in triangulating both the councillors' and technocrats' views. I generally used reports that were in the public domain for which I did not need special permission as well as those I had permission from the town clerk. I used formal

documentation and only documents related to the nature of infrastructure in Masvingo post-independence to the present. To this end, I looked at the following documents:

1. Annual reports
 - i. Census 2012 report: Zimbabwe National statistics Agency
 - ii. Masvingo Town Engineer's Report of 1982 (1982)
 - iii. Mucheke High Density Area: Town planning report and proposals for the South-Western extension of the area
 - iv. Municipality of Masvingo Mayor's report of 1982
 - v. The City of Masvingo Strategic Action Plan (2012)
 - vi. The City of Masvingo strategic Plan (2012-2017)
 - vii. The Masvingo Revised Strategic Development Plan (2004-2008)
 - viii. The Masvingo Urban strategic plan (2004-2008)
 - ix. Zimbabwe general information: Zimbabwe cities
 - x. Zimbabwe National Road Administration (ZINARA) -2014
2. News-paper articles
 - i. Masvingo Mirror
 - ii. Zimbabwe Herald

3.3.3 Participant observation

In order to recognize and comprehend intentions and connotations of social actions from the viewpoint of those involved, I used participant observation. Bryman (1993:45) underscores this technique as "...the immersion of the researcher among those whom he seeks to study with the view of generating a rounded, in-depth account of the group or organization". From this perspective, I immersed myself in the research context for six weeks with a view to obtain a thick understanding of the perceptions and actions of research participants.

With the help of this technique, I was able to directly observe more rather than relying only on what people say. Owing to the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe and exacerbated by the emergence of security networks, some people were not willing to give personal information. As such, I observed their natural setting and watched

situations as they take place. Furthermore, I used participant observation primarily to note the depth and nuance of the actions and perceptions of the study group. This technique resulted in new knowledge being discovered since I was a careful and sensitive observer.

During the observation period, I was not being a 'passive collector of data' but actively engaged with the intention of meeting the study objectives. Thus, in order to capture the aforementioned, I recorded observational data using anecdotal recording. Maree (2007:85) defines anecdotal records as notes written during observation, capturing sequential events and basic actions observed. During this process, I recorded notes on actual coping strategies and other interesting issues. Analytical notes were later recorded and developed in order to capture themes and patterns. These notes were developed from anecdotal records after the observation period.

In the course of observing, I was aware of the observer effect which could distort the authenticity of data. In this regard, I observed the study group in its natural setting even though I was an insider so as to avoid the problems of "going native". In so doing I immersed myself as part of the elite urban ratepayers whilst observing and experiencing different strategies employed by the elite urban ratepayers.

3.4 Research ethics

3.4.1 Insider and outsider status in qualitative research

In qualitative research, there is need to comprehend and carefully assess the positive and negative elements of being an insider or outsider.

I was a member of the Masvingo urban elite (for almost six years) being the son of a high status professional and well respected man in the community, hence I can be deemed to be an insider researcher. This status can affect the objectivity, reflexivity and authenticity of the research data in principle (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009:55). The requirements of validity and reliability can be affected especially when participants fail to

explain their personal experience as a result of assumptions of similarity given shared status. Participants might address crucial matters in relation to how they value and know the researcher. This results in the researcher's assumed position rather than participant's views being collected. In order to deal with this matter, I was honest since I was familiar with participants.

Insider status on the other hand was an advantage in this qualitative research as some of the participants had high levels of trust and openness. As noted by Dwyer and Buckle (2009:56), participants are more likely to be willing to share experiences with someone they know as an insider. In this research project, this was of enormous importance given the political instability and violence in Zimbabwe which has of late been further intensified by security networks who are politically affiliated. Therefore, I facilitated the participants comfort by sharing neutral personal experiences, actions and perceptions with them. Furthermore, I entered the field with some knowledge of the area under study which the outsider researcher did not have. In this way it became arguably easier for me to gain access to participants and to understand emotions and feelings of the participants.

Rabe (2003:150) argues that an insider, to some extent is an outsider (dual role) especially with regards to participants' personal life and other hidden individual distinctiveness. There were certain hidden personal identities which had profound effects on the coping strategies adopted.

3.4.2 Ethical considerations

Following Wassenaar (2006:61), ethical reviews have globally become mandatory and of fundamental concern for every social science researcher who includes people as subjects in research design. A plethora of ethical procedures, rules and guidelines were developed after the realization of research participants' abuse by researchers. I observed research ethics prior to entry into the research field up until the assemblage of the findings. Pertinent to this study in particular are non-maleficence, justice and autonomy.

3.4.2.1 Non-maleficence

This philosophical opinion calls for the researcher to guarantee that no impairment, destruction or harm befalls research participants as a direct and indirect outcome of the research (Wassenaar, 2006:67). It was therefore my obligation as a researcher to circumvent and curtail harms and wrongs that may emerge in the research outcome. I did not use stigmatizing language or make suggestive actions or comments that may wrong participants. Considering the political instability in Zimbabwe, no language which could offend any political party was used. Furthermore, I used pseudonyms to protect the identities of participants (see discussion on page 61 for details).

3.4.2.2 Justice

According to Wassenaar (2006:67), “*justice requires the researcher to have some level of responsibility, to provide care and support for participants who may become distressed or harmed by the study.*” I was honest enough to ensure that the nature and aim of the study was disclosed to the participants prior to their input and contribution. At all phases of the research, I took care of each research participant with same level of fairness and equity. The selection of research participants was not based on convenience or personal relations but was done on free and fair grounds. To this end, I made sure that respondents voluntarily take part in the research project.

Furthermore, in my interviews, there are some political issues that surfaced during my interviews such as the *Gukurahundi*³(the rain that washes away the chaff) which I think would be a risk both to me and some of my respondents, if published. To this effect I deliberately left the information out of my analysis because the relationship between the two parties (MDC-T and the ruling ZANU-PF), whilst an important part of the problems of Masvingo, was not the main focus of my study. I therefore intentionally left the

³ For more information about this historical event see chapter 1 [1.2.1 First Decade: The Post-independence welfarist economy (1980-1991)] where I discussed the unrest political disturbances in the first decade after independence.

information for security reasons thus avoiding harms that may emerge in the research outcome. It is not like these issues did not happen but I decided not to put that information in my study. There are deep-seated long debates of mistrust and this is not as simple as one might think. In Zimbabwe you cannot just interview someone without opening up both interparty and historical issues. In my view, there is already stigma attached to these political parties and for this reason including party politics and their historical issues will move the debate which might distort the aims and objectives of my research. Most of my respondents were open up to this information but as a researcher I feel must use the information wisely. Given that these are sensitive and given an already difficult situation on the ground I reflected on the matter and decided that this issue is not central to the way in which I framed my research. It may be an issue that stands in the long term plans for fixing Masvingo but it was not central to my research and that's why I bracketed it out.

CHAPTER 4

AN OVERVIEW OF MASVINGO'S URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE (2010-2015):

Challenges and opportunities

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis and overview of infrastructure conditions in urban Masvingo for the period 2010 to 2015. To this end, I engage with fieldwork data, information obtained from documentary review, as well as relevant existing literature in order to understand infrastructure challenges, opportunities and conditions in urban Masvingo. The central argument in this chapter is that infrastructure conditions in Masvingo have deteriorated significantly compared to the first two decades after independence. The reasons for this point to human negligence, rapid urbanization, political instability, and macro-economic challenges, which ultimately affects the municipal council's prioritization of expenditures. Infrastructure predicaments in urban Masvingo are also exacerbated by the rise of Government parastatals such as ZINARA, which are not remitting back to local authorities; hence the municipal council finds it extremely difficult to acquire resources in order to repair infrastructure such as roads. For this reason, I concur with Mbiba (2014) on the challenges of financing African urban infrastructure as well as Smit and Pieterse's (2014) analysis of decentralization. In addition to Smit and Pieterse (2014), I further engage Chigwenya (2010) about his notion of decentralization without devolution as it was implemented in Zimbabwe. In terms of an intra-city comparative approach based on the evidence for Masvingo, this chapter concludes that the condition of urban infrastructure is related to the density of the suburb (that is, low density and high density suburbs). High density suburbs seem to experience much more severe environmental and infrastructure problems relative to the low density suburbs.

4.2 Understanding infrastructure challenges: Council and technocratic perspectives

This section is based on interviews with three council members, as well as the Mayor and a technocrat plus documentary review. Given that the scope of my study is limited, I

have not been able to extensively review the sources of income and financial reports, but there is some sense of an emerging picture of both the challenges and the way in which the municipal council plans to intervene.

According to the City of Masvingo Strategic Plan (2012-2017:9), the Masvingo City Council has successfully completed some of the planned projects for the past three decades. Major projects included the completion of the Bushmead water works (1980), the establishment of the Biological Nutrient Removal plant (1998) and the extension of the south-west Muccheke area (2007).

For the first two decades after independence, the infrastructure conditions in urban Masvingo reportedly were some of the best in the country. Munashe Gambiza, a councillor puts it as follows:

...during that period, 1998, the population was still very low and also even the economy was performing much better than say after the year 2000 going forward... our infrastructure used to be of high quality, clean the city delivery of service was excellent... roads used to be repaired and resurfaced constantly. There was not even a single pothole in the location (Interview: Munashe Gambiza; 17/05/2014).

At the time, the population size in Masvingo was still reasonably small, approximately 69,490 in 2002 (Zimbabwe National Statistic Agency, 2014:1) and the economy was still stable. As such, infrastructure during the period under review was still adequate.

However, after the year 2000, the condition of urban infrastructure started to deteriorate. The city, which presided over a weak economic base during the third decade after independence, as evidenced by lack of industrial activities (UN-HABITAT, 2012:5) and other socio-economic challenges discussed in chapter 2, began to face extensive service delivery challenges and poor maintenance of critical infrastructure. In the long run, I argue, spatial fragmentation took place and as a result urban infrastructure

conditions started decaying. Although there are remaining pockets with good infrastructure, most of the areas included in this study provided evidence of the fragmentation, crumbling and/or disintegration of urban infrastructure from 2000 to the present. Service delivery and sustainable infrastructure progression were destabilized by the political and economic environment which impacted the local authority's ability to effectively administer its infrastructure problems.

I have indicated three projects successfully executed. In the next section, I am going to tackle issues of water, electricity, sewer, roads and other social amenities from the perspective of the council, residents and technocrats.

4.2.1 Water

Arguably, the city of Masvingo produced the best potable water in Zimbabwe, particularly during the period after independence to early 2010. In an interview with a municipal technocrat who has been serving for a number of years, Noel Tavirimirwa recounted that:

We used to produce the best water in the country. I know the former mayor used to go in the higher meetings and when they talked about water he would compare our water with mineral bottled water and some guys in Harare would prefer our water instead of mineral water...(Interview: Noel Tavirimirwa; 17/05/2014)

Following Noel Tavirimirwa's statement, it seems to me that in addition to water quality, literature provided by the City of Masvingo Strategic Plan (2012-2017:10) also supports the idea that during the first two decades after independence up to the millennium period water demand in the case of Masvingo had not yet reached the design capacity of the system, and water provision was good.

Masvingo's main water pipeline was constructed during the Rhodesian era to serve a small population of about 35,523 (Zimbabwe National Statistic Agency, 2014:2). During

the first two decades, the population size was still manageable and water treatment was generally adequate. Currently the intake supply is oversubscribed by users and the system is subsequently failing to cope with an increasing population. For this reason, the current reservoirs are inadequate resulting in water shortages in Masvingo.

Commenting on water infrastructure condition in Masvingo, Austin Masutu, an active member in the committee of council observed:

The city Fathers of that time were of the view that by the year 2010 the population of the city would be 40 000. So the infrastructure that we are currently using for both water and sewer was designed for a population of plus or minus 35 000. Regrettably, the population of the city trebled close to 100 000. However, minor modifications have been made. The water infrastructure in terms of capacity was increased in 1984, I think, from 5 – 12 mega litres per day. Then increased a few years later to 18 mega litres and currently it has been increased to 24 mega litres per day when the requirement is 50 mega litres per day. So the deficiency for water infrastructure in Masvingo is 50%. The age of infrastructure cannot cope with the current population... the effect is that we now have water bursts... sewer bursts than we have been having before... the population has increased to 110 000 and we are still using the same infrastructure (Interview: Austin Masutu; 15/05/2014).

As evidence from Austin Masutu's perspective, the water deficiency in the city of Masvingo is approximately 50% due to an unexpected increase in population.

