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# ***Surveillance and the City: Patronage, Power-sharing and the Politics of Urban Control in Zimbabwe<sup>1</sup>***

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*From 2000, ZANU(PF) suffered repeated electoral defeat in the cities and lost control of municipalities to the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). This turned urban governance into a battlefield, as ZANU(PF) dramatically recentralised powers over local authorities, developed 'parallel' party structures and used militia to control central markets and peri-urban land. Taking the case of Harare and environs during the period of Zimbabwe's Inclusive Government, this article explores contestations over urban authority focusing on the office of councillor and urban spaces dominated by ZANU(PF)-aligned militia. I argue that surveillance was central to ZANU(PF)'s strategy for urban control and to the politics of patronage. Inconvenient councillors were disciplined by threats and enticements from the feared Central Intelligence Organization (CIO), and were also vulnerable to suspension, while ZANU(PF) militia made political loyalty a condition of access to market stalls, land and housing cooperatives. Dominant political science characterisations of the African postcolonial state and ethnographic accounts of precarity and vigilance mislead in this context if they fail to capture the disciplining roles and social reach of a centralised partisan state security agency and militarised party structures that suffuse work and social life within local government institutions and contested city spaces. Analyses of power-sharing need to reach beyond the national stage not only because conflict over local authorities can undermine transitional political processes but also for the light it can shed on the changing character of the state and its relationship to reconstituted ZANU(PF) powers.*

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## **Introduction**

From 2000, Zimbabwe's urban centres became strongholds for the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), and voters elected MDC councillors and mayors to take charge of local authorities. In response ZANU(PF) embarked on a process of trying to regain urban control that turned urban governance into the object of intense political struggle, and drastically undermined the capacity of councils to deliver services. The ruling party's strategy depended on recentralising powers over local authorities while at the same time developing a system of patronage through and beyond local state institutions, creating 'parallel' party hierarchies and using party-aligned militia to control key urban spaces and access to resources. Privatisation created opportunities for accumulation on the part of state officials, party/military businesses and contributed to the surge in corruption. By the height of the crisis in 2008, urban services collapsed, sewage flowed through Harare streets and cholera was rampant in the city's high density suburbs. Local authorities once seen as among the

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most professional and capable in the region instead came to be cast as politicised, pervasively corrupt and marred by patronage and clientalism.<sup>2</sup>

The Inclusive Government, through which the two MDC parties came to 'share' power with ZANU(PF) from February 2009, brought about some improvement in services. It also opened up limited new political space to contest corruption within urban councils and challenge partisan practice. But although a new cohort of elected MDC councillors and mayors were elected to run urban councils in 2008, ZANU(PF) retained control of the powerful Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development and the former ZANU(PF) Minister Dr Ignatius Chombo remained in place. Change was thus severely constrained and urban governance showed marked continuities with prior practice.

ZANU(PF) sought to undermine councils run by the former opposition by all means possible, formal and otherwise, particularly those in the hands of its main political opponent and the larger of the two MDC parties, Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC-T.<sup>3</sup> This required extraordinary levels of vigilance over ordinary council business around the country. Minister Chombo found it necessary to meddle in the minutiae of daily council matters, trying to block and discredit MDC-T councils' every move to the point that councillors joked 'The Minister wants to control how many sugars we put in our tea!'.<sup>4</sup> The MDC-T leadership clung to the hope that the public could see the constraints. MDC-T Minister of Public Service Lucia Matibenga argued: 'We should have laid it bare, in the Ministry, even if it's an MDC Ministry, the real person who gets things done is the Permanent Secretary, or in local government, it's the Town Clerk, not the mayor or councillors...'<sup>5</sup> The MDC-T was outmanoeuvred as it came to appreciate the importance of local government too late.<sup>6</sup>

The failures of MDC-T run councils incessantly made media headlines over the tenure of the IG, and the figure of the corrupt and incapable MDC-T councillor was upheld as evidence of MDC-T's incapacity to rule. In August 2012, an MDC-T audit revealing corruption in seven out of ten councils produced typical headlines of 'MDC-T jumps on ZANU(PF) gravy train'.<sup>7</sup> The Zimbabwean press elaborated 'how councillors corruptly acquired vast tracts of land, fleets of luxury vehicles and built mansions' and noted the 'shocking change of lifestyle of some councillors'.<sup>8</sup> When an opinion poll indicated a drastic attrition of support for MDC-T, corruption in MDC-T urban councils was singled out as the cause.<sup>9</sup> Revealingly, councillors expelled by their own party for corruption were not

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<sup>2</sup> K. Chatiza, 'Can Local Government Steer Socio-economic Transformation in Zimbabwe? Analysing Historical Trends and Gazing into the Future', in de Visser, N. Steytler and N. Machinguta (eds) *Local Government Reform in Zimbabwe: A Policy Dialogue*. (UWC, South Africa, Community Law Centre, 2010), pp.1-30. See also Institute for a Democratic Alternative in Zimbabwe (IDAZIM) *Local Governance in Transition. Zimbabwe's Local Authorities During the Inclusive Government* (Harare, RTI International and IDAZIM, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> In 2005 the MDC split and the larger grouping remained under the leadership of Morgan Tsvangirai, hereafter MDC-T. This paper is focussed on local politics in Harare and environs, where MDC-T dominates, and does not detail the politics of the smaller MDC formation.

<sup>4</sup> Suspended Harare MDC-T city councillor, 3 September 2011

<sup>5</sup> MDC-T Minister of Public Service, Lucia Matibenga, Harare, 23 April 2012

<sup>6</sup> MDC-T did not have a clear policy on local government initially, and did not press the issue during the negotiations for the GPA.

<sup>7</sup> *Zimbabwe Independent* 31 August 2012. See also *SW Radio Africa* 31 August 2012; See also 'MDC fires corrupt councillors', *The Zimbabwean* 25 August 2012; 'Battle looms over fired councillors', *Daily News* 31 August 2012

<sup>8</sup> *Zimbabwe Independent* 31 August 2012.

<sup>9</sup> 'Freedom House Poll: MDC-T under spotlight', *The Standard* 2 September 2012. According to the poll, support for MDC-T plummeted from 38% in 2010 to 19% in 2012, while that for ZANU(PF) grew from 17% to 31%

automatically expelled from the councils. Quite the opposite - ZANU(PF) Minister Chombo was particularly keen to retain such councillors.<sup>10</sup>

This article examines the battles over urban public authority under the Inclusive Government to shed light on the transformations to Zimbabwean state institutions and remaking of ZANU(PF) powers within and beyond them. It makes three broader points. First, I emphasise the importance of local politics for wider debates over the postcolonial state and politics of power-sharing.<sup>11</sup> Power-sharing arrangements are usually debated and assessed exclusively at national level, but analyses should extend their reach to local domains that have the capacity to undermine transitional political processes. I build on anthropological approaches to the state that call for an examination of 'actually existing forms of governance and the trajectory of institutions and representations of the state'.<sup>12</sup> These reject the assumptions and teleology reflected in the 'usual negative prefixes - weak, disorganised, incoherent, illegitimate, de-institutionalised' that dominate political science debates, and which reduce the role of state institutions to mere façade.<sup>13</sup> Hansen and Stepputat see the local as a 'privileged domain' for understanding changing practices of governance. The point is not to reify 'the local' but rather to understand practices and ideas of 'stateness' through key sites of interaction where they are shaped.<sup>14</sup>

Second, I focus on surveillance, which invites different questions from those arising out of assumptions of state 'weakness'. Surveillance can be defined as 'close observation, especially of a suspected spy or criminal',<sup>15</sup> and can achieve control in a manner that is distinct from coercion through force and threats. Indeed, the aim can be to reduce the need for overt violence, and to discipline populations by generating self-restraint. Debates over surveillance in African contexts have focussed primarily on physical watching rather than technology,<sup>16</sup> and reflect an empirical grounding in countries with highly centralised, authoritarian governments, where 'the state's reach is extensive', administrative bureaucracies are dense, and intersect closely with militarised ruling party

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<sup>10</sup> 'Mwonzora castigates Chombo for protecting councillors' *The Zimbabwean* 3 September 2012

<sup>11</sup> On power-sharing see A.C. Le Van, 'Power-sharing and Inclusive Politics in Uncertain Democracies' *Governance*, 24, 1 (2011), pp.31-53; I. Spears 'Understanding Inclusive Peace Agreements in Africa: The Problem of Power Sharing', *Third World Quarterly*, 21, 1 (2000), pp. 105-118; N. Cheeseman and M. Tendi, 'Power-sharing in Comparative Perspective: The Dynamics of "Unity Government" in Kenya and Zimbabwe', *JMAS*, 48, 2 (2010), pp. 203-299; B. Raftopoulos (ed) *The Hard Road to Reform: The Politics of Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement* (Harare, Weaver Press in association with Solidarity Peace Trust, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> T.B. Hansen and F. Stepputat, 'Introduction: States of Imagination', in T.B. Hansen and F. Stepputat (eds), *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State* (London: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 14. See also Veena Das and D. Poole (eds) *Anthropology in the Margins of the State* (Santa Fe, School of American Research Press, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Hansen and Stepputat, 'States of Imagination', p. 14. The most frequently invoked political science texts include J. F. Bayart *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London, Longman, 1993); P. Chabal and J.P. Daloz *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (Oxford, James Currey 1992).