According to the City of Masvingo strategic plan (2012-2017), "Masvingo needs 60 mega litres of water per day... four more reservoirs, plasticized polyvinyl chloride pipes (UPVC) and three elevated storage tanks." Currently the city has one reservoir and small pipe line which is failing to cope with an increasing population. As a result, some areas in urban Masvingo frequently run short of water on a daily basis. Commenting on

the water shortage, Noel Tavirimirwa, a technocrat in the Masvingo Municipal council had this to say:

I think the main problem which persists in Masvingo is water. Like I have said earlier, we only have one reservoir in Masvingo and the area which I live is in one of the highest grounds meaning that inhabitants of this ward are the first to run short of water. As I am speaking right now they don't have water. Most of the times by 10am water will be unavailable. (Interview: Noel Tavirimirwa; 15/07/2014)

Based on my personal observations during my fieldwork, I note that the Municipality is positively working on the third phase to upgrade water supply in Masvingo. Although the construction of the new pipes has been put on hold because of financial challenges, minor modifications are being made to boost the pumping capacity. The council is planning to construct a 50 mega litres reservoir by the end of 2015. As I have argued earlier, the project is operating at a slow pace owing to economic predicaments.

Although Mapira (2012:4) blames the Municipal council for water shortages, the findings from this research project seem to differ. It is unlikely that water shortage in urban Masvingo is a council problem only. The city of Masvingo is not the only entity to blame for the problem. Besides unexpected population growth, the geographical position of Masvingo, which is in Zimbabwe's Agricultural region 4 with low rainfall patterns, has made it difficult for the city to constantly supply adequate water to its residents. The evidence to support the above argument can be drawn from the discussion in chapter 2 in which it was indicated that Masvingo has an average rainfall of 600mm per annum and an annual minimum temperature of 19°C. This rainfall pattern has contributed to water shortages in Masvingo.

The primary source of water in Masvingo is Lake Mutirikwi, which is evidently vulnerable to extensive water pollution from the council, residents and nearby agriculture activities.

Figure 1 shows Lake Mutirikwi, the country's largest inland lake constructed in 1960 and Figure 2 shows the Bushmead water treatment plant.

Fig 1: Lake Kyle/Mutirikwi



Fig 2: Bushmead water treatment plant



Fig 1 Source: Panoramio (2014)

Fig 2 Source: Maponga (2012)

In 2013, water levels in Lake Mutirikwi dropped to a shocking 7.5% (Maponga, 2013:1). To this end, in an interview with an active member in the committee of council, Austin Masutu argues that water levels in Masvingo used to be very good but as of late 2013, the level of water in Lake Mutirikwi (Kyle dam) went down to below 6% and the council was now pumping mud instead of pure water. As such the 6% water level could not sustain the whole city. This resulted in poor water delivery service and unsafe water to drink. I therefore argue that there is primary need to consider the geographical position of the city in our understanding of water problems in Masvingo.

In addition, Masvingo municipality has not been spared of the ravages of the prolonged financial crisis. This is evident from the fact that water infrastructure in Masvingo is as old as the city itself. According to the Masvingo Town Engineer's annual report of 1982, the Bushmead water works (water purification plant) shown in Fig 2 was completed in 1980. This is the same water purification plant that is currently used in urban Masvingo. Following the literature provided by the Zimbabwe National Statistic Agency (2014), this

purification plant was designed for a population 30,523 yet by 2014 the population come close to 100 000. There are insufficient funds to upgrade and maintain the Bushmead water purification plant and to purchase water treatment chemicals. This has all destabilized the constant provision of water into the city. This makes it difficult for the municipality to offer a constant supply of potable water to its residents. To this end, water has remained a challenge in Masvingo.

I argue that despite water problems bedeviling the city, the Municipality is doing its best in serving the water needs of its residents. The Masvingo Strategic Plan (2012-2017:22) highlights that 97% of the Masvingo residents have access to tap water. Furthermore, the city of Masvingo's Revised Strategic Development Plan (2004-2008:10) notes that the Council of Masvingo has professionals and experienced management who fight for social issues like health problems. In this regard, they give the first priority to water in terms of crisis. For example, as shall be evidenced later in this chapter, the council frequently makes use of the Fire Brigade truck to supply clean and safe water to residents owing to water shortages in most parts of the LDSs.

In order to avoid water supply problems, the council has made necessary arrangements with the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA). Austin Masutu, who has been serving for a number of years in the committee of council, maintains that:

...People don't stop going to the toilet because you are not pumping the sewer, so that was the challenge... we negotiated with ZESA so they put a dedicated power supply to our water abstraction station so ... but our sewer works are still affected if there is no dedicated power line to our sewer works. So if that area is load-shedded it means we are not pumping sewer and therefore it brings challenges of sewer bursts in the city because we keep flushing and sewerage has nowhere to go... (Interview: Austin Masutu; 15/05/2014).

Based on my fieldwork observation, I agree with Austin Masutu's sentiments and I further argue that the municipality of Masvingo has created a symbiotic relationship with

ZESA such that they are assured of constant supply of electricity to the Bushmead Water Treatment Plant (BNR) resulting in a constant supply of potable water. These efforts are to some extent undermined by financial constraints and the geographical location of the city as discussed above.

In addition, one of the mechanisms implemented by the municipal council in order to solve water problems is the Demand Water Management System (DWMS). The DWMS is a key aspect that assists the municipal council to analyse how much water is used. As part of the DWMS, the municipal council has introduced water rationing measures in both the LDSs and HDSs. My interviews with key members of the council and technocrats confirmed that the municipal council closes water supply almost on daily basis at 3pm such that whatever water is found between 3pm and 4am the following morning is water that was in the system already, so as to allow them to pump into the overnight tanks. However, people living at higher-lying areas are likely to run short of water more often than those in the lower-lying areas. At 4am, the water supply is usually opened up and everybody gets it as people go for work.

I argue, therefore, that the council of Masvingo gives the first priority to water infrastructure in terms of infrastructure development. I argue that giving the first priority to water is of utmost importance, hence the municipal council should be acknowledged and credited for that. In order to understand the sustenance of civilization, potable water creates an environment that permits human beings to survive. I view the municipal council as playing a fundamental role in providing a better life to its citizens in times of crisis.

In order to understand the condition of water infrastructure in Masvingo, in this thesis I therefore concur with the propositions put forth by Eberhard and Bernstein (1985:10-11) who argue that overpopulation as well as change in employment and lifestyle patterns impact negatively on urban infrastructure. In the case of Masvingo in particular, I have also outlined the broader political and macro-economic situation as contributing factors.

The findings seem to point to the fact that the frequent breakdown of sewer infrastructure is primarily a result of the aging infrastructure, an increasing population, and a shortfall in electricity supply. Literature provided by Mapira (2011:353) corresponds with these findings. Mapira (2011:353) argues that frequent power cuts by ZESA result in frequent sewage waste treatment breakdown. However, Mapira seems to overlook the fact that to some extent the municipal council has created a constructive relationship with ZESA to get assurance and guarantee of a stable supply of electricity to critical service delivery systems as discussed above.

4.2.2 Sewer System

Soon after independence in Zimbabwe, sewage treatment and disposal in Masvingo was efficient. According to the report of the Masvingo town engineer (1982:31), there was an excellent sewage treatment and satisfactory sewage flow in 1982. Evidence can also be drawn from Zawira (1982:24) who states that the city of Masvingo was put on the national map to the extent that heads of African states in the likes of President Don Santos of Angola, the former President Machel of Mozambique, the former President Kaunda of Zambia and the then President of Botswana Sir Seketumile Masire visited the city to witness its satisfactory performance. During the period under review, Zawira (1982:24) notes that the town council introduced a new and innovative test on sewage and effluent in order to give a better indication of the performance of sewage works. A recording device was installed in this regard. The sewage works were further upgraded in 1998. According to the Masvingo Urban Strategic Plan (2004-2008:7), the Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) plant was established in 1998 after the realization that the conventional trickling filter system commissioned soon after independence (Mapira, 2011:357) was overloaded with an increased volume of sewage from an expanding urban population. However, the 600mm sewer created to serve the High Density Suburbs (HDSs) could not cope with an increasing user need.

From the early 2000s though, population density continued to increase without further modifications to the system. At present, both the water and the sewage systems are old, poorly maintained and were not extended when urban densities increased. According to

the Masvingo Revised Strategic Development Plan (2004-2008:6), there were frequent sewer and blockage reports especially in the high density areas. However the municipal council is still financially strapped, such that it is failing to maintain the sewage treatment works capacity which increased in 1998.

It is therefore my argument that reasons for constant sewer bursts could point to the economic position of the council, which put pressure on the gap between the available resources and the community expectations. The council does not have the resources to build a dedicated power supply to the BNR plant, yet the community expects constant pumping and treatment of sewer.

My interviews with key figures in council and the administration suggest that the Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) plant in Masvingo is no longer operating efficiently. The BNR is the sewer treatment works whereby water is treated and purified before it flows back into the dam. However instead of generating nutrients which can be used for irrigation and commercial farming, raw sewerage is now being disposed in Lake Mutirikwi. In light of the above, Munashe Gambiza, a female councillor, states:

Now the BNR is no longer working and raw sewage is now flowing all over and we have been paying a lot of fines to EMA. Currently the EMA is suing the council for polluting the dam because it's almost untreated sewerage going into the dam. It also becomes expensive for us to treat again polluted dam water for it to be safe for residents to drink since a lot of chemicals are needed (Interview: Munashe Gambiza; 17/05/2014).

Noel Tavirimirwa, one of the active and influential technocrats in the municipal council adds:

Sometimes our BNR, that is, the Sewage treatment works, have been down for some time and what it means is that there is no proper treatment of sewage so they discharge into our only local water body which is Lake Mutirikwi. It means

we are polluting our own water and it is costing us to treat because of pollution which is a result of breakdown in the system and also some water bursts
(Interview: Noel Tavirimirwa; 15/07/2014).

There is a controversial relationship between the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and the Municipal council. The EMA has frequently sued the Municipal council for water and land pollution following the establishment of the Environmental Management Act (Chapter 20:27) of 2002 discussed in the first chapter. According to the literature provided by Mapira (2011:354), the EMA monitors the national environment with an eye to achieve sustainable management of natural resources. They advocate for the prevention of pollution and they curb environmental degradation through implementing the requirements of the Environmental Management Act (20: 27). Thus the council and its engineers have failed to comply with the EMA's regulations as the BNR is no longer operating appropriately. In the process, they fail to regulate untreated waste disposal into Mucheke River. Instead, raw sewage is now going back to the only source of water, Lake Mutirikwi via the Mucheke River. Mapira (2011:358) argues that poor sewage disposal is a threat to the national environmental quality. To this end, I argue that sewer disposal into Mucheke River endangers the lives and health not only that of elite urban residence but also the downstream communities in a number of ways. This kind of pollution disturbs the ecosystem, exacerbates land and water degradation resulting in loss of biodiversity.

The city of Masvingo is working towards achieving a friendly environment. Despite the socio-political and economic challenges facing the city, the council is working very hard to improve its sewer system (Masvingo Strategic Plan, 2012-2017: 12). Interviews with key figures in council and the administration and the information from municipal documents that I reviewed suggest the municipal council was and is still committed to the provision of quality municipal services to its stakeholders and residents.

According to the Masvingo Revised Strategic Plan (2004-2008:22), the city council aims at duplicating the sewer tanks and sewer line making sure that "gullies and washing

basins around structures do not drain into the sewer system.” Although these plans have been undermined by financial challenges, the City of Masvingo Strategic Plan (2012-2017:13) notes that the city is aware of these financial problems and seeks to continue with the same project of the duplication of another sewer line. If this project is done, the disposal of raw sewer into Mucheke River will be reduced, at the same time reducing fines to be paid to EMA.

The major challenge in the sewer service section is the regular power cuts to the BNR treatment plant. In this regard, the council is aiming at increasing the power availability and refurbishment of the ZESA substations close to the BNR although this might take time due to economic constraints.

Social factors also play a role in the current sewer system problems. My interviews with key figures in council and the administration suggest that recently city of Masvingo residents were faced with a health threat, as disposable nappies were dumped into the sewer system, blocking sewer pipes and resulting in frequent sewer bursts being reported. My findings are backed up by Chitagu (2014) who reports the worrying sentiments of the Masvingo Mayor on poor and improper disposal of nappies in the sewer systems and the Mucheke River. Disposable nappies are not like liquid which can be absorbed easily. It results in the blockage of sewer pipes. To this effect, the city of Masvingo introduced educational campaigns working towards improving the environmental quality. The city council has introduced education campaigns to conscientise the Masvingo residents to desist from blocking the residential sewer system with disposable nappies and sand which they use for cleaning pots at the household level.

I have focused on the perspectives of the council and technocrats on urban infrastructure challenges. Now I am moving to the perspectives of ward-based councillors and residents of both the HDSs and LDSs.

4.3 Urban infrastructure conditions on the ground: High Density Suburbs

The situation in the Masvingo High Density Suburbs (HDSs) is similar to any other High Density Suburb in Zimbabwean cities. The HDS Mucheke is divided into 5 sections namely *Manjange, Yeukai, Sisk, West* and *Pangolin*. I recruited interviewees across all 5 of these sections with the intention of understanding the infrastructure conditions and how the community responds. Generally I discovered that infrastructure conditions in these sections are deplorable. Masvingo is a city in transition that has witnessed rapid population growth for the past 3 decades as discussed in the previous chapter. As people migrate into city, many seem to settle in HDSs for economic reasons. I further argue that economically, life in the Masvingo HDSs is cheap and for this reason most of the working class prefers staying in this density and as a result the population of HDSs is high relative to the LDSs. There are very low water bills, rentals and cheap accommodation available in HDSs. In support of the aforementioned view, in an interview with a very active member in community development, Jessica Ngore reported as follows:

...our water rates are very low...at my house we are just paying \$28 (approximately R300) or so for the whole month...for the fixed users, those who are doing construction and so on just \$8 (approximately R100) a month but I can see the volume of water that they use for moulding of bricks, construction and so on, “slabbing” and so on it’s quite a lot such that I don’t think the municipality is gaining anything out of that... (Interview: Jessica Ngore; 13/05/2014).

Building on Jessica Ngore’s account, it seems important to note how the municipal council has set very low bills in HDSs. I argue that reasons for low bills could point to the fact that they are aware of differences in class structure of urban residents, as well as the deprived economic positions of most residents in the HDSs. It is my argument that as the gap between the affluent and the middle class is shrinking; the poor class is expanding because of the socio-economic situation in Zimbabwe. As such, many people stay in the HDSs where life is affordable, owing to the country’s economic

predicaments discussed in the first chapter. To this end, Masvingo HDSs is mostly inhabited by poor and working class residents as well as rural migrants. People tend to settle in HDSs merely because of lower and affordable rentals created by the municipal council. However there is also a mushrooming of more affluent and elite classes staying in the HDSs, who also want to enjoy the benefits of very low rentals. Most of them respond positively, although there are also some negative responses, to the aforementioned infrastructure challenges as shall be discussed in the next chapter.

4.3.1 Water

Accessing water is one of the problems encountered by HDSs residents. In this research I argue that in urban Masvingo, water tends to lose its quality and meaning in serving the community. Ratepayers in Masvingo are much concerned and anxious about water quality in Masvingo. In my interview with Johannes Machinya, a member of the Committee of Council had the following to say with regards to water quality in his ward:

Water is supposed to be odourless and is supposed to be colourless but we started to smell some odours in the water, even the taste, water is supposed to be tasteless but it developed some taste and some smell and the like... at times we would get water that is purely clean and at times there were elements of that odour. (Interview: Johannes Machinya; 17/05/2014)

Joyline Dube, an active member and founder of a local Community Based Organization in the HDSs, shared the same sentiments:

Our water is actually in a very bad shape. Sometimes tap water comes with a certain colour and smell which you don't understand. Sometimes it comes up with rust and it's like we are now drinking raw sewer. We don't even know whether they are treating our drinking water or not. A few weeks ago there was an outbreak of diarrhoea and we ended up boiling our water before drinking. I strongly believe that the municipal council is responsible the poor delivery of

water in our city and maximum attention is needed (Interview: Joyline Dube; 15/05/2014).

The end result of lack of access to safe water and improper sewage disposal is the widespread ill-health and the spread of routine water borne diseases. As noted by the WHO (2008:15), the absence of toilets and clean water acts as a catalyst in the transmission of parasites, viruses and bacteria found in “human excreta which... contaminate water resources, soil and food.” As such, the urban ratepayers are aware of this mismanagement and fear another disastrous cholera outbreak like that of 2008 – 2009, which claimed more than 1,900 lives. As such, they employ different response mechanisms to withstand these pressures and avoid predictable catastrophe as will be discussed in the next chapter.

Although residents mentioned poor quality of water and water shortage in the HDSs, there is evidence of municipal action in solving water problems in the HDSs. In August 2014, when the level of water in Lake Mutirikwi was very low, the City council used the last available resources to supply potable water to its residents. Figure 3 shows the council’s department of water using the council fire engine to supply water to the urban residents. I argue that Masvingo town council always uses the last resources they have to save the interest of its HDSs residents.

Fig 3: Fire engine to supply water to urban residents



Source: Wezhira (2010)

Building from this evidence, I argue that the municipal council of Masvingo is doing the best despite difficult economic circumstances. In times of economic downturn and social crisis, the municipal council used every resource necessary to supply essential basic necessities to its residents.

4.3.2 Sewer System

Another problem that persists in HDSs is frequent sewer bursts. The elite ratepayers in HDSs complain a lot more about sewer infrastructure than those from the LDSs. The accounts of Vimbai Chirandu and Stanford Malava provide a good example of these disparities in relation to the different ways elites from two densities understand sewer problems. In my interview with Vimbai Chirandu, an elite resident who has been staying in a particular HDS ward for almost 37 years, he explained this problem as follows:

...people like us living in High residential areas are suffering a lot. Our infrastructure conditions are worse than before independence... Instead of

celebrating independence people are suffering more. Sewer bursts have now increased ever since the 1980s. Here in Mucheke, sewage is flowing all over the streets yet it's supposed to follow the designated pipelines... (Interview: Vimbai Chirandu; 13/05/2014).

Comparatively, Stanford Malava, an elite urban ratepayer from the LDSs, had this to say:

Sewer wise it's not a problem here in Rhoden, I don't know in Mucheke and Rujeko... In our side here we don't have sewer problems but we only hear some people saying that they are now releasing that sewage stuff into Kyle dam, so I hear (Interview: Stanford Malava; 16/05/2014).

Elite urban ratepayers from two different residential spaces therefore have different perceptions with regards to the condition of sewer infrastructure. In the Rhoden low density residential area, there are no frequent sewer bursts compared to the high density residential areas. The reason could be that in Rhoden the population size and density is very low compared to the Mucheke and Rujeko high density areas. I therefore concur with Yameogo *et al* (2014:3) on the fact that separate development is a result of the prioritization of infrastructure development based on class interests. Yameogo *et al* (2014:3) argues that elite groups, primarily those who control the economy, have greater influence with regards to the prioritization of infrastructure development, resulting in selective infrastructure investment. That is the reason why elites do not complain a lot about infrastructure problems, they influence decisions through institutional networks in which they benefit as shall be discussed in the next chapter. As I will explain later, although there are elites in both LDSs and HDSs, most influential people I interviewed for my study are based in the LDSs including most members of the MBAB. To this end, the roads in the LDSs are in a better condition as evidenced by resurfacing and the influence of MBAB members living there. I argue that some of the better road conditions that members of the LDSs have, they have accrued on the back

of the fact that the LDSs was colonially designed. Some of the benefits accrued because of continued influence and links.

While the findings seem to point to the fact that sewer conditions in the low and high density suburbs are not the same, literature provided by Mapira (2011) seems to differ. Mapira (2011:353) generalizes the malfunction of the sewer system in urban Masvingo. Sewer infrastructure in the Rhoden LDS is still performing well with no blockages, no sewer bursts and the sewer facilities built during the Rhodesian era are still coping with the current residential population. In the low density area, there is still a state of equilibrium between sewer infrastructure and the user need as compared to the HDSs.

4.3.3 Lack of connectivity

Based on my fieldwork experience, observation and interviews conducted, I argue that the High Density Suburbs (HDSs) lack reliable *connectivity* as evidenced by poor roads and lack of link-bridges connecting the HDSs and CBD. Safe and well maintained bridges and roads are essential urban infrastructure that assist inhabitants to live a productive life. In addition to issues of connectivity, mechanical faults, traffic congestion and accidents also impact negatively on residents of the HDSs.

4.3.3.1 Bridges

The Mucheke HDS and the CBD is geographically separated by the Mucheke River. However, there is lack of bridges to connect the Masvingo HDSs and the CBD. There is only one main bridge (Figure 4) connecting these two distinct areas. The other bridge (Known as *Chimusana Bridge*), shown in Figure 5, is very small such that during the rainy season, water overflows forcing everyone to use the main bridge. Furthermore *Chimusana Bridge* cannot accommodate any heavy vehicles because of its size.

Fig 4: Main bridge connecting the HDSs and the CBD

Fig 5: Car swept away at *Chimusana* Bridge



Fig 4 source: Author

Fig 5 source: Gagare (2014)

During peak hours, there is a lot of traffic congestion on the main link-bridge (Figure 4) since pedestrians and motorists prefer it as the only reliable bridge connecting the HDSs and the CBD. During peak hours motorists face lots of challenges to connect the HDSs and the city centre. Most of my respondents were particular about the need to construct a new high level bridge to ease traffic congestion during peak hours. The focus here is on how more bridges can enhance better connectivity principally during peak hours. In an interview with an elite urban ratepayer, a medical doctor by profession, who has been staying for a number of years in Masvingo, Tafadzwa Ndebvu, argues:

...there is always traffic jam when you come to town every morning. We have got only one link-bridge to town from the location... So if the council can only prioritize that then that was going to ease problems of traffic congestion...they

must build a high level bridge at Chimusana to ease the transport situation into town from different ends of the town (Interview: Tafadzwa Ndebvu; 16/05/2014).

Commenting on the importance of construction a high-level bridge to replace *Chimusana* Bridge, an elite urban ratepayer from the LDS, Stanford Malava, had this to say:

...there is Chimusana Bridge which is a low level bridge in times of heavy rain that bridge is of no use at all. So the construction of a new bridge is very important and should be given the first priority when it comes to development. If we have at least two bridges, this will reduce traffic congestion into the CBD (Interview: Stanford Malava; 12/07/2014).

In an interview with the HDS councillor, Munashe Gambiza, he added:

We try to encourage people to use those feeder roads especially during peak hours. It's one of the major challenges especially when the main roads are congested. So these ease congestion...We even encourage people in the morning to use Chimusana because of the traffic jam (sic)(Interview: Munashe Gambiza; 17/05/2014).

The rising residential expansions in the HDSs mean more demand for more resources and socio-economic services provided by the CBD. In Masvingo, reliable medical centre and experts of the city, for example, bureaucrats, lawyers and doctors operate their businesses in the CBD. To this end, elite residents residing in the HDSs face immense challenges in connecting to the CBD during peak hours. In this regard, a plethora of development priorities have been identified by the municipal council aiming to stimulate development creating credibility in the eyes of its residents (The City of Masvingo Strategic Plan, 2012:10). Currently the municipal council has key future plans to construct high level *Chimusana* Bridge for the benefit of its residents. Theoretically this

is a noble effort to address traffic congestion enabling better connectivity. However, practically the implementation of the project is a challenge due to economic constraints.

4.3.3.2 Poor roads

The road conditions in the HDSs are a very big problem. My interviews with elite urban ratepayers from the HDSs suggest that the Masvingo council repaired the main ways in the HDSs, but it failed to attend to small streets. There are a lot of potholes which have become difficult for drivers to negotiate. The condition of roads in the HDSs as shown in Figure 6 is miserable. In my interview with one of the elite residents in the HDSs, Jessica Ngore, she argues:

The roads are a very big problem. The main ways have been repaired and have been actually put in place. When you start diverting into small streets from the main way, normally they are not attended to in time. There are potholes yes they are potholes and we don't enjoy using those streets when driving. Maybe the pedestrians might not notice that but drivers face problems when they get to that. You have to be very cautious when driving and normally we drive at a very slow speed, less than 20km/hr in some instances. Even the sides of the roads, they are not attended to such that if you want to make a guard in to your house you have to do it from the gate to the main road they don't do it for you. I noticed we had problems when it was raining very heavily (Interview: Jessica Ngore; 12/07/2014).

From the foregoing, one can argue that the council only repairs the main way whereas the small streets into the residential areas are not attended to. Chigwenya and Ndlovu (2012:4) states that the Masvingo town council introduced traffic calming measures such as humps and speed tables in order for drivers to reduce speed “without the involvement of the police.” Traffic calming measures normally improve not only the safety of motorist but also cyclist and pedestrians. According to Chigwenya and Ndlovu (2012:5), it is the mandate of the town engineers to design and alter the traffic calming measures. However, in this research, I argue that this is not by design but by implication

that traffic is calmed by potholes. In the small roads, drivers are naturally forced to drive at a very slow speed, less than 20km/hour in some instances even though the considerable speed limit in the HDSs is 60km/hour. This is a deplorable situation, impacting on the productivity and viability of the city.

Fig 6: Roads in High Density Suburbs (HDSs)



Source: Author

In the Masvingo HDSs, potholes are attributed to lack of road maintenance (for example resurfacing), rainfall impact and aging road infrastructure with poor drainage of roads. There is a plethora of mechanical and socioeconomic consequences of potholes to both elite urban ratepayers and motorists in the HDSs in general. In an interview with Kudakwashe Zwana, an elite resident who have been staying in a particular HDSs wards for 15 years, he noted:

To start with roads; when I started staying in Masvingo our roads were looking good but now the condition is miserable. Potholes are everywhere in the location and drivers having to be very cautious when driving. In some cases drivers have to drive in the wrong side of the lane avoiding potholes yet this causes accidents. Last month a grade 3 student was injured when the driver of a Toyota Ipsum tried to avoid hitting a pothole and went straight to hit this student who was coming from school. Even our government is failing to solve these problems (Interview: Kudakwashe Zwana; 15/05/14).