<sup>14</sup> Hansen and Stepputat, 'States of Imagination', p. 12. A. Hammar, 'The Making and Unmaking of Local Government in Zimbabwe', in A. Hammar, B. Raftopoulos and S. Jensen (eds) *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis*, (Harare, Weaver Press, 2003)

<sup>15</sup> *Oxford Dictionaries* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> The Oxford dictionary definition is appropriate for the forms of watching discussed here, but has been criticised in relation to new surveillance technologies, see G. Marx, 'What's new about the "new surveillance": classifying for change and continuity', *Surveillance and Society*, 1, 1 (2002), 9-29. ZANU(PF)'s use of technology is not discussed here, but see C. Mavhunga, 'The Glass Fortress: Zimbabwe's Cyber-Guerrilla Warfare', *Journal of International Affairs*, 62, 2 (2009), pp.159-174.

hierarchies.<sup>17</sup> In such contexts, as Purdekova argues for Rwanda, the central question is not how various localised forms of authority compete in marginal spaces for the attributes of stateness. Rather, it is necessary to examine ‘the different apparatuses through which central power reaches people’, and understand ‘the extent to which they saturate lived time and space’.<sup>18</sup> Purdekova argues that ‘a state of surveillance is created through a combination of the state’s presence and its indirect effects, namely suspicion, distrust and fear’.<sup>19</sup> These ‘indirect’ effects are potent in the aftermath of protracted violence and instability: Vigh argues that insecurity produces a form of ‘social hyper-vigilance that saturates social relations’, creating an orientation towards ‘negative potentiality’ and fear of invisible social forces.<sup>20</sup> There is a characteristic amplification of rumours, a tendency towards heightened suspicion, and a preoccupation with ‘hidden’ motives.<sup>21</sup>

In the Zimbabwean context, however, such negative potentiality also reflects the effects of surveillance regimes that are all too visible for those in public office or engaged in activism. The Zimbabwean CIO is estimated to have 10,000 permanent staff, and a large network of auxiliaries and informers. Its funds are attributed untransparently through the President’s Office.<sup>22</sup> Aside from core work in intelligence gathering, the force is notorious for abductions and torture. Its network and agents are a ubiquitous presence and threat for those working in state institutions and holding public office. The militia that act as *de facto* authorities in Harare’s central markets and on the farms of the urban periphery have also developed techniques of surveillance that are more rudimentary and low-tech than those used by the CIO. Yet here too there is an investment in intelligence-gathering in the form of lists of names and registers, monitoring movements, checking for ZANU(PF) cards and keeping particular watch over suspected MDC-T leaders. While ZANU(PF) militia are also implicated in political violence, the fears invoked by ZANU(PF) structures in these urban spaces are not just about physical violence, but of losing access to markets land and housing.

Third, I argue for an approach to patronage, corruption and ‘parallel structures’ that is ‘essentially non-cultural’.<sup>23</sup> Scholars of Zimbabwe disagree over how to conceptualise ZANU(PF) power and its relationship to state institutions. Although it is clear that ZANU(PF)’s command of the security sector remains centrally important,<sup>24</sup> one strand of writing about the party downplays the importance of formal institutional control. Norma Kriger argues that ZANU(PF) structures should be conceptualised as ‘personalised informal networks’ that wield power through violence and patronage, creating a

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<sup>17</sup> A. Purdekova, ‘“Even if I Am Not Here, There Are so Many Eyes”’: Surveillance and State Reach in Rwanda’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 49, 3 (2011) p. 476.

<sup>18</sup> Purdekova, ‘Even if I am not here’, p.476.

<sup>19</sup> Purdekova, ‘Even if I am not here’, p.478. See also D. Bozzini ‘Low-tech Surveillance and the Despotism State in Eritrea’, *Surveillance and Society*, 9, 1,2 (2011), pp.93-113.

<sup>20</sup> H. Vigh, ‘Vigilance: On Conflict, Social Invisibility and Negative Potentiality’, *Social Analysis*, 55, 3 (2011), pp. 93-114.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94.

<sup>22</sup> K. Chitiyo, *The Case for Security Sector Reform in Zimbabwe*, London, Royal Services International, Occasional Paper (2009), p.12

<sup>23</sup> This echoes aspects of the essentially non-culturalist approach in G. Blundo and J-P. Olivier de Sardan in *Everyday Corruption and the State: Citizens and Public Officials in Africa* (London, Zed Books, 2006).

<sup>24</sup> D. Matyszak, *Law, Politics and Zimbabwe’s “Unity” Government* (Harare, Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, 2010); B. Raftopoulos, ‘An Overview of the Global Political Agreement: National Conflict, Regional Agency, International Dilemma’ (forthcoming); International Crisis Group, ‘Resistance and Denial: Zimbabwe’s Stalled Reform Agenda’ (ICG, Johannesburg/Brussels, 2011); Cheeseman and Tendi ‘Power-sharing’; Chitiyo ‘The case’; Raftopoulos, *Hard Road*.

‘parallel government’.<sup>25</sup> The terms of this debate are, however, unhelpful: ‘parallel’ is a misleading metaphor because ZANU(PF) powers work within as well as outside state institutions, while ‘network’ removes hierarchy. ‘Informal’ can imply disorganisation, marginality and a separation from the realm of state. Here I follow Jane Roitman in avoiding the term ‘informal’.<sup>26</sup> The distinction she draws between ‘state regulatory authority’ and ‘state power’ can help make sense of ‘the supposed contradiction between the expansion of unregulated activities –such as fraud and contraband, which seem to indicate a loss of state control – on the one hand, and the continuity of state power’ in its military coercive forms and its capacity for redistribution on the other’.<sup>27</sup> The idea of ‘state power’ captures the reality of a conflation between ZANU(PF) and state, yet it is important to maintain a normative distinction not least because this conflation is a prime object of political contestation. Indeed the struggles over urban authority I describe below hinge centrally on attempts to re-draw boundaries between the public and private, state and party. Detailing the battles over corruption and partisan practice within urban authorities corrects a tendency in writing on the state to reduce the ‘machinery of state to a “black box”’,<sup>28</sup> while also revealing the extent of resistance and thus ZANU(PF)’s need to resort to ‘parallel structures’ and militia to maintain urban patronage.

Examining the internal politics of urban councils deflects attention away from the spectre of the corrupt and incapable MDC-T councillor, and the related emphasis in policy reports on a grassroots ‘culture of clientalism’.<sup>29</sup> Presenting corruption a-historically as popular culture makes for an inexplicable disjuncture with the histories of responsible public service provision and past levels of professionalism in Zimbabwe.<sup>30</sup> Nor can it explain the uneven spread of corruption, the persistence of professional practice within some councils and resilient ideologies of public service. It is important, rather, to situate councillors in the historically shaped institutions within which they operate, scrutinise the nature of the political space they occupy and ask what kind of pressures they face. Casting corruption as a ‘technology of governance’,<sup>31</sup> can help draw attention to top-down processes, inviting examination of how the spread of corruption is linked to histories of recentralisation, politicisation, privatisation and securitisation. As Chatiza argues, it is also important to investigate the role within local authorities of key party/state officials – sometimes referred to as ‘untouchables’<sup>32</sup> or ‘dinosaurs’<sup>33</sup> - who have political protection, and the practice of ‘log-jamming institutions to deliberately breed corruption’.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> N. Kriger ‘ZANU(PF) Politics under Zimbabwe’s “Power-sharing Government”’, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 30, 1 (2012), pp.11-26.

<sup>26</sup> J. Roitman, *Fiscal Disobedience. An Anthropology of Economic Regulation in Central Africa* (Princeton University Press, 2005).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, p. 22

<sup>28</sup> G. Blundo and P-Y. Le Meur, ‘An Anthropology of Everyday Governance: Collective Service Delivery and Subject-Making’, in G. Blundo and Pier-Yves le Meur (eds), *The Governance of Daily Life in Africa: Ethnographic Explorations of Public and Collective Services* (Leiden, Brill, 2005) p. 18.

<sup>29</sup> J. De Visser, N. Steytler and N. Machingauta (eds) *Local Government Reform in Zimbabwe: A Policy Dialogue*. (UWC, South Africa, Community Law Centre, 2010); Institute for a Democratic Alternative in Zimbabwe [IDAZIM] *Local Governance in Transition. Zimbabwe’s Local Authorities During the Inclusive Government* (Harare, RTI International and IDAZIM, 2010).

<sup>30</sup> De Visser et al *Local Government*, and IDAZIM, *Local Governance* commend Zimbabwe’s history of professionalism in light of regional comparison.

<sup>31</sup> S. Bracking, ‘Political Economies of Corruption Beyond Liberalism: An Interpretative View of Zimbabwe’, *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 30 (2009), pp. 35-51.