A retired pensioner from the HDS, Edmore Chitukutuku, added:

Generally with road infrastructure we have challenge. Road maintenance is there but limited. You find some of the roads especially when it's raining you can't drive through. During rainy season motorists can't see these potholes and can easily bump into it. At the end of the day mechanically it's a challenge to our vehicles. Some of them are closed up and you can't drive through. There are a lot of potholes. There was a time when we had the city council repairing a road in Mucheke whereby there were putting some humps and it was a challenge for use when driving because they were so steep. I don't know the engineers who set up these (Interview: Edmore Chitukutuku; 13/05/2014).

While the findings point to the mechanical and socio-economic impacts of potholes to elite urban ratepayers, literature provided by Mutekwa et al (2012:5) and Tigere

(2011:1) seem to converge. A study by Mutekwa et al (2012:5) in a comparable city of Gweru in Zimbabwe, motorists complain of the mechanical impacts of potholes resulting in them spending much money on repairing ball joints, the replacement of bending rims and on tyre punctures. In Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe, potholes claimed 42 people after a rear tyre burst (Tigere, 2011:1). The convergence could point to the fact that town councils in Zimbabwe are facing macro-economic challenges which ultimately affects their prioritization of expenditures. An elite resident, Tafadzwa Ndebvu states:

...the way the council prioritizes may be a challenge. That which the residents expect might not be the expectations of the council. I have seen because they are certain issues which they do, which we feel as residents they might not have done that first before attending to activity A or B (Interview: Tafadzwa Ndebvu; 16/05/2014).

As urban development councils are responsible for road maintenance and rehabilitation, they are financially strapped. As such the little finance resources available will be channelled to basic and critical amenities such as water and health services with little attention to small roads in the HDSs. Thus, I conclude that the financial crisis has become a national structural problem in the quest for town councils to effectively administer their aging road infrastructure.

4.3.3.2.1 'Dustification' of tarred roads

The rate at which roads are deteriorating in the HDSs has resulted in tarred roads escalating into dust roads. Figure 4.4 shows how tarred roads designed and completed in January 1982 (Zawira, 1982:30) are deteriorating into dust roads. According to Zawira (1982:30), the road system in Muccheke East were constructed and completed in 1982. Since then, up to the year 2000, roads in the HDSs were still maintained by the municipal council. However things started to deteriorate after the millennium period due to political and economic reasons that had a great impact on local authorities' management plans. Commenting on the rate at which roads in the HDSs are deteriorating, Munashe Gambiza, a councillor in one of the HDS wards notes:

Our roads are deteriorating even in the new locations. There are no tarred roads so it's a health hazard zone. There is a lot of dust, lot of pollution. Those roads in the town are deteriorating, and developing potholes. In some areas you can't even see the tar even though tar is there it's all covered with dust. I think the council should do something to rehabilitate these roads because these conditions are not safe for our health (Interview: Munashe Gambiza; 17/05/2014).

Dust roads are hazardous to human health. According to EPA (2010:1), airborne dust can aggravate “lung-related conditions such as asthma when inhaled through the nose or mouth.” Building on the works of EPA (2010) I argue that the components of mineral dust like phyllosilicates, clay minerals and quartz minerals contributes to lung-related diseases. To this end, the residents of Masvingo's HDSs, primarily those close to dust roads, are staying in a health-threatening environment. Their situation is exacerbated by traffic-generated dust. Traffic-related dust has a significant impact not only on the residents per se but on road users as well. My study findings therefore correspond to a quantitative cross-sectional study by Greening (2011:3) in Washington. Greening (2011:3) argues that traffic-generated dust is a serious environmental hazard with severe impact on the health of the residents. To this effect I argue that in the Masvingo HDSs, tarred roads are deteriorating in terms of quality and escalating into dust roads, creating environmental conditions that are a hazard to human health.

4.3.4 Other social amenities

In this study, I argue that local community facilities such as libraries, clinics, schools, shops, churches and community halls assist in the creation of a sustainable community through creating shared community activities and a sense of belonging. In Masvingo, social amenities such as community halls have depreciated at an unprecedented rate. In an interview with an elite urban ratepayer, Edmore Chitukutuku narrates:

I strongly blame the municipal council for the dilapidation of our current infrastructure. As I am speaking, the community halls and community beer halls have been closed for example the one close to Mucheke Rank. We do not even understand what's going on with our Municipal council... there is no development on our buildings we are still at the same level from where we used to be 20 years ago. In fact some time back the conditions of our building infrastructure were better than what we have now (Interview: Edmore Chitukutuku; 12/07/2014).

In addition, another HDS resident, Charity Hama adds:

I think the council should really try harder than what they are doing to ensure that the current infrastructure is refurbished to meet the standards because now, just citing an example of the residential houses and council hostels I was talking about, It's so sad given that these are like infrastructure owned by the local authorities but you will find it's so dilapidated and there is no development in progress and no refurbishment occurring at places like that. Same goes for the community beer halls (Interview: Charity Hama; 13/07/2014).

In order to embed this analysis in historical context as well as within an analysis of spatiality, Zawira (1982:16) argues that soon after independence, 24 sites covering a combined area of 6.05 hectares (4.31% of the total area site) were set aside for community facilities, 3000m² for a clinic, 2500m² for a library and 22.08 hectares reserved for sporting facilities. There was also space reserved for the construction of public toilets, markets and shopping stands. This was a noble proposal for the Mucheke High density area. However, the implementation and monitoring of these projects were a challenge. No new community beer halls and libraries were built for the period after independence. According to the city of Masvingo Strategic Plan (2012:41), the few community libraries in Mucheke HDS are poorly maintained and inadequately stocked and the recreational facilities poorly maintained.

One can observe that undesirable infrastructure thwarts potential economic growth and abates international competitiveness thereby undermining a country's economic growth and adherence to international standards, especially in terms of the worth and value of the infrastructure. Poor infrastructure management impacts negatively on residents' safety, health and education. Thus, there is a positive correlation between infrastructure problems and overall quality of human life. According to Gukurume (2012:4), lack of access to basic social amenities results in residents sitting on 'a health time bomb'. This research paper concurs and adds that long term social cost, for example, mental health issues and isolation are mainly a result of not having adequate social amenities.

4.4 Low Density Suburbs (LDSs)

In Masvingo, previously Fort Victoria, all suburbs were designed as low density residential areas. They were originally for settlers. I have already outlined that the council has a project to increase densification. I have also argued that there is a double strategy, in that LDSs and HDSs areas face different challenges. However some of the infrastructure challenges, such as water quality and electricity shortages, are similar in both the HDSs and LDSs communities. The LDSs face water complexities similar to their HDSs counterparts. In my view, this is principally because these two distinct densities share the same water source and water purification plant (Bushmead Water works). Furthermore the two different areas (HDSs and LDSs) both rely on electricity services offered by the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA), which is a government parastatal in charge of generating, transmitting, and distributing electricity particularly in Masvingo and in Zimbabwe at large. For this reason, the two communities share same electricity shortages. There are however some aspects relating to infrastructure that are distinctive to the LDSs. These are discussed below.

4.4.1 Densification of the low density space

In my view, Infrastructure quality in the low density suburbs (LDSs) is achieved through implementation of a densification approach in order to create an appealing urban environment. As I have discussed earlier, the vision of the city of Masvingo is to ensure a "prosperous, sustainable and environmentally friendly city" (UN HABITAT, 2012:4).

From the municipal council perspective, I argue that the densification implemented by the city council planners, local authorities and technicians assist in creating a sustainable environment.

Arnberger (2012:717) argues that urban densification is capable of presenting socio-economic benefits such as reduced land consumption for settlement and mounting public transport efficiency. In this regard, the roads in the LDSs are wide to accommodate traffic flow during off and peak hours. Therefore, an increasing fragmenting economy in Zimbabwe has made it difficult for the municipal council to effectively administer the densification strategy.

The municipal council has a strategy of densification and it concerns all LDSs including new ones. In some LDSs the council has included apartment building and in some including rezoning of public spaces. In my particular area, Rhoden, they are rezoning and putting on extra residential stands. Although there are pockets with potholes in the LDSs, generally road quality is better than it is in the HDSs. Commenting on road and housing infrastructure, Stanford Malava, an elite resident from one of the LDSs argues:

As far as our Rhoden side is concerned, if there is any problem the council look into the problem with caution and care...The infrastructure is not that bad besides shortages of water which runs out, some pockets of potholes and sewer burst but not always. Of course in some sections the roads are bad but you can find some sections which are quite ok. I think in the area where I stay its average. It's not as bad (Interview: Stanford Malava; 16/05/2014).

Masvingo is just a small town relative to other cities in Zimbabwe. During the colonial era, the LDS Rhoden was for whites, but because of independence the black majority are now able to stay in this area. This means the resources have had to be stretched to meet an increasing population. The municipal council has increased the use of this space with new developments such as the resurfacing of roads and increasing density by building flats to accommodate an increasing population. Yet, besides water

shortages and electricity blackouts, generally infrastructure conditions in the LDSs are better than in the HDSs. Nonetheless, when the quality of infrastructure and services is compared to the period soon after independence, these have seen demise primarily as a result of economic reasons.

In my view, one of the main reasons undermining effective densification in Masvingo the role played by government parastatals. Government parastatals such as ZINARA are not remitting back to local authorities hence the municipal council finds it extremely difficult to find resources to repair the roads. In an interview with a newly appointed LDS councillor, Johannes Machinya argues:

We don't even know whether we are going to get something this year or not. So ZINARA thinks a big council like this can survive with \$14 000.00 throughout the year which I think is very stupid, sorry to say this but it shows lack of reasoning. They are abusing funds which should be channelled to development. Urban councils used to collect car revenues but since 2011 the government took this power into the hands of private parastatals – ZINARA. So money which we once used to repair our roads is now going to ZINARA. This year ZINARA only managed to give us \$14 000.00 and last year we had nothing. So you see it's actually a big problem than what people anticipate. (Interview: Johannes Machinya; 17/05/2014)

As discussed in the first chapter, Zimbabwe National Road Administration (ZINARA) is a government parastatal instituted in 2002 in terms of the road Act Chapter 13:18 (ZINARA 2012:1). It endeavours to ensure a high-quality road network system nationwide, monitoring, implementing and evaluating road maintenance. In the course of decentralization, ZINARA was bestowed full authority to control traffic revenues and taxis which previously was the duty of local rural and urban councils. In this regard, local councils are financially strapped since they no longer have income generating projects besides collecting rentals. Thus, densification of LDSs is undermined by the re-

centralization policies. This has financially harmed the municipal council; abate its capacity to lucratively execute the densification strategy.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have engaged with fieldwork data, documents and relevant secondary literature in order to provide an overview and analysis of urban infrastructure conditions in post-independence Masvingo. In post-independence Masvingo, infrastructure has deteriorated significantly compared to the first two decades after independence. Urban infrastructure conditions in the Low Density Suburbs (LDSs) appear to be at variance with those in High Density Suburbs (HDSs). Infrastructure in the LDSs is relatively better than in the HDS spaces. Reasons could point to class interests and the prioritization of infrastructure development resulting in selective infrastructure investment as I have discussed above. Elite groups, primarily those who control the economy from the LDSs, have greater influence with regards to the administration of urban infrastructure. I also argued that infrastructure problems such as sewer bursts and increasing deterioration of roads resulting in potholes are attributed to a lack of maintenance (for example resurfacing), rainfall impact and aging infrastructure.

CHAPTER 5:

THE PRAGMATISM OF COPING STRATEGIES:

Surviving in a disintegrating urban infrastructure environment

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on urban infrastructure problems and the socio-economic challenges preventing the municipal council and other stakeholders from creating a working, sustainable and attractive environment in Masvingo. Accordingly, the previous chapter demonstrated that infrastructure conditions in urban Masvingo have depreciated significantly compared to the first two decades after independence in Zimbabwe. This chapter is based on my fieldwork period, which included personal observation and seventeen (17) semi-structured interviews that I conducted. The main thrust of this chapter is to explore the coping strategies employed by elite urban ratepayers in order to withstand their prolonged infrastructure problems. The central argument here is that elite urban ratepayers make use of different individual and collective coping and resilience strategies in order to endure infrastructure problems discussed in the previous chapter. Constant engagement with key institutions such as MURRA, MBAB and CBOs represents a fundamental and on-going strategy for the elite urban ratepayers in Masvingo. In addition, access to countryside resources such as fire wood, use of alternative fuel sources like gas and wood, and reliance on community as well as household boreholes constitute the key coping strategies adopted by elite urban ratepayers. In explaining the broad range of practices adopted by elite urban ratepayers, I view coping strategies in Masvingo as a pursuit of the autonomous interest of individuals or a class/group (whether business people or residents in a particular area). Although these are autonomous pursuits based on class interest, I argue that some of the coping strategies adopted at institutional level do not harm but benefit the society at large.

5.2 Investments in urban institutional networks

Elite urban ratepayers in Masvingo make use of institutions such as the Masvingo United Ratepayers Association (MURRA), the Masvingo Business Advisory Board

(MBAB) and a number of community-based organizations (CBOs) to cope with infrastructure problems. In my work, I found that urban elites constantly utilize the aforementioned institutions as a practical reaction to the tormenting infrastructure conditions in urban Masvingo. As discussed below, MBAB is doing interesting things on the one hand but it also looks closely to its own interest. This research found that CBOs perhaps play a positive role on the whole relative to MURRA and MBAB. Although there are some critics of MBAB, MURRA and CBOs, and some of the critiques may be grounded, I argue that in contemporary urban Masvingo, it is better to have the aforementioned three institutions than not.

5.2.1 Masvingo Business Advisory Board (MBAB)

In this research project, I argue that present-day Zimbabwe comes across as an incredibly nonviolent and peaceful society relative to other Southern African countries such as South Africa, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo, etcetera. If pockets of violence and demonstrations occur, the state makes use of repressive state apparatuses, such as riot police, in order to maintain order and peace. Other Southern African countries and countries located in parts of central and West Africa, for instance, Nigeria, the Ivory Coast and Senegal, utilize violence as well as aggressive and belligerent procedures such as burning tires and other forms of physical force to send their message to responsible authorities. However, in Zimbabwe, violence and demonstrations are rare, if they take place at all. Reasons for the more peaceful ways of conveying messages to authorities adopted by Zimbabweans could be linked to the draconian laws put in place by the political rulers. The post-independence government implemented laws that many critics perceive as draconian, namely; the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) established in 2002. The two Acts were established with the intention of preventing illicit demonstrations and gatherings, whilst simultaneously maintaining the status quo of the ruling elites. Any gathering or demonstration involving more than five people should be approved by the state through the police department. The effectiveness of the aforementioned repressive state laws is accomplished through force by the riot police and national army in order to suffocate any unauthorized

gathering and demonstration. Any organization or individual with the intention to perform a formal demonstration has to apply for consent and normally it is difficult to get permission. As life became hard, Zimbabwean citizens have come up with mechanisms to stay alive other than to opt for demonstrations and violence. Amongst a plethora of coping mechanisms employed by residents, the majority of elite urban ratepayers included in this study indicated that they prefer working with the Masvingo Business Advisory Board (MBAB), since the institution seems to be more professional and efficient than other institutions such as the Masvingo United Residents and Ratepayers Association (MURRA). They resort to peaceful strategies of engagement in this regard. My interviews with key members of the MBAB suggest that through the institution, elite urban ratepayers contribute ideas, knowledge and technocratic expertise to the municipal council. Commenting on improvisations by the business community, Tichaona Nyere one of the LDS elite urban ratepayers, recounts that:

...contributions in terms of ideas yes, the business advisory board helps to advise the council in terms of business so that when the council is making their decisions, they incorporate such people so that they bring their views... in terms of communication system Masvingo is at a high level we have managed to upgrade the council's website for easy communication. Our level of communication is excellent. Through the business forum online communication was improved and new technological ways of communication improved. Right now you can get and check your water bill statement online. If there is any query you want to report you can do so online (Interview: Tichaona Nyere; 17/05/2014).

Tichaona Nyere is amongst the elite urban ratepayers who have been active participants in the MBAB for the past 7 years. Elite urban ratepayers in Masvingo indicated that they frequently make use of the MBAB to endure and relieve their prolonged infrastructure problems. For example, during the economic downturn, the municipal council had reached a point where it failed to supply basic forms of communication for its residents. When residents were confronted with sewer or water

bursts, it took time for the municipal council to respond to the problem as a result of poor communication. Elite ratepayers, through the MBAB, contributed resources and expertise to improve the council's website for easy communication. Thus, Tichaona Nyere's case is a remarkable example of how elite urban ratepayers, primarily those in the MBAB and drawn from both high and low density residential areas, persist in creating active urban institutional networks in their everyday struggles in an infrastructure-fragmenting city. Supporting the municipal council in upgrading the communication website accelerated the rate at which their infrastructure problems could be addressed.

In addition to ideas and technological support, individual members within the MBAB reported that they have offered training courses to municipal technocrats, including administrative and casual workers. A group of local urban elite ratepayers from the MBAB recounted that they offer short training courses to the municipality. Currently, they have trained more than two hundred (200) municipal workers on public relations matters, environmental health affairs and good sanitation practice and presented certificates of completion. The training is funded by individual members from the MBAB, such as the owner of Miles Truck and Car Hire. These individual members use the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) premises to offer person-centred training to all municipal departments, such as the health, housing and fire departments. A facilitator during the training programmes, Jessica Ngore noted that the idea started in early 2013 amongst individual members of the MBAB. In her own words, the main aim of the short training courses was *"...to make sure all council leaders understand and analyse trends, predicting consequences of their actions, counselling residents or leaders who might come with any problem related to the municipality's action, for example poor service delivery..."* (Interview: Jessica Ngore; 13/05/2014). According to Jessica Ngore, the training is very effective and has produced plausible results benefiting the Masvingo urban residents in terms of infrastructure support. I tend to concur with these conclusions based on my own experience and observations during fieldwork. For example, in terms of service delivery, I noted that there is a significant change in Masvingo (in the LDSs as well as some parts of HDSs) as evidenced by

quick responses to sewer blockages ever since the training was launched to the municipal administration. In particular, ever since the training was introduced to the municipal technocrats, they have been able to form an Environmental Management Board which works intimately with Environmental Management Agency (EMA). The board plays a supervisory role with regards to infrastructure problem such as sewer burst hazards to the inhabitants. However, it is my argument that the effectiveness of the board is undermined by financial problems that are threatening their management autonomy.

Basically these actions demonstrate a mutually cooperative relationship between the MBAB and the municipal council in terms of rehabilitation, sanitation and public relations programmes. In addition to the aforementioned programmes, in mid-2013, representatives of the MBAB went to Beitbridge (a border town in the southern province of Zimbabwe) for a workshop organized by the United Nations and came up with strategic plans for the city development. Such workshops have helped the municipality of Masvingo to amalgamate, categorize and develop infrastructure resilience strategies for the benefit of the residents at large.

Moreover, the MBAB attends interactive weekly and quarterly meetings with the municipal council and the Masvingo Mayor. Through the aforementioned interactive meetings, bylaws such as the vehicle exclusion zone were initiated and eventually approved. The law prohibits heavy vehicles of more than four (4) tonnes to enter the CBD in order to ease traffic congestion and protect roads. The MBAB believes that maximum acceptable load of trucks and buses are mostly exceeded by these commercial vehicles, which results in the destruction of pavement roads. For this reason, I argue that the only possible option to accomplish their goal (their referring to the elite urban ratepayers) and to survive a constraining environment was to create new collective identity, that is, MBAB. Recognizing the role played by the MBAB makes it crystal clear how infrastructure development and socio-economic benefits to the city at large obtain due to collective participation.

However, elite urban ratepayers within the MBAB should not be treated as a homogeneous group. According to my study, a small number of these appear not to be concerned with existing structures (municipal council and environmental concerns) and infrastructure conditions. Even though they are affiliates of the MBAB, this distinctive group acts against the socially expected behaviour and actions. For this reason, it is argued that this distinctive group opts for environmental degradation as a coping strategy, aggravating rather than assisting the municipal council improving the existing infrastructure. For example, I observed that the medium and small scale companies at Sisk shopping centre in Mucheke HDS have coupled with local vendors to form a dumping space at the back of their shopping centre following the municipality's failure to consistently collect refuse within their locality. Surprisingly, the owners of these medium and small scale companies at Sisk shopping centre are also members of the MBAB. The opening of an unauthorized dumping site is hazardous not only to inhabitants but results in the deterioration of soil quality and provides a threat to the vegetation. Dumping solid waste endanger human health, especially considering the fact that the shopping centre is positioned very close to the high density residential areas. Nevertheless, these anti-social actions by some MBAB members are small-scale and therefore seem to me not to undermine the legitimacy and success of urban institutional networks. Generally, the MBAB as an institution has made significant contributions to bringing about a long-standing peace between elite residents and the municipal council in so far as solving infrastructure problems is concerned.

5.2.2 MURRA

According to Musekiwa and Chatiza (2015:127), the Masvingo United Residents and Ratepayers Association⁴ (MURRA) is a membership-based association that was formed in 2004. It is the only residents and ratepayer's association in Masvingo which draws its mandate from membership. Commenting on the history and structure of MURRA,

⁴I cannot establish the number of members in the Masvingo United Residents and Ratepayers Association but theoretically this is an organization linked to property ownership of various residents from the 10 wards. However my sense is that active members of the association are between 200-300 members. According to Musekiwa and Chatiza (2015:127), in 2013, only 43.3% of property holders paid their membership in full, that is, US\$1 joining fee and an annual subscription fee of US\$1.

Nyasha Madzivanyika who has served for more than 5 years as a member of the MURRA management committee notes that the main aim of the association is to ensure active citizen participation in the municipal council's budget making processes, budget implementation processes and budget monitoring. In addition, Nyasha Madzivanyika adds that the association offers ward-based budget meetings and consultative meetings connecting service providers, such as the municipal council, and other government parastatals like ZESA and ZINWA. Thus, elite urban ratepayers, through individual and collective agency, exploit their institutional position in MURRA, since they are also part of the structure, in the quest for better governance and improved infrastructure.

There is a distinct group of elite urban ratepayers who are business owners and therefore eligible for participation in the business forum yet they are not members of the MBAB. It is my argument, based on observation, that some of these elite urban ratepayers, predominantly residents from the high density suburbs, view the MBAB institution as merely serving the hegemonic ideas and the interests of the business community rather than infrastructure problems per se. They (referring to non-MBAB elite residents) are mainly concerned with the system of representation in which certain ideas and thoughts adopted by the municipal council correspond to the MBAB collective economic interest and status quo. To this end, this distinctive group prefers to work closely with a membership-based ratepayers association, the Masvingo United Residents and Ratepayers Association (MURRA) together with other residents from different wards.

From the perspective of MURRA, the association is able to deliver on the mandate from members in the kinds of ways it is delivering. The existence of MURRA has presented a prolific ground for social interaction for the benefit of various citizens. Citizens are able to secure infrastructure benefits from the municipal council by virtue of their membership in MURRA, an association which provides both social and infrastructure support. Sometimes MURRA is successful in solving resident complaints.

Elite urban ratepayers in Masvingo see themselves as having an intensive institutional-based support (i.e. MURRA-based support) in this regard. Through MURRA, residents have access to and a supplementary advantage in advancing infrastructure support. The main avenue through which such access is granted is through ward-based meetings. If, for example, a resident complains about infrastructure problems, such as a sewer burst, MURRA more often than not takes action within the quickest possible time because of social attachment to its members. In addition, residents from ward 1 around Mucheke terminus and *Chikato* area and parts of ward 2 in the region of *Makuva* Street face infrastructure problems more often than any other residents in urban Masvingo. These residents use community toilets and their houses are owned by the municipality, which is not maintaining the aged infrastructure. The paint is peeling off and the sewer system is no longer working to its maximum capacity as evidenced by frequent blockages. Yet these residents pay monthly rates to the Masvingo urban council. MURRA, however, frequently provides institutional support working as a mouthpiece confronting the municipal council to address the challenges faced by these residents. Thus the majority of my research participants concurred that there is a positive relationship between MURRA and residents.

Although in some cases there is a low turn-out, the fact that residents are invited to budgetary meetings shows the extent to which MURRA is concerned with the Masvingo residents. The institution has created a platform to which residents can bring their suggestions and contributions to be discussed in council meetings, although their bargaining power is limited. During meetings with the Masvingo municipal council, MURRA plays a leading role in fighting for the rights of its members or residents, for example, one of my respondents noted that that MURRA often complains about the high user rates set by the municipal council, but normally it does not win the cases. The reason for this state of affairs could point to the fact that the Masvingo municipal council compares itself with other cities in Zimbabwe, such as Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare and Gweru, in terms of development and they gloss over the fact that they do not have serious manufacturing industry in comparison with other cities in Zimbabwe and therefore largely rely on rates and taxes from residents. This has resulted in MURRA

engaging in demonstrations, although these have not been violent. In June 2014, there was a demonstration organized by MURRA in which residents were protesting against the municipality's violation of the independence agreement to provide better lives to residents. Nevertheless, the demonstration was not successful, since some of the protesters were arrested and charged with the violation of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA). Arresting of protesters was done in order to silence 'illicit' demonstrations.