<sup>32</sup> Interviews, Harare, eg, 3 September 2011.

<sup>33</sup> K. Chatiza, ‘Can Local Government’

<sup>34</sup> K. Chatiza, ‘Can Local Government’

The article begins by revisiting the structural changes to urban governance over the last decade, before exploring attempts within councils to challenge corruption and partisan allocation of resources in spaces controlled by ZANU(PF) militia. The research was conducted in Harare itself and in the two satellite towns of Norton and Ruwa.<sup>35</sup> It is based on interviews with councillors and MDC-T structures at Provincial and District levels, MPs and the Deputy Minister of Local Government, executive officers in the three councils, residents associations, and members of professional interest bodies in real estate.<sup>36</sup>

### **Recentralised, Politicised and Securitised Local Authorities**

The dramatic re-centralisation of control that started from 2000 is important to revisit here because it also politicised the local state, introducing new levels of surveillance. In the context of histories of political violence, being watched and the risks of being seen as a traitor increasingly shaped daily work in councils such that a 'state of unease' became 'normal' among public servants, workers and councillors.<sup>37</sup>

Central interventions occurred first in rural areas, as ZANU(PF) sought to push through land reform in the face of opposition from within local state bureaucracies: war veterans, CIO and senior party officials presided over a process of purging the local state of suspected opposition supporters, replacing ousted professionals and workers with party loyalists, veterans and youth militia.<sup>38</sup> But from 2002, attention turned to the cities, where councils were run by the opposition and in Harare, executive mayor Elias Mudzuri had become a powerful populist figure of resistance. The Minister's intervention in the affairs of the City provoked a battle that saw the expulsion of 'traitorous' officials, and workers, ending with Mayor and council being replaced in 2004 with a centrally appointed Commission. Kamete argues, this was a ZANU(PF) 'victory born of strong-arm methods replete with controversy and underhand dealings' that was widely perceived as illegitimate and did nothing to undercut MDC-T's support in the cities.<sup>39</sup> Interventions were made possible by the law, particularly the Urban Councils Act, reform of which is a central objective of MDC and civic campaign groups.<sup>40</sup> Partisan control was bolstered by the new political position of Governor for Harare and Bulawayo, as well as by elevating the powers of Provincial and District Administrators in rural contexts, and District Officers in cities.<sup>41</sup>

As surveillance was tightened, officials came under intense and intrusive scrutiny. Politicisation meant there was no scope for professional practice: an official expelled by the Commission, but later reinstated said, 'We are technocrats and the councillors are politicians – that is how it is supposed to

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<sup>35</sup> Norton and Ruwa provided interesting comparisons, in that Ruwa was upheld by the MDC-T as a model council and had managed to build 2 new schools under the IG, while Norton suffered more typical failings.

<sup>36</sup> Interviews were conducted with 21 MDC-T councillors (9 from Harare, 8 from Norton and 3 from Ruwa), 3 ZANU(PF) councillors from ZANU(PF)-dominated Norton council 2003-8, plus 6 executive officers. As councillors and officials wished to remain anonymous, it has sometimes been necessary to be vague and unspecific about particular wards or councils, unless information is already in the public domain through media coverage.

<sup>37</sup> On the normalisation of a 'state of unease' in Eritrea, see Bozzini 'Low-Tech Surveillance', p. 110.

<sup>38</sup> J. McGregor, 'The Politics of Disruption: War Veterans and the Local State in Zimbabwe', *African Affairs*, 101, 402 (2002), pp. 9-37. There were precedents in Rhodesian traditions of control and in the suspension of ZAPU councils in Matabeleland and Midlands in the 1980s.

<sup>39</sup> A. Kamete, 'The Return of the Jettisoned: ZANU(PF)'s Crack at "Re-Urbanising" in Harare', *JSAS*, 32 (2), pp. 255-271

<sup>40</sup> Chatiza 'Can Local Government'

<sup>41</sup> This was possible through the Provincial Councils and Administration Act

be; they make policy and we advise from a professional point of view; but when officials are also politicians, where is the space for professional judgement?’<sup>42</sup> Others emphasised fear of punishment, explaining how council work was ‘different from the old days where we could talk to anyone, even the newspapers without fear of being punished’.<sup>43</sup> Council matters had instead become ‘very sensitive’, as ‘enemies may use a light thing to pounce on you’.<sup>44</sup> The conscription of technocratic expertise within state bureaucracies was particularly notable during Operation Murambatsvina, through which army, police and militia undertook the mass demolition of informal homes and businesses. The Operation was widely seen as punitive action against opposition-supporting city dwellers, but was legitimised in terms of a legal-technical vision of urban order by the city’s powerful planning bureaucracy, which Kamete describes as ‘possibly the most established, most conservative and least compromising in sub-Saharan Africa’.<sup>45</sup> Planners described being ‘literally conscripted’ in support of the operation: they felt ‘we as planners have demonstrated an unacceptable degree of fear, incompetence and malice’.<sup>46</sup> Indeed fear was a prime motivation for compliance – it was ‘dangerous to stand out and contest’.<sup>47</sup>

Although these interventions enhanced ZANU(PF) powers, the MDC-T leadership was complicit with some legal aspects of recentralisation. Tsvangirai supported the abolition of executive mayors in favour of a ceremonial/titular post, objecting to the ‘lack of control over elected mayors who established independent urban power bases.’<sup>48</sup> MDC-T also agreed to special interest councillors amounting to 25% of the council, and to provisions that allowed mayors to be chosen from outside council, meaning they could be imposed by the party leadership.<sup>49</sup> This dilution of urban democracy was controversial, not least within MDC-T. In Harare, Tsvangirai appointed lawyer Muchadayi Masunda as mayor in 2009, arguing that the elected councillors lacked appropriate education and stature. But Masunda was far from a populist figure, had no history of MDC-T membership and was criticised for potential conflicts of interest because he held numerous directorships of property companies.<sup>50</sup>

The interregnum immediately following the violent 2008 combined elections but before the new cohort of MDC-T mayors and councillors were sworn in provided an opportunity for a range of changes designed to incapacitate and cripple councils. Youth militia were given jobs in some councils - in Harare 767 new employees were added – and elsewhere temporary workers were made permanent and staff got pay rises.<sup>51</sup> Indeed overstaffing was such that the World Bank regarded a third of the

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<sup>42</sup> Interview, Harare, 29 August 2011.

<sup>43</sup> Interviews, Harare and Norton, 31 August 2011; 2 September 2011.

<sup>44</sup> Council officials’ reasons for declining interviews.

<sup>45</sup> A. Kamete, ‘Cold-Hearted, Negligent and Spineless? Planning, Planners and the (R)ejection of “Filth” in Urban Zimbabwe’, *International Planning Studies*, 12, 2 (2007), pp. 153-77, p. 154. See also J. Fontein, ‘Anticipating the Tsunami: Rumours, Planning and the Arbitrary State in Zimbabwe’, *Africa*, 3 (2009) 369-38; D. Potts, ‘Restoring Order? Operation Murambatsvina and the Urban Crisis in Zimbabwe’, *JSAS*, 32, 2 (2006), pp. 273-291.

<sup>46</sup> Senior planners and consultants cited in Kamete, ‘Cold-Hearted’, p. 158.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* p. 159.

<sup>48</sup> Made law through the Local Government Laws Amendment Act, December 2007.

<sup>49</sup> Through an Amendment to the Urban Councils Act in early 2008.

<sup>50</sup> See Mike Davies’ challenges, <http://www.swradioafrica.com/2012/03/14/transcript-of-harare-mayor-on-question-time-part-2/>, retrieved 31 July 2012.

<sup>51</sup> Interview Lucia Matibenga, 23 April 2011; Interviews, Harare and Norton councillors, eg 11 September 2011, 16 April 2011.