However to some extent, disgruntled members of MURRA noted that there is an unconstructive relationship between MURRA and elite urban ratepayers. The distinctive group maintains that MURRA's actions can be described as 'wolves in sheep's skin' since it is enjoying the status quo of the municipality's open door policies. Commenting on the relationship between MURRA and residents, Charity Hama, elite urban ratepayer from the LDSs recalls that, *"...in some instances MURRA does private meetings with the council ignoring residents. Their communication is poor; there is no regular communication between MURRA and residents. MURRA only communicate when they are organizing a meeting..."* (Interview: Charity Hama; 13/07/2014). Building on Munyaradzi Chamboko's sentiments, MURRA is accused by some respondents of having frequent private meetings with the municipal council at the expense of public consultation and open forum. To this end, some of the residents feel MURRA is failing to offer the best quality of communication to its residents. As noted by Munyaradzi Chamboko, evidence can be drawn from irregular communication between MURRA and residents which distort the functionality of the association as a watchdog and mediator of residents' infrastructure problems. In some instances, only residents who are affected and conversant with contemporary issues know about MURRA. The rest are not familiar with the existence and the role played by MURRA in contemporary Masvingo. As such the association, which seems to represent all ratepayers, might represent the interest of a distinct and elite group of residents rather than the broader base of ratepayers.

In my view, the fact that the association involves residents in budgetary, monitoring and implementation process demonstrates the notion that elite urban ratepayers rely

extensively on the association to ensure economic and infrastructure stability. The unique ways in which MURRA meetings are managed and the extent to which residents participate in these are contentious. Owing to economic predicaments, MURRA sometimes takes its time to respond to ratepayers' infrastructure problems but it tries its best to address the problems. Its existence has provided for an avenue through which urban ratepayers can express concerns and capitalize on their visibility in order to withstand their protracted infrastructural adversities.

5.2.3 An evaluation of the municipal council's response to MBAB and MURRA

In my view, there is a perspective that some MURRA members feel the association is not being taken seriously by the council. According to my study, the Masvingo Municipal council seems to prefer the MBAB's ideas over that of MURRA. In this regard, I criticize the municipal council for deliberately excluding other forms of knowledge production such as views from non-MBAB residents, thereby treating MBAB knowledge and strategies as the panacea to infrastructure problems bedevilling the city. For instance, in terms of road infrastructure development, the MBAB elite affiliates prioritized the construction of a recently completed traffic circle at Rujeko-Target Kopje junction along Beitbridge highway, adjacent to the Masvingo Polytechnic and the development of the industrial road network. Most of the MBAB affiliates control the few means of production in Masvingo, hence the preference for the development of industrial road networks which would promote their economic interest by facilitating an easy flow of goods and services.

In contrast to the aforementioned development project set by the municipal technocrats, my fieldwork data found that non-MBAB elite urban ratepayers, particularly residents from Mucheke HDS, preferred the construction of a high level *Chimusana* Bridge, instead of a traffic circle, in order to alleviate traffic congestion between the CBD and HDSs during peak hours. However the municipal council gave preference to the traffic cycle and the industrial road network merely because it (referring to the municipal council) favours the MBAB, due to their economic and ideological support.

As evidenced from my study, this has created tensions resulting in MURRA more aggressive than the MBAB in terms of conveying their message as a result of their perception that their interests are not prioritized. Although there are quite opposing views with regards to the role played by MBAB, the business community feel their infrastructural interests are not served by the municipal council and for this reason endeavour to fill the gap through active participation at the MBAB institutional level.

5.2.4 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and civil society initiatives

Various residential matters underpinned by infrastructure problems necessitated the formation of CBOs in urban Masvingo. In my view, CBOs are formed for a number of reasons, which includes developmental concerns, recreational interest, and religious concerns. CBOs in urban Masvingo, particularly the SHINE club, which is also called ‘*vanautsanana*’ (clean people), were formed to meet the most challenging infrastructure problems faced by residents. In this regard, protestant churches have worked strongly with the CBOs and residents have responded positively.

The fact that elite urban ratepayers have no access to constant supplies of potable water, that the garbage collection system is non-functioning due to corrupted, and that there are frequent sewer bursts and system blockages require them to rely on different informal and self-management service systems. The extent to which elite urban ratepayers withstand their prolonged infrastructure problems depends on the existing social resources, material resources and multifaceted activities associated with CBOs. Accordingly, Joyline Dube, one of the elite urban ratepayers from the LDSs who formed the SHINE club (a local CBO), which provides infrastructure resilience services as well as cleaning, education and health campaigns describes her project as follows:

The ‘SHINE CLUB’ has become the main survival mechanism for residents considering our current infrastructural conditions. We don’t always have to wait for the council to solve our infrastructure problems but visit door to door, inspecting individual households and if for example the sewer is not working we help with other members of the club to fix the problem. We inspect everything

including the water they drink. If that water is not safe to drink then we advise the household to boil water before drink. We are mainly concerned with health precautions of individual and working on areas that are not addressed by the council. In this club we believe that cleanliness is next to Godliness, that's why we work towards a healthier and clean environment... (Interview, Joyline Dube; 13/05/2014)

Joyline Dube's sentiments are in resonance with thoughtful ideas of other elite urban ratepayers interviewed. Following my personal observation, I concur with Joyline Dube's arguments that the SHINE club makes significant contributions to the maintenance of infrastructure service and provides community-based support strategies and area-based involvement with an eye to develop environmental excellence and indispensable social services. The SHINE club was formed in order to serve different class interests and political identities. In this regard, the aforementioned CBO is apolitical but invests in collective health and sanitation strategies.

My focus in the analysis of CBOs is their innovative approach to building infrastructure resilience strategies, such as the SHINE cleaning, education and health related campaigns. Participatory approaches equip the elite urban ratepayers with flexible responses to forceful infrastructure predicaments. According to my study findings, CBOs, the SHINE club in particular, play a fundamental role in providing practical approaches to sustainable coping strategies. In relation to frequent sewer bursts, for example, not only does the club repair sewer systems, it also provides health related education and possible health precautionary measures. Interestingly, most of my interviewees appear to respond positively to health precaution measures encouraged by the SHINE club. At whatever time sewer bursts are detectable in their densities, the aforementioned residents advise their kids not to play anywhere in close proximity to open sewers. In addition, the residents have introduced the bucket system whereby a bucket and water is available at each household mostly at the gate for visitors to wash their hands on entry. Furthermore, the SHINE club does frequent visits to households

adopting these health and sanitation strategies, thereby simultaneously re-enforcing those aspects.

I argue that CBOs offer a wide range of coping strategies and enlighten residents on basic municipal policies which impinge on their coping techniques. In my view, offering resilience approaches and resilience training are evidence of elite urban ratepayers' attempts at transforming and improving the infrastructure environment.

Different community stakeholders like churches encourage flexible responses to infrastructure problems. One of my respondents, a Pastor of a local Pentecostal church, highlighted the existence of an organized group called '*vashandi*' (Workers) consisting of young energetic youth who frequently participate in community-based support strategies under his patronage. This group plays a similar community role as their SHINE club counterparts, helping to create an appealing environment. The *Vashandi* primarily consists of members from the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) and voluntary members of the local community who admire the role played by CBOs but goes further to issues dealing with housing cooperatives with an eye to prevent the emergence of slums and informal settlements. Specifically, departments within churches play a significant role with regards to the maintenance of urban infrastructure and not the church at large. The *Vashandi* and social responsibility department of the 'main line' churches play a significant complementary role to the infrastructure developmental concerns of local CBOs. For example, the Methodist church in Zimbabwe (MCZ) and the 'main line'⁵ minister's fraternity fellowship through its social responsibility department work very closely with CBOs. These religious groups make a follow-up of the CBOs' actions with regard to infrastructure problems, reminding the community through religious actions and campaigns on how to overcome the most challenging infrastructure problems. In order for CBOs to accomplish their goals, different stakeholders such as churches and religious leaders in Masvingo have played a significant role.

⁵ Mainline in this research project refers to protestant churches (also called evangelical denominations) such as the Methodist, United Methodist, Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Salvation Army and Baptists churches, etcetera.

Elite urban residents in Masvingo reacted confidently to the role played by CBOs in union with religious groups and the civil society. In addition to the aforementioned contributions by CBOs, elite urban residents further are able to access and attract the services of external donors and NGOs such as for example, the Red Cross and CARE International, in order to be equipped with short courses to withstand the health hazards in their environment. Evidence can be drawn from stimulating courses presented by the Zimbabwe Applied Health Education and Development (AHEAD) during the period 2010-2012 during which families were provided with extensive training on family health, good sanitation and safe use of water, a training which was organized by elite residents. After the training course was completed, they went door to door educating residents on family health and how to recycle household solid waste. During this period, a number of campaigns were done on environmental health and refuse collection up to an extent when the municipal council bought a white truck for refuse collection. Late in 2011, the truck was presented to the Masvingo A.H.E.A.D members on behalf of the residents by the former Mayor of Masvingo, Mr Chakabuda.

However, efforts of elite urban ratepayers to respond to CBOs have been undermined by the Zimbabwe mainstream development ideology in which development is directly linked to political representation. This research project views such kind of development as an extension of national sovereignty, nationalism and liberation ideologies. Prior to the 2011 elections, external donors and NGOs were forced to shut down by the ruling government due to political reasons. This came as a threat to CBOs' endurance since they rely profoundly on external donors and NGO support. Thus the localization of resilience strategies and grassroots participation, specifically reliance on local CBOs in Masvingo, is threatened by a government which treats development and politics as analogous.

I have now discussed the institutional aspects. In the next section, I consider how specific infrastructure problems such as electricity and water are dealt with and how the elite adopt ward-based strategies.

5.3 Surviving electricity shortages

This research project uncovered a multiplicity of coping strategies adopted by elite urban ratepayers in the wake of frequent electricity shortages. Electricity blackouts affect domestic fundamental areas, such as pumping of water from private boreholes, cooking, preservation of food and lights. To this end, elite urban ratepayers adopted alternative forms of energy to withstand difficulties. These exceptional response mechanisms consist of access to countryside resources (such as coal, firewood and wood burning stoves), alternative fuels (such as gas and jelly stoves) and the use of kerosene lamps and kerosene refrigerators.

5.3.1 Access to countryside resources

Access to countryside resources continues to be a valuable alternative for elite urban ratepayers. Elite urban ratepayers either survive from the informal firewood business, which has been intensely developed by poor residents, or personally amass immense firewood supplies from the nearby farms and forests such as the Victoria Range. One of the elite urban ratepayers who have been staying in Mucheke's low density suburb for the past 30 years, Joyline Dube recalls that:

We often go to the forest and collect firewood for domestic purposes. EMA is against this. There is nothing we can do. Of course there are some who go to nearby A1 farms, rural areas and collect firewood in bulk with trucks and sell to residents at exorbitant prices... We are now acting as if there is liberation struggle where everyone just does what he likes. The forest near Victoria Range now doesn't have trees as people are cutting these trees for firewood
(Interview: Joyline Dube; 13/05/2014)

What is apparent from Joyline Dube's reflection is that elite urban ratepayers maintain a strong urban-rural linkage giving them much opportunity to accrue bulk firewood from their rural farms. These residents harvest bulk cords of firewood which indicates the lack of a forest management plan. The adoption of coping strategies of this nature

appears to be a threat to environmental sustainability, forest health and the wildlife habitat. Transportation of firewood is a big challenge considering the role played by EMA in environmental management. In order to protect the environment and policing, EMA has introduced heavy penalties to any resident caught with unlicensed cords of harvested firewood. The elite urban ratepayers believe that the aforementioned environment protection agency is the restraining factor towards the adoption of firewood harvest as a coping strategy. In this regard, illegal transportation of firewood is normally done during the night.

Accordingly, the utilization and access to firewood connotes a typical rural-urban linkage and localized outward appearance of the metropolises economic activity. Firewood is the most fashionable option advanced by the elite urban ratepayers owing to frequent blackouts. Firewood cost depends significantly on social networks and urban-rural linkages. For instance, residents in possession of nearby farms or relatives residing from close-by A1 farms normally access firewood at a very cheap price if they have to pay at all. Sometimes they amass firewood for free owing to social networks. Residents prefer adopting this coping strategy because it is cheap compared to other fuel sources like gas and coal. Certainly, the routine manner in which residents adopt this strategy is disconcerting considering the reality that the centre of consumption (i.e. the city, where the firewood will be used) is frequently not the environment of impact. (i.e. countryside). Firewood harvest results more in rural and countryside environmental degradation than degradation of the urban environment. Elite urban residents normally do not cut down urban household trees but prefer to destroy the environment in the countryside.

The long term effects of adopting this strategy are questionable. Although elite urban ratepayers view the strategy as providing fundamental domestic energy, this coping strategy simultaneously result in environmental degradation. Evidence can be drawn from the Victoria Range which has experienced widespread deforestation resulting in soil erosion. Bringing my study findings to a close, I argue that the adoption of this strategy thwarts the country's potential economic growth and abates international competitiveness in terms of the worth and value of the surrounding environmental

quality. This strategy has intensified environmental degradation, undermining the growth of an urban sustainable environment and threatens environmental security. For this reason EMA is not in favour of this strategy, specifically the illegal collection of firewood for both domestic and commercial purposes. Whilst the EMA discourages environmental degradation, owing to economic predicaments in Zimbabwe, some authorities within the institution accept bribes from elite urban ratepayers in order for illegal firewood to be transported during the night.

5.3.2 Using alternative sources

Other alternative fuels used by elite urban ratepayers include the use of modern generators, gas stoves and jelly stoves. During electric shortages the elite urban ratepayers from both densities use fuel generators which they believe to be a safe system to power their home electric equipment. The generators are also used to charge batteries for domestic use.

Figure 7 demonstrates an example of the type of generators used by elite urban ratepayers in times of electricity shortages. Some of the residents included in this study own formal businesses such as bars and in order to continue their business operations they use generators as an alternatives for electricity shortage. Nowadays bars have turned out to be the centre of entertainment. At household level, generators in the LDSs are used to pump water from the boreholes into private reservoirs. In my view, the extent to which generators are used by elite urban residents from the HDSs and LDSs appear to be at variance.

Fig 7: A typical household generator used by elite urban ratepayers



Source: Author

Elite urban residents from the LDSs use generators and gas stoves more often relative to their HDSs counterparts. This pattern is mainly observable at night in which most residents in the HDSs make use of candles for lighting and firewood for cooking and warming purposes whilst those in the LDSs utilize gas for cooking and generators for lighting and other domestic purposes.

5.4 Surviving inconvenient water supply

It can be noted that instead of looking for money to repair and maintain water infrastructure, the Masvingo municipal council launched the Demand Water Management system (DWMS). In order to effectively accomplish DWMS, the municipal council initiated water rationing, disconnecting of water to residents failing to pay their monthly water bills, compulsory metering of every household and expanding their water carrying capacity as discussed in the previous chapter. In this regard, instead of demonstrating and putting forth additional strain on the council, elite urban ratepayers in Masvingo have adopted individual and collective strategies to withstand prolonged water challenges bedevilling them.

In times of water crises, elite urban residents alternatively engage in a number of response mechanisms. Most of the elite urban ratepayers in Masvingo have set up long term water saving plans to withstand the aforementioned challenges. These residents survive on borehole water, and installed water saving appliances such as water saving showers. They also support regular campaigns about water conservation. These strategies are suitable practices in view of a water scarce milieu.

5.4.1 Borehole water

Elite urban ratepayers mostly survive on borehole water. Most of my respondents from the LDSs note that they have drilled personal (household) boreholes in order to withstand water problems in urban Masvingo. However adopting this strategy was a very difficult task. Initially, the council did not allow residents to sink boreholes since they view the idea as a threat to their income budget. The municipal council charge residents, especially those in the LDSs, exorbitant estimated water bills, so that the sinking of personal boreholes would mean a reduction in their income stream. In my interview with a local businessman from the LDS, Stanford Malava, he explained the matter as follows:

The council actually know we have big yards and lawns which need to be watered on daily basis so they felt they were losing revenue. So it took them time close to 4-5months dragging their feet but we kept on persisting with our issue. At first they didn't want us to sink boreholes since they saw it as a threat to their income budget. We were no longer going to pay high monthly estimated water bills. So all the urban ratepayers in Rhoden interested in boreholes had to put our ideas together to force the council accept our proposal. However they eventually allowed us to sink our boreholes after we had forced them to do so (Interview; Stanford Malava: 16/05/2014)

Building on Stanford Malava's sentiments, I argue that giving residents the opportunity to sink personal and household boreholes would have a direct effect on the council's operating budget. Service charges and property rates provided by residents are the

core sources of the municipal operating revenue which significantly assist in socio-economic and environmental development. The elite urban ratepayers have lawns, seeds and flowers which call for perennial watering hence their demand for water is high compared to the urban poor residents. For this reason the municipal council believed that if the anticipated revenues are not collected, this would offer a threat to its operational budget. The municipal council tried to prevent residents from sinking household boreholes. Collectively, the elite urban ratepayers in Rhoden confronted the municipal council through formal requests to which the authorities responded positively, though after a long time.

The ability to adopt the strategy was undermined by the constraining structures that have vetoed the elite urban ratepayers' prerogative to practice their strategies. In the process of adopting their coping strategies, elite urban ratepayers operated autonomously against the broader regulatory constraints. According to the Water Act of 1976, drilling of boreholes was prohibited for both environmental and health reasons up until the Water Amendment Act of 1998 which granted authority to ZINWA to collect high bill rates on borehole water. Any households wanting to drill boreholes are supposed to ask for permission first from both ZINWA and the local council, following rigorous scrutiny.

5.4.2 The efficacy of borehole water as a coping strategy

In the process of adopting their water response mechanisms, the elite urban ratepayers are capable of acting collectively and engaging and confronting the constraints placed by the local authority constraints on their ability to make use of borehole water. As a collective, they have managed harness borehole water into becoming part of the coping strategies at the same time shaking the existing social structures which previously prohibited the drilling of boreholes.

Borehole water is reliable because of its availability and accessibility throughout the year. Most of my respondents indicated that they now prefer borehole water to municipal tap-water because they enjoy pure underground water, which is chemical free

and which contains no pathogens. One of my respondents added that borehole water in Masvingo is incredibly safe. They are located far from industrial areas and for this reason there are no threats of excess chemicals which can contaminate their underground water. The significance of this strategy is also observable since residents are able to administer borehole water at their own pace without any municipal restrictions. In this regard, they are able to withstand pressure in times of water crisis.

Fig 8: Typical storage tank of household borehole water in the LDSs

Fig 9: Borehole water in the HDSs borehole



Fig 8: Typical storage tank of household boreholes water in the LDSs.

Source: Author

Fig 9: borehole water in the HDSs borehole

Source: Author

These defensive mechanisms operate as a response to the implementation of DWMS by the municipal council and corresponding water challenges facing the city. Furthermore, elite urban ratepayers in Masvingo prefer borehole water because it has desirable qualities which include a lovely taste and odourless water safe to drink. As such elite residents in the LDSs habitually share their borehole water resources with

those without. Commenting on borehole water in the low density Rhoden, Noel Tavirimirwa had this to say:

As for the water problem, we are now used to the system, we have big tanks and containers which can be used if water runs out of the tap. In my area, people have drilled their own boreholes in their own places but some can access water from their neighbours' boreholes. We always share as a family. You see that big green storage tank outside, my neighbours always come to do laundry using my borehole water and some fetch water for domestic use. This is how we are as Zimbabweans. We believe in sharing (Interview: Noel Tavirimirwa; 15/07/2014)

The majority of elite urban ratepayers in LDSs make use of big storage tanks to store water, particularly important considering erratic electricity, which in turns affects the ability to pump water. If there is no electricity, elites use generators to pump water into their private reservoirs. Figure 8 shows an example of a storage borehole water tank in the LDSs. The residential stands in the LDSs are so big such that there is enough space to sink boreholes and install huge storage tanks.

Nonetheless, in the HDSs, residential space is very small such that elites residing in this density find it difficult to establish an extra space for the drilling of boreholes within their yard. Unlike the elite urban ratepayers from the LDSs, therefore, most of those in the HDSs rely on community boreholes donated by a Non-Governmental Organization, CARE international. Figure 9 shows a community borehole donated by CARE international in the HDSs. Commenting on the possibility to drill boreholes in the HDSs, Jessica Ngore, one of the elite residents in the HDSs, argues that, *"If I had the largest space I think would drill a borehole because it is one of the things that one can do instead of using municipal waters... in fact boreholes have become a basic need considering our water challenges."* (Interview: Jessica Ngore; 13/05/2014). They (referring to elite urban ratepayers residing in HDSs) all wish to have personal boreholes but the space is the limiting factor. Thus the elite urban ratepayers in the

HDSs survive on community boreholes with relatively few using household boreholes. They also contribute quarterly funds to maintain these boreholes. Considering their class, status, prestige and power, elite urban ratepayers do not desire waiting in long queues with containers to fetch water. Instead they use their money and status to their advantage. For example elite urban ratepayers in the HDS rather send their employed servants, maids (*musikana webasa*) and garden boys (*mukomana webasa*) to fetch water from the community boreholes where they wait in long queues. Thus the elite urban ratepayers are able to protect individual identities and sustain their highly dignified position in society.

In addition to coping strategies employed by elite urban ratepayers to withstand their prolonged water challenges, a good number of my respondents in Masvingo, in particular residents from the HDSs and those from the LDSs without personal boreholes, make use of buckets, containers and private storage tanks harvesting water when it is available – both tap and rain water. In an interview with an LDS businessman, Joseph Govo (Interview: 15/07/2014), he stated that they accumulate water using buckets, big jugs and containers and store for further use when water runs out of the tap. Water of this nature is used for cooking but for drinking they have to boil it. As evidenced in the previous chapter, water pumped into residential households is sometimes not safe for human survival. For this reason elite urban ratepayers who prefer harvesting tap water when it is available normally boil it prior to any domestic use. Some apply tablets with tetraglycine hydroperiodide iodine which destroys any pathogen existing in tap water. For drinking water these tablets are by and large added 30 minute before water is used.

However a handful of the elite urban ratepayers from both densities use informal options following water disconnections. Enforcement agencies from ZINWA through the municipal council visit households disconnecting water to residents failing to pay monthly water bills. These authorities seem not to consider residents' circumstances and reasons for non-payment and instead of introducing penalties for late payment they prefer disconnecting water. This research project views this action as a violation of

human rights since human beings have the right to potable water. My respondents however agreed that they normally give these officers and enforcement agencies illegal gratuities of approximately US\$ 5 (60 rand) such that water will not be disconnected for the next two months or more even though they are not paying water bills. The fraudulent money is not receipted but it is a form of bribery set to manipulate the legal proceedings. The pervasiveness of bribery and corruption of this nature significantly affect the municipal and ZINWA's income budget. This exacerbates the challenges with regards to effectual administration of water infrastructure.

5.5 Ward-based and individual coping strategies

In different wards, elite urban ratepayers frequently meet to discuss infrastructure challenges within different localities. Although sometimes there is a low turnout, ward-based meetings are very important in keeping community ties and coming up with collective strategies to withstand challenges arising from a deteriorating infrastructure. For example, there was a period when erratic blackouts exacerbated the rate of house breaking and aggravated burglary especially at night in both high and low density suburbs. This problem, arising from electricity blackouts, was minimized through the introduction of a neighbourhood watch team enforced in ward-based meeting. Commenting on the role played by neighbourhood watch Stanford Malava, a local businessman who has stayed in Rhoden low density suburb for more than 15 years, had this to say:

...we introduced neighbourhood watch. During that time individual ratepayers in Rhoden were patrolling together with the help of the police especially at night. There was a time I think in 2008 when the rate of burglary was very high in Rhoden. We used to call these neighbourhood watch and they have been very helpful in reducing the rate of house breaking in our area (Interview: Stanford Malava; 16/05/2014)

As discussed in the previous chapter, most of the street lights in urban Masvingo are no longer working. To this end, Stanford Malava's views are in resonance with other elite

urban ratepayers from LDSs. During the period of hyper-inflation and economic downturn, load-shedding ignited a cycle of robberies and burglaries. In this regard, inconveniences posed by poor energy infrastructure forced the elite urban ratepayers to find ways to shield and safeguard their spatial boundaries. The introduction of the neighbourhood watch programme was successful in reducing the crime rate in the LDSs. Furthermore the aforementioned infrastructure problems have intensified the creation of gated communities primarily for security reasons.

Elite urban residents in Masvingo mostly do not solely depend on social services offered by the municipal council. They employ individual ways of covering these problems. Potholes in the HDSs have become a traffic hazard as noted by most of my study participants in Masvingo. Residents consciously drive at very low speed to avoid potholes. During the rainy season, residents avoid driving through water at high speed for safety reasons. During peak hours, they do not tailgate behind a vehicle in order to avoid accidents in case a vehicle ahead suddenly stops. During peak hours, most of my respondents concurred that they go to work very early in order to circumvent traffic congestion. In addition, resident (both individual and collectively) constantly fill potholes close to their residential areas with rubble stones, sand and tree branches in order to protect their vehicles from mechanical problems such as repairing ball joints, replacement of bending rims and tyre punctures.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview and analysis of a diverse range of coping strategies adopted by elite urban ratepayers in the wake of a fragmenting urban infrastructure. As agencies of transformation, elite urban ratepayers both collectively and as individuals constantly engage with institutions like MURRA, MBAB and CBOs which provide them with on-going coping strategies. Access to countryside resources such as firewood and reliance on household and community boreholes are additional and fundamental coping strategies adopted by my research participants. However, adopting some of these strategies has been an incredibly difficult task. The constraining environment which includes the role played by environment protection agencies (such

as EMA), Water Amendment Act of 1998 which granted more authority to government parastatals destabilize the adoption of informal coping strategies. Furthermore, the analysis authenticates the notion that the coping strategies employed by the elite urban ratepayers from two densities (that is, low density and high density suburbs) in contemporary urban Masvingo appear to be at variance in most cases.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

In this study, I explored the coping strategies employed by urban elite ratepayers against the background of decentralization and in the wake of a fragmenting infrastructure in urban Masvingo. I used four sub-questions to complement the main question. Firstly I started by exploring the position of council members and technocrats in relation to the nature and condition of urban infrastructure in Masvingo and their own role in it. Secondly, I provided an overview of infrastructure conditions in urban Masvingo against the background of the decentralization model. Thirdly I focused on the perceptions and experiences of elite urban ratepayers *viz a viz* the public administration of their local infrastructure. Lastly I evaluated the usefulness of the coping strategies employed by the elite urban ratepayers in improving services within contested urban spaces where there is a municipal management regime.