Harare City municipal workforce of more than 9000 as 'excess'.<sup>52</sup> This interim juncture was the occasion in some places for looting of council property 'down to the grass slashers'.<sup>53</sup> In Harare, the preparations for Mayor Masunda's inauguration were marked by the theft of the last remaining ten head of council cattle, six of which were later recovered from the cold storage rooms of the Jameson hotel through an investigation initiated by the incoming MDC-T councillors.<sup>54</sup>

Political violence shaped the new council in direct as well as indirect ways. It was a huge challenge for the MDC-T to find suitable candidates to fill the post of local councillor around the country in the elections of 2008. Many of those brave enough to stand were youth activists who bore the scars of a decade of violence, including assaults during and in the aftermath of the 2008 elections, when many were forced to flee or go into hiding. Though they gave up roles as youth leaders when assuming their council positions (as one explained 'some of the things our youth get up to are not fit for discussion in the council boardroom')<sup>55</sup>, many needed the muscle of the MDC-T youth after being elected, not least as personal protection. The MDC-T Provincial structures estimated that 70% of the MDC-T councillors in Harare and Chitungwiza were unemployed and did not own their own homes prior to being elected as councillor.<sup>56</sup>

Yet these are the people who allowed MDC-T to fill council seats. As an MDC-T provincial officer elaborated:

You look at one of our MDC councillors, a youth who was throwing stones in the streets before, that was the life he knew, many are not employed, then we ask ourselves, from throwing stones to the board room, can we really expect a good policy? Yes we can, but we need to do some education. Some councillors can have capacity or have that capacity built. But a very hungry councillor who can hardly buy a suit and has to beg his aging uncle to borrow him an oversize suit, imagine that councillor presiding over the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer when he's a guy who what he knows is how to throw stones. That's the background of the party. Our councillors don't have houses, they've been given stands, yes, but most have sold them or can't build on them. If you're like that, however good you are at articulating a policy, someone will not take you seriously. It makes them very vulnerable to corruption.<sup>57</sup>

The problem of corruptibility was real, reflecting poverty and lack of education as well as ZANU(PF)'s enticements and threats, delivered through the 'untouchables', CIO and other party members within local government. There were, of course, compounding bottom-up pressures, though these were historically embedded in a manner that is inadequately captured by the idea of a 'culture of clientalism'. They took the form of voters' enormous expectations of what an MDC-T run council could and should deliver. Although MDC-T policy upheld the idea of a neutral, apolitical delivery of services and allocation of resources, there was pressure on councillors not to simply re-institute apolitical practice, but also to reverse histories of partisan practice and privilege MDC-T voters. Sections of MDC-T's support base felt that the MDC-T now in government, could and should operate a patronage system to reward the suffering of members. Indeed, Alexander and Chitofiri argue that the

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<sup>52</sup> '3000 face axe at city council' *Daily News*, 21 April 2011; 'City rules out retrenchment', *The Herald*, 12 May 2011.

<sup>53</sup> Interview, Norton councillors, 16 and 17 April 2011.

<sup>54</sup> Interview, Harare councillor 3 September 2011. 'Stolen meat found in Jameson Hotel', *ZimEye* 20 August 2009.

<sup>55</sup> Interview, Harare councillor, high density ward, 14 December 2011.

<sup>56</sup> Interviews, 1 September 2011, 11 September 2011.

<sup>57</sup> Interview, 1 September 2011

IG provoked a shift away from the prior ethos of solidarity among marginalised MDC-T urban youth, towards the view that MDC-T, now in power, should pay back its activists in material terms.<sup>58</sup> Councillors emphasised the huge problem of ‘over expectation’. One councillor elaborated:

It’s a problem, those who voted for us. They expect work, stands, stalls, they think we are earning, eating – buy us beer! Let us enjoy! The serious dilemma we face from an activist point of view, they over expect – when I fail to meet those expectations, our activists try to force us. We’ve lost some councils – these are some of the issues.<sup>59</sup>

Under the IG and notwithstanding the risks, the position of councillor also came to be seen as a route to power and wealth, encouraging competition and confusion in MDC-T party structures in some places: in one Harare ward, for example, the councillor explained that rivalry between parallel sets of MDC-T structures was the main problem he faced.<sup>60</sup>

The difficulties of occupying and using the political space of MDC-T city councillor in its shrunken and securitised form, can be highlighted more clearly through closer examination of working relationships between councillors and administrative hierarchy, as well as through closer appreciation of the effects of surveillance, the range of feared potential punishments, and the Minister’s use of his legal powers to suspend inconvenient councillors.

### **Relations between Councillors and Administrative Hierarchy**

The in-coming MDC-T councillors initially considered the entire local state administrative hierarchy to be against them, from Town Clerks or Chief Executive Officers at the top, via the technocrats and District Officers, down to the municipal police, workers and temporary labourers at the bottom. Councils were unable to control appointments, even of temporary labour, or to achieve suspensions of corrupt officials protected by the Minister.<sup>61</sup> Employment and dismissals were overseen by the Local Government Board, which was dominated by Ministerial appointees, such that ‘dinosaurs’ continued in office and technocrats and workers trying to resist ZANU(PF) pressures walked a tightrope and risked suspension themselves.

Councillors told stories of deception and manipulation by officials: of not being told rules and procedures, being given false information, circulated the wrong times and dates for important council meetings, resolutions being blocked, papers disappearing or consultations with constituents being thwarted. Intimidation included explicit verbal threats from CIO – to life, job, family, property, and of arrest and imprisonment. The legacies of violence, and ubiquitous reminders of surveillance meant that councillors did not speak freely in council offices, tried to disguise their movements, met to discuss in secret places rather than central downtown venues, were constantly alert to being followed and listened to, and on the look-out for cars with numberless plates or other signs of the CIO. They

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<sup>58</sup> J. Alexander and K. Chitofiri, ‘The Consequences of Violent Politics in Norton, Zimbabwe’, *The Round Table*, 99, 411 (2011), pp. 673-686.

<sup>59</sup> Interview, councillor, high density ward, Ruwa, 1 September 2011; Harare high density councillors, 11 September 2011, 24 August 2010, 14 December 2011.

<sup>60</sup> Interview, 24 April 2012.

<sup>61</sup> Norton MDC-T MP explained: ‘An audit identified the CEO in terms of misuse of funds, so he was to be suspended, but that was revoked by Chombo. It left the councillors in a weak state...Technocrats could fix problems, we have experienced personnel on our council, but they knew that will also help the councillors. It’s not all individual technocrats, but the hierarchy is aligned to ZANU(PF). The council can’t present a case without the technocrats support. Technocrats can also organise a plan of action that will lead the ratepayers to attack the councillors’, 19 April 2011.

demonstrated the ‘hyper-vigilance’ that Vigh associates with chronic instability, characterised by the ‘ever present need for scanning the socio-political environment for early warning signals’ and alertness to ‘elusive yet imagined destructive future effect’ of agents or forces.<sup>62</sup> Indeed the CIO played directly on such fears. While some councillors were militant and some were bought or used by ZANU(PF), others chose strategies of appeasement and risk-avoidance, and most drew boundaries as to what they were and were not willing to challenge, accepting that ‘some ZANU(PF) strategies – there’s nothing you can do’.<sup>63</sup> One Harare MDC-T councillor described how a sense of continual surveillance and threat, shaped daily calculations of risk:

Being a councillor is a risk – you have to calculate your risk. I’m not confrontational, you accept, for example if the police refuse permission for you to talk to your constituents, then you can’t do that. Don’t force. If you try to continue, what happens? You end up in prison, and then what good did that do? We are constantly looking over our shoulder – am I being followed, watched?<sup>64</sup>

In Norton, councillors argued that ‘At first, technocrats made council business impossible... Even now they can tell us ‘No I’m working for the DA or the Minister’.<sup>65</sup> But councillors also spoke of officials answering to ZANU(PF) outside the formal administrative structures. In some wards, MDC-T councillors and MPs were not accepted by ZANU(PF) local constituents, who treated ousted ZANU(PF) counterparts as incumbents. Outside Harare city, it was said that some officials still answered to the ousted former ZANU(PF) executives, and that ‘ZANU(PF) has formed pressure zones, developing parallel institutions to the council, having cell meetings with residents to try to stop people from participating in council meetings.’<sup>66</sup>

Council financial problems could be crippling, particularly where the workforce was bloated and salaries high, but councillors were powerless to reduce payments due to the Labour Relations Act.<sup>67</sup> Salaries consumed excessive sums, amounting to 90% of the council budget in one extreme case.<sup>68</sup> In Harare, the Town Clerk’s pay made headline news at \$15,000 per month plus allowances.<sup>69</sup> The bottom tiers were also paid disproportionately – municipal police and unskilled workers earning more than teachers.<sup>70</sup> Nor was it possible to bring in funds through rates, as these were difficult to collect given company closures, poverty, arrears from the time of the Zimbabwe Dollar that could not be brought forward, and campaigns from ZANU(PF)-aligned groups to block payment. In Norton at the time of the interviews, workers were on strike and councillors explained: ‘When we started trying to ask for rates to be paid, ZANU(PF) mobilised, including the workers, saying ‘this is an MDC council, the councillors are no good, why should we pay?’<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Vigh ‘Vigilance’, p.104.

<sup>63</sup> Interview, Harare councillor, 20 April 2012.

<sup>64</sup> Interview, 25 March 2011

<sup>65</sup> Interview, 16 April 2011

<sup>66</sup> Interview, Norton and Ruwa, 16-18 April 2011, 1 September 2011

<sup>67</sup> There has, however, been some leeway to reduce allowances.

<sup>68</sup> IDAZIM *Local Governance*, p.44.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Disclose council executive salaries’ *Daily News* 7 September 2012; CHRA 12 March 2009.

<sup>70</sup> CHRA cites municipal police salaries ranging from \$290-\$500, 12 March 2009, ie when teachers were earning \$100 per month.

<sup>71</sup> Interviews, Norton councillors, 16-19 April 2011. Ruwa council’s ability to build schools under the IG was attributed partly to less intense politicisation and the fact that there was a more significant presence of companies and hence potential for collecting taxes. Interview, Ruwa executive officers, 1 September 2011.

City of Harare piloted a politicised and chaotic process of enforced rate collection via District Offices in early 2012, using court orders to attach property and sending in municipal police to remove goods to the value of the debts owed.<sup>72</sup> The initiative was not sanctioned by council resolution, and both the Town Clerk and mayor denied responsibility, though council was clearly involved, as enforcers knew the sums owed. The process was piloted in Mabvuku-Tafara and began with the homes of the MDC-T structures and the suspended MDC-T councillor. MDC-T youth were called on to protect MDC-T leaders' homes and repulse the bailiffs, which they managed successfully in some prominent cases, but the scale of the operation overwhelmed them and a number of households lost significant goods. MDC-T turned to the Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA) and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR) to try to secure a court order to stop these actions. As one of those targeted explained: 'it's political – they're trying to fine the MDC leaders – thinking if we auction off their house and property, it will be a message to others'.<sup>73</sup>

Punitive actions such as these, authorised by council officials without backing by council resolutions were a recurrent problem for councillors – not only because they had to protect themselves, and their property but also because they needed to do damage control with their own constituencies, and explain their party was not responsible. Such difficulties posed by the administrative hierarchy and ZANU(PF) agents within it, were compounded by councillors' vulnerability to dismissal. The ways in which the Minister was able to remove inconvenient MDC-T councillors from positions of influence can be illustrated clearly through the fate of those who tried to expose corruption in the lucrative business of urban land and property development. This made them prime targets for heightened surveillance then expulsion.

### **Urban Land and Property Development - 'The Other Land Story'?**

The Harare Land Audit was prepared by MDC-T city councillors and presented to council in April 2010.<sup>74</sup> It investigated illegitimate land and property deals by council officials and linked ZANU(PF) businessmen during the period the City was run by an appointed Commission (2004-9). During the crisis period of the Commission's tenure, urban land and property development became central to the politics of accumulation, closely tied into flourishing irregular money markets and facilitated by processes of formal deregulation and privatisation. The Land Audit presented evidence from council files against Minister Chombo himself, the ZANU(PF) businessman and property developer Philip Chiyangwa, the Town Clerk and other members of the Commission – Chief Engineer, Housing Officer, Chief Town Planner – ie the 'untouchables' still working for City of Harare. It documented a range of illegitimate activity: using dual currency markets to acquire land at a pittance; selling land to developers that was reserved for purposes other than construction; selling land several times over; flaunting regulations over service provision. As one of the investigators explained:

This was done concurrently with the farm invasions, while some were taking land out on the farms there, others were concentrating on town. There was massive looting of land, and most of it, there was the appearance of it being done legally... at one time you could pay for an acre of land for 1 US\$ - paying the city council employees... The council now has no land, while the Commissioners are land barons.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> 'Council attaches property in Mabvuku', *The Standard*, 28 April 2012

<sup>73</sup> Interview 13 December 2011

<sup>74</sup> City of Harare, *Special Investigations Committee Report on City of Harare Land Sales, Leases and Exchanges from the Period October 2004 to December 2009* (Harare, 23 March 2010).

<sup>75</sup> Interview, Harare, 26 August 2010

The growing corruption in urban property development, encouraged first through policies of privatisation over the 1990s, was furthered by the Parallel Development Act of 2006, which allowed property developers to raise the funds to service land by selling off plots before infrastructure had been put in place. Justified as a strategy for mobilising finance to tackle the growing housing problem (and recognising *de facto* practice), this had the effect of removing the main sanction local authorities had for insuring accountability from developers.<sup>76</sup>

New irregular urban developments and disreputable companies were problems not only in Harare.<sup>77</sup> Much construction over the past decade happened not in Harare itself, but in its satellite towns, such as Norton and Ruwa, where councils in the crisis period were ZANU(PF) dominated. Councillors and officials spoke of the council housing departments as ‘cash cow’ in that period, and criticised unscrupulous developers, particularly in Norton, where some of the new housing estates were the worst affected in the cholera outbreak, not because old infrastructure had decayed, but because private companies had installed wholly inadequate sewerage and other services.<sup>78</sup> Even ex-ZANU(PF) councillors and executive officers were critical. One elaborated:

I’m a critic of the private developers unless there are controls, it’s creating corruption and they’re allowed to get away with it, providing sub-standard everything, as long as the Engineer approves, that is all the regulation there is.<sup>79</sup>

An officer in the housing department admitted ‘many of us made a lot of money’ and stressed ‘developers need to be monitored – but some of them are government companies, they have connections, and council does not have real power to regulate their activities...’<sup>80</sup>

The Land Audit is, however, interesting beyond the light it sheds on how the local state became a vehicle of accumulation for officials, ZANU(PF) councillors and ZANU(PF)-aligned business, because of the punishments meted out to the MDC-T councillors who compiled it. The two key figures - committee chair Clr Warship Dumba plus Clr Casper Takura – became prime targets for heightened CIO surveillance and intimidation: they received repeated death threats from CIO agents, as well as offers of money to desist, which they refused, leading to four episodes of arrest and detention. The first occasion was in April 2010 shortly after the Land Audit was handed over to the police, when the hastily suspended council committee of eight were all arrested together with Mayor Masunda and journalists who had covered the story. The charge was criminal defamation, in a case brought by one of the accused – businessman Philip Chiyangwa.<sup>81</sup> The opportunity for the second arrest was the following year, when MDC-T activists were rounded up and detained in significant

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<sup>76</sup> N. Marongwe, S. Mukoto and K. Chatiza, *Scoping Study: Governance of Urban Land Markets in Zimbabwe* (Harare, Urban Landmark, 2011).

<sup>77</sup> On the politics of property, see J. McGregor ‘Sentimentality or Speculation? Dream Homes, Crisis Economies and Diasporic Re-shaping of Urban Space’, *Geoforum* (forthcoming). The Real Estate Institute and Estate Agents Council of Zimbabwe estimated 50% of estate agents and property developers were disreputable. Interviews, REI executive, 6 April 2011; EAC executive, 22 March 2011

<sup>78</sup> Interviews, Norton councillors 16-18 April 2011; the new Mariedale and Johannesburg estates were particularly severely affected.

<sup>79</sup> Interview, Norton, 16 April 2011.

<sup>80</sup> Interview, Norton, 17 April 2011.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Councillors arrested on Chiyangwa’s orders’, *Independent*, 9 April 2010; ‘Chombo and Chiyangwa fume as City of Harare’s land audit makes revelations’, CHRA 20 April 2010; ‘MDC slams arrest of Harare’s mayor, councillors’, ‘MDC, Masunda, Councillors let out on bail’, *Financial Gazette* 23 April 2010

numbers, this time on charges of murder and terrorism in relation with the killing of a police officer in Glen View and the bombing of MDC-T Finance Minister Tendai Biti's home.<sup>82</sup>

Minister Chombo then found a new more plausible reason for arresting the councillors, turning their suspension into dismissal for fraudulent expense claims amounting to US\$368 and a potential additional sum of US\$131.<sup>83</sup> The money had been claimed by the councillors to cover transport costs to Urban Council Association of Zimbabwe (UCAZ) meetings. Harare magistrate Ndirowei found there was no evidence of fraud as the councillors had claimed for costs they believed were legitimate. Despite this verdict, the Minister did not drop charges. Rather, he maintained the councillors' dismissal and continued to pursue them through the courts, appealing first to a higher court, as well as initiating civil charges.

Suspended councillors continued both to try to challenge their dismissal, and to pursue the issue of illegitimate accumulation and sale of urban land, by presenting the Audit to the newly constituted Anti-Corruption Committee, an action which led to their fourth arrest, within a week of presenting the case.<sup>84</sup> They also founded the Elected Councillors Association of Zimbabwe (ECAZ) to represent the larger group of 120 elected councillors suspended by the Minister. ECAZ exposed a range of illegitimate action, provoking further death threats and enticements to desist.<sup>85</sup> One of the issues it took up was the disproportionate fee charged by Ministerial probe teams investigating council corruption. In the case of the two suspended for heading up the Land Audit, for example, allegations of fraud related to a sum of less than \$600, yet the probe team billed the City of Harare for \$42,000.<sup>86</sup> ECAZ also continued to pool information from councils across the country about illegitimate urban land deals and the Minister's own accumulation of property.<sup>87</sup>

Yet the Minister's capacity to remove MDC-T councillors from positions of authority through suspensions undercut their influence. It mattered less whether or not cases were won, than that the legal process took them out of action. This recourse to the courts over spurious allegations diverted energy and resources within councils, and tied the MDC-T up in endless litigation, necessitating financial outlay on lawyers' fees and straining the capacity of legal firms such as ZLHR taking on the multitude of long drawn out cases. It removed many of the most capable and active councillors from local authority work, sent a message to those remaining of the risks of challenging corruption within council. Powerful though these measures were, they were not enough for ZANU(PF) to achieve the levels of control over council roles and resources necessary to run a broader urban patronage system. For this, ZANU(PF) also relied on party-aligned militia.

### **ZANU(PF) Militia - Chipangano**

Militia have come to play a key role in maintaining ZANU(PF)'s urban patronage system. The militia known as Chipangano has become notorious for hi-jacking council property and functions in Harare's central Mbare district, where it controls the city's major markets, and the press frequently refer to it as a 'vigilante group'. But the language of vigilantism and the idea of sovereignty outsourced is misleading because it is clear the militia is ZANU(PF)-aligned and state supported. The Crisis

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<sup>82</sup> MDC councillor Dumba arrested' *Daily News*, 15 June 2011.

<sup>83</sup> ZLHR 17 October 2011

<sup>84</sup> *Newsday* 7 March 2012

<sup>85</sup> Interview, Harare, 19 April 2012.

<sup>86</sup> In less than a year, councils were billed \$500,000 for probe investigations *Financial Gazette*, 23 August 2011.

<sup>87</sup> In Harare, they put pressure for 61 Helensvale, Mandara, worth \$600,000 to be surrendered back to council. *The Standard*, 5 August 2011 .

Coalition concur, arguing that Chipangano should not be conceptualised as a ‘localised militia’, but rather the ‘beginnings of the spread of a structure of violence by non-state actors supported by ZANU(PF) and security’. They label it a ‘parallel rogue security force’.<sup>88</sup> Chipangano’s violent business model of party control over urban space allowed ZANU(PF) to extract rents and dominate livelihood opportunities, creating client populations to perform public displays of support.<sup>89</sup> Chipangano was notorious for physical violence, but also invested in low tech surveillance to foster compliance and quell resistance. This entailed compiling lists of names, keeping registers of attendance at ZANU(PF) events, monitoring movement and activity, making regular demands for ZANU(PF) cards, and keeping particularly close watch on any suspected MDC-T activists. This combination of violence assaults on key MDC-T councillors and activists, who were expelled from Mbare, plus threats and surveillance pushed remaining MDC-T activity underground.

Chipangano was established in 2001, and its patron is generally said to be Tendayi Savanhu, a ZANU(PF) politburo member and businessman, who lost the 2002 contest for Mbare constituency to MDC-T MP Piniel Denga. The ZANU(PF) Youth District chair, Jim Kunaka publically acknowledged his own leadership role within the militia. Comparable youth militia were established elsewhere in Harare’s environs in Epworth and Harare South under different ZANU(PF) patrons.<sup>90</sup> Kriger uses these militia as evidence of how ZANU(PF) parallel structures take the form of personal networks of senior party figures.<sup>91</sup> Chipangano has prompted outspoken criticism from some sections of ZANU(PF),<sup>92</sup> yet my emphasis here is on the utility of a disorderly, supposedly locally-embedded grassroots militia that can be used to generate income for party supporters and maintain partisan access to urban resources, just as war veterans have been used to police access to land and rural livelihoods in resettlement areas as political patronage.

One way of reading Chipangano’s embeddedness in Mbare, is simply as a reflection of the intense concentration of state resources and economic activity supposedly regulated by council, and therefore greater possibilities for rent-seeking and extortion, accumulation and clientage derived from usurping the local state’s role. There are rows of council flats, the cities’ main trading hubs, with farmers markets, flea markets, large home industry areas, a concentration of businesses of various sorts, fleets of kombis and the central transport terminus for long distance buses.

The violence in Mbare over the duration of the IG cannot be understood without an historical perspective on increasingly partisan allocation of council-controlled resources over the course of the crisis, and the way both sides used promises of housing and rights to trade as a campaigning tool. When Mbare markets were rebuilt after the demolitions of Operation Murambatsvina, Savanhu was City Commissioner, and then rose to head the Commission running Harare. The reorganisation provided the opportunity to expel MDC-T, and allocate stalls preferentially to ZANU(PF) supporters, while council housing was re-allocated both through manipulating waiting lists and mass evictions of MDC-T activists, particularly in 2008.

Patterns of urban violence in Harare’s high density suburbs during the IG were shaped by MDC-T’s predominance, which made ZANU(PF) supporters vulnerable to intimidation and violence unless they

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<sup>88</sup> Crisis Coalition, ‘Deal with Chipangano’, 30 March 2012

<sup>89</sup> Comparable militia in other towns are: Top Six (in Chinhoyi), Jochomondo (Hurungwe), Jambanja (Marambapfungwe) and Alshabab (Kwekwe), Sokwanele, 18 September 2012. Crisis Coalition, ‘ZANU(PF) a powerful brand of extortion’, 31 August 2012 <http://www.crisiszimbabwe.org/>, retrieved 30 July 2012.

<sup>90</sup> Namely ZANU(PF) Provincial Chair Amos Midzi and Brig. Hubert Nyanyongo.

<sup>91</sup> Kriger ‘ZANU(PF) Politics’

<sup>92</sup> ‘Chipangano ZANU(PF) product: Didymus Mutasa’, *The Zimbabwean*, 24 July 2012

could draw on state force and outside reinforcements, or militia had a presence. Mbare is unusual because of Chipangano's strong presence and control over markets, which ZANU(PF) used to develop a client force, and gain votes. Indeed, in the 2008 parliamentary elections, the MDC-T victory was very narrow, and ZANU(PF)'s strategy under the IG was to enhance control to win the constituency.<sup>93</sup> Over the course of the IG, Chipangano exercised increasingly close surveillance over Mbare markets, dividing them into sections and creating a cell structure to monitor activity. The markets were regularly closed, and traders were forced to go to ZANU(PF) rallies and other events, with attendance monitored through registers.<sup>94</sup>

The violence in Mbare market that followed the signing of the GPA was sparked by MDC-T councillors' efforts to redress partisan allocation of stalls.<sup>95</sup> In March 2009 they raised this issue in full council, leading to council's attempt to close the market to conduct an audit of allocations, to reveal and penalise multiple allocations.<sup>96</sup> CHRA exposed internal council documents showing Harare City received only 1% of proceeds from market stalls while Minister Chombo and ZANU(PF) women's league director Oppah Machinguri and other high-ranking ZANU(PF) figures owned multiple stalls and were profiting from illegal subletting.<sup>97</sup> The council's closure of the market sparked a protest demonstration by ZANU(PF) supporting vendors, one of whom, an elderly woman - Martha Chitambira - was killed by a stone thrown by the MDC-T crowd that also gathered, provoking revenge assaults against MDC-T.<sup>98</sup> Mugabe took the opportunity to speak at the vendor's funeral and condemn MDC-T violence,<sup>99</sup> while the council also came under attack for harassing vendors, extortion and failing to solve the problems of market stalls. Mbare councillor Paul Muleya explained:

Many of our activists had livelihoods as traders which have been banned. You're supposed to have a licence from the City of Harare, but now you need a ZANU card.

When City of Harare had pegged the markets after Operation Murambatsvina, if I as a ZANU(PF) person got one 2 m table, then I'd subdivide that. The person recognised by the original pegging is supposed to pay \$23/month for the table to the council, but then the sub-letters can be charged as much as \$100 per month for their small section of the table. So the City tried to intervene, to demarcate officially to a smaller size to stop the extortion of the sub-letters, and that is the moment when there was violence.

When the council tried to intervene it led to chaos – we tried to enforce the revenue collection in line with new subdivisions, then that was the time a vendor was killed. There have been running battles with the police. Our youth can retaliate; those who died on some occasions were ZANU. After that we withdrew the municipal police because it had led to chaos. The council lost a truck which was burnt. ZANU youth then went on the rampage every day, extorting from traders and business people to eat and drink.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Mbare results in 2008 were MDC-T 7520 vs ZANU(PF) 6121, <http://www.sokwanele.com/election2008>, retrieved 31 July 2012. The parliamentary seat was won by ZANU(PF) in 2013, along with 2 of the 4 Mbare council seats, <http://www.sokwanele.com/elections2013>, retrieved 1 October 2013.

<sup>94</sup> Interview, Mbare councillors 28 August 2010; 2 September 2011.

<sup>95</sup> On partisan allocation of stalls, 'Breaking news on Harare market stalls' CHRA 18 September 2009.

<sup>96</sup> 'Chra in solidarity with council decision to reallocate market stalls', CHRA 24 September 2009.

<sup>97</sup> 'Breaking news on Harare market stalls', CHRA 18 September 2009.

<sup>98</sup> 'Elderly woman killed during Mbare market demonstration', SW Radio Africa 23 September 2009. <http://www.swradioafrica.com/>, retrieved 30 July 2012.

<sup>99</sup> 'Mugabe slams violence' *The Herald*, 5 October 2009. Chitambira came from Mugabe's home area.

<sup>100</sup> Interview, 2 September 2011.



The ensuing episodes of violence thus embroiled the council in violence in ways that discredited it, as municipal police supposed to enforce new subdivisions and control illegal vending also extorted themselves, beat people up and killed a resisting trader – Godfrey Tonde.<sup>101</sup> Angry residents dumped Tonde’s body on council property; CHRA demanded the council should be brought to book for causing the death, pay funeral expenses and desist from harassing vendors.<sup>102</sup> Councillors responded by denying responsibility, demanding that Council investigate recruitment practices in the municipal police, as well as contributing to the funeral expenses.<sup>103</sup> On these and other occasions when the municipal police acted jointly with ZRP, such as in moves against vendors and kombis in central Harare, councillors had to run around organising meetings to tell people they were not responsible.

Attempts to reoccupy council flats likewise sparked violence only 72 hours after Tsvangirai was sworn in, as councillors took formal and informal measures to rectify a history of partisan allocation.<sup>104</sup> One of the first full council resolutions in March 2009 was to initiate a formal process to return flats to evicted tenants, and Mbare councillors also worked with ZLHR to get eviction orders for illegitimate occupants.<sup>105</sup> At the same time, MDC-T activists rallied the youth to throw out the ZANU(PF) tenants who had invaded their flats. In an early incident of MDC-T revenge in Mbare, on 11 February 2009, MDC-T evictees trying to repossess their flats were arrested by police. Six 6 months later, 61 families who had court authority to repossess homes tried to reoccupy them, accompanied by MDC-T Mbare Ward 4 Councillor Paul Muleya plus the Court Messenger, but were attacked by ZANU(PF).<sup>106</sup>

Mbare councillor for ward 3, Paul Gorekore lost his market stall in 2005 (after which his livelihood was hawking watches from his arm in the streets), and was then evicted from his flat in Mbare’s Tagarika Flats in 2008. He explained:<sup>107</sup>

ZANU(PF) were forcing people to attend meetings in 2008, saying ‘We’ll take your house if you don’t vote ZANU(PF)’. As MDC we said ‘We’ll protect you and your access to housing’. Then after the March elections, ZANU(PF) went on a rampage and took over council blocks. MDC was seeking court orders and a ministerial order to get people back and also invading them directly.

In the case of my flat ...I came with my MDC guys, 8 of them and we removed them – using the same methods they had used against us. The ZANU guy in my flat was unprepared. I’d waited two weeks, and he didn’t have his men with him, he was alone...he left and rushed to my neighbour’s place to rally the ZANU guys and they came back armed with sticks and stones, but by that time I’d locked myself in and barricaded the door. My friends were outside, but they were outnumbered and ran away, one was beaten up by the soldiers at ZBC. The ZANU guys brought him back to the flat injured and bloody, showing him to me, saying ‘that’s what you’ll look like’...

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<sup>101</sup> ‘Tonde’s death – residents up in arms against Harare council’ *The Standard*, 15 November 2009

<sup>102</sup> ‘Mbare man dies... as municipal police unleashes violence on vendors’, CHRA 10 September 2009

<sup>103</sup> Harare councillors probe municipal police recruitment, 11 November 2009

<http://www.zimeye.org/?p=10391>, retrieved 31 July 2012.

<sup>104</sup> MDC supporters take revenge, 2 March 2009, [http://www.zimbabwejournalists.com/print.php?art\\_id=5339](http://www.zimbabwejournalists.com/print.php?art_id=5339), retrieved 31 July 2012.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid; ‘MDC says violence against supporters continues’ Voice of America, 27 October 2009, <http://www.voanews.com/content/a-13-2008-09-24-voa74-66760817/563542.html>, retrieved 30 July 2012

<sup>106</sup> Ibid; ‘High court grants bail to 8 MDC activists from Mbare’, 3 March 2009 <http://www.swradioafrica.com/>, retrieved 31 July.

<sup>107</sup> Interview, 28 August 2010

Direct retributive actions of this kind on the part of MDC-T often proved insecure over the longterm, while allegations of on-going partisan allocation of council rented accommodation did not improve the popular image of the council. The Harare Residents Trust study of Mbare's Majubeki lines accused 'politicians in ZANU(PF) and MDC-T in cahoots with named city employees at Remembrance District Offices' of 'causing the displacement of innocent residents from their houses', leaving 'orphans without shelter' and others to 'live in constant fear of being evicted because they have failed to pay the demanded bribes'.<sup>108</sup> The report began by criticising Mbare councillors for not communicating with residents, for selling waiting list forms to home-seekers for \$2, and collecting funds from members of a cooperative designed to secure access to flea market tables that never materialised.<sup>109</sup> But allegations against council officers and ZANU(PF) politicians were more fully developed and revealed the maintenance of partisan preference despite MDC-T efforts to reverse it. HRT alleged there is 'a well refined syndicate of repossessing residents' houses'.<sup>110</sup> This worked by council officials targeting 'relatives of deceased owners' who have accumulated huge arrears, who are issued with eviction orders, but are then directed to ZANU(PF) officials at Mbare hostels and told to pay bribes of \$2500 for protection, with the fees being shared between ZANU(PF) politicians and council officials.<sup>111</sup>

The Mbare councillors for wards 3 and 4 were arrested multiple times and suspended from council for illegally evicting council tenants. The first arrests came two weeks after the formation of the IG, following the evictions of ZANU(PF) supporters from council flats, then on 25 September 2009 following the death of vendor Martha Chitambira, who Clr Gorekore was accused of murdering. In the latter case, the prosecution tried at the very last minute to reduce the offence to culpable homicide, and the Magistrate later freed Clr Gorekore of charges of both public violence and murder.<sup>112</sup>

They were arrested again in the violence of early 2011 when Chipangano consolidated its control over Mbare. In this episode Chipangano took over Carter and Paget Houses (both council properties), burnt down the MDC-T office in Mbare, took over more council blocks, purged suspected MDC-T members from Mbare markets, undertook another round of evictions from flats. The MDC-T claimed 1000 were displaced and moved into safe houses, and human rights organisations dealt with 140 victims.<sup>113</sup> Achieving displacements on this scale was clearly not Chipangano acting alone, and the CCJP 'vendors' diary' that documents the expulsion of traders shows clearly that this was achieved with the full support of the ZRP Mbare office and higher echelons of the police.<sup>114</sup> During this episode, Councillor Gorekore's flat was burnt out by a group of ZANU(PF) youths, his property looted and his brother was among those hospitalised.<sup>115</sup> He was arrested then let out briefly before being arrested again following the attack on Carter House. A few months later he fled the country, though the High Court later cleared him and others of all charges, and ordered their reinstatement in

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<sup>108</sup> P. Shumba, *Majubeki Report: Housing Crisis - The Weak Suffer in Silence* (Harare, Harare Residents Trust, September 2010), p. 2.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p.2.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, p.4.

<sup>112</sup> 'Councillor walks out of court a free man', *Newsday* 7 July 2010.

<sup>113</sup> 'Terror grips Mbare' *The Zimbabwean* 23 February 2011; CCJP 'Violence in Mbare: Testimonies from the victims', 18 July 2011 <http://www.swradioafrica.com/pages/ccjptestimonies180711.htm>, retrieved 31 July 2012

<sup>114</sup> CCJP, 'Vendors diary'

<http://catholiccomforjusticeandpeaceinzimbabwe.wordpress.com/2012/03/27/vendors-diary-displacements-intimidation-and-violence-in-mbare/>, retrieved 31 July 2012.

<sup>115</sup> 'Police alliance with ZANU(PF) a major source of threat' *The Zimbabwean*, 9 Feb 2011

council. High Court Judge Justice Patel ruled that the probe team responsible for investigating their actions had acted in a ‘grossly irrational’ manner.<sup>116</sup> But Minister Chombo appealed and re-expelled the councillors in November 2011.<sup>117</sup>

Thereafter, ZANU(PF) control over Mbare tightened, militia bases were re-established comparable to those used in the violent 2008 elections, surveillance was tightened up such that Mbare became a no-go area for MDC-T activists including the councillors, who could not visit openly, and could certainly not live or trade in Mbare; the MP also could not go to Mbare.<sup>118</sup> Open support for MDC-T was forced underground. Chipangano took control over newly drilled BHs, requiring a ZANU(PF) card for access to water. Councillor Muleya explained:<sup>119</sup>

In my ward there are 6 ZANU bases - they have established them themselves around BHs that were drilled in Mbare. The constituency development fund was given to MPs to pay for projects in their areas, and in Mbare it was used to drill BHs. But then all the new BHs were invaded by ZANU members and they are camped around them, took them over, fenced them off, saying they are theirs. Now when you go to collect water, they control that, you can't get it unless you're in good books with ZANU...

Chipangano also monopolised employment opportunities and expelled donor projects that might benefit a non-partisan constituency, such as a \$5 million renovation of Matapi flats proposed by Bill and Melissa Gates Foundation.<sup>120</sup> The disruption of the building of a new service station by Mashwede Diesel, even after all employment had been promised to Chipangano, was particularly instructive of how ZANU(PF) took over as militarised local authority, while also showing the fractious nature of ZANU(PF) hierarchies, revealing tensions between Chipangano and other ZANU(PF) youth, as well as conflict between the ZANU(PF) District Coordinating Committee and Savanhu as senior politburo patron.<sup>121</sup> In April 2012 the DCCs were abolished in the interest of greater central ZANU(PF) control.

Chipangano's presence in Mbare was part of ZANU(PF)'s electoral strategy for Mbare itself, as well as being a model and tool in efforts to establish similar rent-seeking and patronage operations in other parts of the city. Mbare traders living in other parts of Harare were thus instructed to register on the Mbare voters roles, and were used to try to spread ZANU(PF) support in the suburbs where they lived.<sup>122</sup> Chipangano also had a smaller presence in other residential districts, and in other minor markets around the city it was common for ZANU(PF) youth or women's groups to demand people have ZANU(PF) cards to trade and thus achieve parallel taxation of market stalls, taxi ranks and other

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<sup>116</sup> *The Zimbabwean* 17 October 2011

<sup>117</sup> 'MDC applauds court ruling on reinstatement of Harare councillors', *SW Radio Africa*, 26 October 2011.

<sup>118</sup> The MP and councillor have repeatedly reported to the press over 2011-12 that they cannot go to Mbare. See for example *The Zimbabwean*, 14 August 2012

<sup>119</sup> Interview, 2 September 2011

<sup>120</sup> 'Chipangano cost residents new houses', 7 November 2011, *SW Radio Africa* <http://www.swradioafrica.com/>, retrieved 31 July 2012.

<sup>121</sup> The service station was allocated a plot by council resolution, but construction was stopped by ZANU(PF) youth attacking the workers. Mashwede Diesel and ZANU(PF) District Coordinating Committee (DCC) negotiated an agreement that all employment opportunities be given to Chipangano. But ZANU(PF) youth continued to disrupt with violence, apparently on Politburo instructions, as the owner of Maswede Diesel supported MDC activity in Masvingo. Jim Kunaka produced a letter on Harare City Council letterhead signed by the Town Clerk, ordering that construction work should stop. 'How Chipangano stalled fuel project', *Daily News* 27 February 2012.

<sup>122</sup> Interviews, Mbare councillor 2 September 2011.

business. Yet this appeared much less successful in other parts of the city, as MDC-T councillors and MDC-T structures were able to resist or mobilise people to refuse, at least on a temporary basis, and their own members could continue to trade (even if some also decided to buy ZANU(PF) cards for their own protection). In another high density suburb, for example, when ZANU(PF) youth tried to set up market stalls and take over a car park, the councillor said he was able to ‘use council muscle’ by threatening that council would destroy illegal structures, but he also acknowledged limits ‘particularly when ZRP are involved’.<sup>123</sup>

Councillors claimed to have mobilised traders to refuse ZANU(PF) donations in some places, through campaigns instructing that market fees should be paid only to City of Harare, and a mixture of persuasion and threats. As in Mbare, ZANU(PF)’s entrée strategy in other districts of the city was to take over council and local state assets – occupying community halls, invading singles accommodation intended for vulnerable groups, or key worker housing. Councillors were sometimes able to undermine this strategy through threats to the long term safety of ZANU(PF) supporters and family living in MDC-T strongholds - ‘if you create problems for us, we’ll create problems for you’.<sup>124</sup> MDC-T also played on people’s insecurity and preoccupation with negative potentiality, by spreading rumours of mysterious illnesses and deaths of ZANU(PF) militia engaged in violence.<sup>125</sup> In this way, they reduced the militancy of the municipal police, or Mbare traders outside Mbare, and managed to get District Officers to help protect council facilities. They also used the courts. In one instance where a block of housing intended for teachers and nurses was occupied by ZANU(PF) youth, pressure from the Ministries of Education and Health resulted in their departure.<sup>126</sup>

The extent to which ZANU(PF) set up parallel structures or was able to control urban economic opportunities was thus variable, and the high density suburbs were organised from MDC-T activists’ point of view in a mosaic of defensible and in-defensible space. Spaces ranged from those seen as MDC-T controlled, with safe houses, where ZANU(PF) activists moving alone were unsafe, through contested areas MDC-T would not try to defend, to ZANU(PF) areas that were no-go areas for MDC-T.<sup>127</sup> Aside from Mbare, the spaces that ZANU(PF) managed to create as no-go areas for MDC-T under the IG were on the peripheries of cities, where the expanding urban population and housing spills over and extends beyond the boundaries of City Council into former farmland and other state land controlled by war veterans. There too militarised modes of party control included surveillance.

### **Peri-urban Areas and Militia Control**

MDC-T-run councils typically had an acute shortage of serviced land and a critical shortage of housing. Increasingly, they were hemmed in by land and populations controlled by ZANU(PF). In Harare City, waiting lists for housing extended to 500,000 people, and in Norton and Ruwa comparable lists also reached into tens of thousands and were extending. Urban councils not only lacked finance to build homes or service land, but increasingly also lacked appropriate land itself: all three councils had requested and been refused additional land from the Ministry of Lands. In Harare, the central state had become the main supplier of land, as a result of land becoming available through land reform.<sup>128</sup> Marongwe *et al* argue this means that ‘the question of who benefitted from land

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<sup>123</sup> Interview, 20 April 2012

<sup>124</sup> Interview, Harare high density councillor, 11 September 2011.

<sup>125</sup> Interviews Harare councillors, various high density wards

<sup>126</sup> Interview, suspended councillor, Tafara, 19 April 2012 sources.

<sup>127</sup> Interviews, Harare councillors, high density wards.

<sup>128</sup> Between 1999 and 2011, central government delivered 53% of land coming onto Harare land markets, (68,740 residential stands), the City council 13% and private sector 33%. The private sector was the most

allocation, even in the towns and cities, cannot be unrelated to one's political affiliation to ZANU(PF)<sup>129</sup>. Indeed, control of urban land was a source of great political capital. Surveillance helped to maintain a sense of insecurity and political conditionality, such that the political advantages could be perpetuated over time, and ZANU(PF) could monopolise the public sphere in parts of the urban periphery, forcing MDC-T underground.

The ways land became available through Fast Track Land Reform within urban areas was far from transparent. Some was allocated through Operation Garikayi, a militarised central state programme purportedly providing homes to those made homeless through the mass demolitions.<sup>130</sup> In practice, however, the housing built under this programme was given to military families and party clients, though un-serviced land was also allocated to housing coops, developers and employers.<sup>131</sup> Housing allocated through Homelink (the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe's programme to cater for diaspora investment) was also partly ceded to army, judiciary and other public servants.<sup>132</sup> Significant land on was also given to ZANU(PF) cooperatives.

ZANU(PF) regulation commonly operated through war veterans and ZANU(PF) District Coordinating Committees, who answered formally up the rural district administrative hierarchy to District and Provincial Administrators and Governor, as well as to ZANU(PF) heavyweights who acted as patron of particular areas. The population in these areas included displaced people from Operation Murambatsvina, former farmworkers, city council workers dismissed during the Commission phase, and overspill from the city's high density suburbs – people who could not afford rents in the high density suburbs and expanding families with nowhere else to go. In some places control was exerted quite straightforwardly through charging rent. Bobo farm, for example, which abuts Mabvuku-Tafara, was set up as a holding camp after Operation Murambatsvina, but was also home to other displaced plus overspill from the high density suburbs, and was controlled through a war veteran base on the farm.<sup>133</sup> The war veterans collected rent from households; they also set up a cemetery that charged slightly less than its Harare City counterpart.

But housing cooperatives have become an increasingly important way of organising access to land, servicing and building. Bobo was divided into sections owned by senior ZANU(PF) figures, where individual households could access stands via membership of cooperatives, for which they paid both an initial membership fee plus a monthly administration charge, and also paid to be allocated a stand. The plots did not necessarily go to people already in Bobo, and multiple allocations of the same stands were said to have caused fights. A member of the underground MDC structures described:

They tell you 'we were given the land, the land was given', then you do your own structures, build on your own, but there's no transfer of papers. Once you have been ceded that land, you

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important supplier in the late 1990s/early 2000s, producing middle/high income housing; the Council and Council cooperatives were briefly important in 2005 after negotiating some land. Marongwe et al *Scoping Study*, p. 55. 58.

<sup>129</sup> Marongwe et al *Scoping Study*, p.59.

<sup>130</sup> Marongwe et al *Scoping Study*, p.58.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. 39% of Operation Garikayi allocations were in Harare, or 35,000 units by 2006. On Operation Garikayi in Bulawayo, see B. Mpofu, 'Operation "Live Well" or "Cry Well"? An Analysis of the Rebuilding Programme in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe', *JSAS* 37, 1 (2011), pp. 177-192

<sup>132</sup> McGregor 'Sentimentality or Speculation'

<sup>133</sup> Interviews, 3 members of MDC-T structures for Bobo, 20 April 2012.

have no rights, you do what they want; you have to do that or they'll accuse you of being MDC. That's the condition of the land. If they even think you're MDC you can't even be considered.<sup>134</sup>

Residents of Bobo described conflict and confusion where plots were allocated to numerous different individuals. They said occupiers were told not to take such issues to the local police station, but were instructed to 'defend yourself with an axe'.<sup>135</sup>

Insecurity was perpetuated by the regime of surveillance maintained through ZANU(PF) cell structures, through which households were monitored, intelligence was gathered on movement and political behaviour, and particularly suspicious individuals were singled out for exceptional