The concluding remarks of this research are context-specific and therefore not generalizable based on the design and scope of my study. The findings are therefore specific to elite urban ratepayers in urban Masvingo. However, it is likely that some of the arguments that I raise in this chapter can be used as a foundation for extending and broadening debates in similar cases.

6.2 Summary of argument and concluding notes

In this study, I explored the issue of service delivery or lack thereof against the background of Zimbabwe's decentralization model of governance, as well as the role and strategies adopted by urban elites.

First, I argued that Masvingo's infrastructure has deteriorated significantly during the third decade after independence.

Second, as evidenced in my research, I argue that infrastructure in urban Masvingo is not homogeneously deteriorating. For example, the conditions of sewer infrastructure in LDSs and HDSs are not the same. Seemingly, roads in the LDSs are still in good shape relative to HDSs. HDSs seem to experience far more severe environmental and infrastructure problems when compared to the LDSs. Therefore, I found that high income areas – LDSs and industrial areas in particular – receive better quality services in contrast to low income areas such as the HDSs. As I have suggested earlier, the reasons could point to the prioritization of infrastructure development premised on class interest as well as the original infrastructure advantages LDSs had accrued given their location in a formerly racially bifurcated city designed for settlers. To this end, the infrastructure delivery services from different densities are premised on class interests and class differences. Elite residents, primarily those who control the economy, have greater influence with regards to the prioritization of infrastructure development, resulting in selective infrastructure investment in Masvingo. The finding about the unevenness of service provision based on class interests is backed up by studies by Reddy (1999) and Yameogo *et al* (2014) undertaken in different contexts.

Third, it is my argument that in this context, and building on the ideas of Teriman *et al* (2010) and Yameogo *et al* (2014), sustainable urban infrastructure can only be achieved through popular participation – which includes integration of municipal planning with residents' cooperation– and decentralization coupled with devolution of power and in conjunction with development programmes. I have pointed out that the nature and objectives of the decentralization model in Zimbabwe have changed over the past three decades. In particular, I have argued that the post-independence third decade decentralization was akin to a '*phony decentralization*'. What the central government implemented as 'decentralization' is contentious. My argument is backed up by the fact that Zimbabwe's post-colonial local government system is based on a 'delegator-*delegatee*' relationship, in which the central government is the delegator of both political and fiscal decision-making to lower tiers mainly through government parastatals. Chigwenya (2010) described this position as incomplete, including only decentralization without devolution. I argue that the process undermines local authorities' ability to

manage urban infrastructure. Based on my study, I concur with Chigwenya (2010) and Smit and Pieterse (2014:51) in their argument that the decentralization process has underperformed due in part to lack of support from political, national and local technocrats. Yet, although decentralization has not been quite successful, for reasons discussed in this research, it does to some extent enable local actors to play more important roles than in the past. However as evidenced from my study, the decentralization model as illuminated through the experience and practices of the Masvingo town council fails because the council cannot fix whatever needs to be fixed unless there is better remitting from central structures (the state). The constraints have been shaped too by political control and the broader macroeconomic environment as I have discussed in the previous chapters.

Fourth, the big question this study raised and explored is what elite urban ratepayers are doing in the context of Zimbabwe's location as a 'crisis state' and to what extent what they are doing is helping or not to bring relieve to the key features of a crisis state. My understanding of a crisis state as applied in the context of my research is that of a state characterized by an amalgamation of serious socio-economic and political problems at an international and local level that impact in a number of ways on citizens. In order to answer this broad question, I identified the institutional forms that elite urban ratepayers utilize in order to have social impact as well as the nature of their coping strategies at household level.

The three institutional forms found in this research are that of a ratepayers associations (MURRA), a business chamber (MBAB) as well as a broad range of civil-society organisations (CBOs). Although I have argued above that elites may be able to skew service delivery in their interests, and although all these organisations may have may contain within themselves class, party and/or personal interests, I have maintained that, in general, these institutional networks are key elements that holds together civil society in urban Masvingo. Some of the strategies adopted by elite urban ratepayers, especially at institutional level, contribute to a more resilient and cohesive urban environment. For example through the MBAB, elite urban ratepayers have contributed resources,

expertise and transformative ideas that benefited both the municipal council and poor residents. As I have discussed in chapter 5, elite driven CSOs such as A.H.E.A.D, *Vashandi*, local health clubs and NGOs provide community capacity building that allow the achievement of sustainable results. In my view, synchronizing the efforts of civil society and that of urban elites is likely to restore sanitation conditions in the context of a crisis state.

I found that in terms of coping strategies employed by elites at household level, some of these, such as reliance on the “fuel” wood (firewood) business, pose a threat to the environment in the long term. Unfortunately, both the poor and the elites embrace these strategies because there are no fall-back methods. I argue that these kinds of strategies are driven mostly by the need to meet short-term individual needs at the expense of sustainability of the environment.

Fifth, based on my own experience and fieldwork observation, I conclude that elite residents in Masvingo are mostly prompted by an ethos of *ubuntu* (*Hunhu*), which is a principle of communitarianism and includes as a practice a modicum of sharing of resources, some form of interdependence, tolerance and collective respect for individual identity. My argument is reiterated by Nhodo *et al* (2013:34) who observed that pensioners in Masvingo believe in the spirit of *ubuntu* in which an individual is part of the whole community and for this reason they assist each other in times of crisis. In my view, the reason for communitarianism could be due to the fact that the city of Masvingo is a fairly small metropole in terms of population density compared to other cities in Zimbabwe.

Finally, I foreground in this study an understanding of the importance of civil society, networks and associations and the various ways in which and conditions upon which civil society organisations and initiatives, in this case driven by elites, are helpful to the broader society. This argument is made against the background of a reading of the Zimbabwean state as a ‘crisis state’. I have demonstrated that in the past decade, Zimbabwe was marked by political unrest as well as a major political and economic

crisis, including events such as the controversial Fast Track Land Reform Programme (Moyo and Yeros, 2005:189) and high inflation (Gukurume, 2011:183; Koech, 2011:2). As I have argued in this research, the crisis in Zimbabwe – predominantly during the third decade, and including for example the state sponsored violence during the 2008 elections – has significantly affected the country’s population, for example giving rise to mass out migration and the ‘brain drain’ phenomenon. Against this background, I argue, the crisis inspired the rise of the civil society with an eye to offer a positive change in Zimbabwe. My focus therefore was largely on elite-driven organizations. The surprising findings of my study is the importance of such networks and of civil society associations more generally to the resilience of the city and its residents. Of course, there are many civil society organizations that are mass-based, but in this research I wanted to flag in particular the importance of elite-driven civil society initiatives.

In conclusion, it should be stated that there is a lot of literature and recent research on survival/livelihood strategies of impoverished households and communities in Zimbabwe. Perhaps not quite enough work has been done about notions of resilience. Moreover, even when the focus of studies is on resilience, it does not often capture the role of elites, particularly those in urban spaces. To this end, this research contributed to filling a knowledge gap, focussing specifically on elite urban ratepayers in Masvingo, and including an assessment of the extent to which elite coping and resilience strategies are aimed at self-interest and/or contribute to the broader benefit of the city and its residents. To a great extent this study demonstrates that elite networking and initiatives on balance do not do harm but in general benefits the society at large.

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APPENDIX A: Interview schedule for elite urban ratepayers

1. How do you see the general condition of urban infrastructure in urban Masvingo?
2. What are the key infrastructure problems conditions in your ward?
3. How do you view the municipal council's management practices and actions with regard to urban infrastructural problems?
4. Based on your view and understanding, what can you say are the strengths and weaknesses of their actions and policies (if any)?
5. What is the nature of your relationship with the municipal council?
6. How do you as an individual ratepayer act and respond to the challenges resulting from the present infrastructure conditions?
7. Can you tell me about collective responses and actions from members in your ward to the policies of the municipality?
8. Have you discussed your planned contributions with the municipal council?
9. What survival strategies have you adopted in respond to the challenges resulting from the present infrastructure conditions
10. Are these survival/livelihood/coping strategies that you practice helpful in improving your livelihoods?
11. What have you encountered in adopting and practicing such coping strategies?
12. What is your opinion about the new arrangements resulting from the election results and their impact on urban infrastructure?

APPENDIX B: Interview schedule for representatives of the municipal council and the committee of council

1. How do you see the general condition of urban infrastructure in Masvingo?
2. What problems have you encountered in the management of the urban infrastructure (if any)?
3. How does the management address urban infrastructure problems?
4. Do you receive complaints from the urban ratepayers around infrastructural conditions?
5. How does management address complaints in this regard (if any)?
6. Please tell me about projects implemented to address current infrastructure conditions?
7. What are the strengths, weaknesses and outcomes of these projects?

APPENDIX C:

Letter of permission for key informants



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
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Department of Sociology
Faculty of Humanities
University of Pretoria

Name: John Mhandu (Student nr 13399803)

Email: john.mhandu@yahoo.com

Cell: +27 83 856 8782

Participation in study: A case study of the survival strategies of the urban elites in Masvingo.

My name is John Mhandu. I am registered in the Department of Sociology at University of Pretoria for the degree Master of Sociology. I am conducting research for my Masters mini-dissertation. The research will be done in Masvingo, Zimbabwe on survival strategies employed by the elite urban ratepayers in Masvingo. During this study, I would like to be able to set up four interviews, review public organizational documentary material and spend some time in the organization itself.

As part of the study I would like to interview you. All the information will be kept confidential. In writing up the information, I will use a pseudonym when I refer to specific interviewees.

The data will be stored in the Department of Sociology's research archive for 15 years. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the data.

The outcomes of the dissertation are to be written up in my Masters dissertation. I may also want to publish the findings in a scholarly journal or as a book or book chapter in a field-specific publication. My dissertation will be available on the University of Pretoria internet which is open to all. I plan to present my findings to participating organizations, to my colleagues at the University of Pretoria and at academic conferences.

The details of my research supervisor follow below. You may contact me or her at any time should you have further queries:

<p>John Mhandu Department of Sociology Faculty of Humanities University of Pretoria Pretoria 0002 Cell: +27 83 856 8782 Email: john.mhandu@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Prof Janis Grobbelaar Department of Sociology Faculty of Humanities University of Pretoria Pretoria 0002 E-mail: Janis.Grobbelaar@up.ac.za</p>
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APPENDIX D

Letter of permission for elite participants



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Department of Sociology
Faculty of Humanities
University of Pretoria

Name: John Mhandu (Student nr 13399803)
Email: john.mhandu@yahoo.com
Cell: +27 83 856 8782

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The details of my research supervisor follow below. You may contact me or her at any time should you have further queries:

<p>John Mhandu Department of Sociology Faculty of Humanities University of Pretoria Pretoria 0002 Cell: +27 83 856 8782 Email: john.mhandu@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Prof Janis Grobbelaar Department of Sociology Faculty of Humanities University of Pretoria Pretoria 0002 E-mail: Janis.Grobbelaar@up.ac.za</p>
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APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT'S AGREEMENT: PARTICIPATION

I am aware that my participation in this interview is voluntary. I understand the intent and purpose of the research. If, for any reason, at any time, I wish to stop the interview, I may do so without having to give an explanation.

I have the right to review, comment on and/or withdraw information prior to the Master's Project submission. The data gathered in this study is confidential with respect to my personal identity unless I specify otherwise. I understand if I say anything that I believe may incriminate myself the interviewer will immediately rewind the tape and record over the potentially incriminating information. The interviewer will then ask me if I would like to continue the interview.

If I have any questions about this study I am free to contact the student researcher or the faculty adviser (contact information given above). I have been offered a copy of this consent form which I may keep for my own reference. I have read the above form, and with the understanding that I can withdraw at any time and for whatever reason, I consent to participate in today's interview.

I am aware that the data will be used in a Master's mini-dissertation that will be publically available at the Main Library at the University of Pretoria, and that the information contained in it may be used in academic publications and presentations. I understand that the data will be securely stored in the Department of Sociology for fifteen years.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Interviewer's signature:

PARTICIPANT'S AGREEMENT: RECORDING

I am aware that the interview will be recorded. I understand the intent and purpose of the recording for transcription purposes. If, for any reason, at any time, I wish to stop the recording, I may do so without having to give an explanation.

Participant's signature:

Date:

Interviewer's signature: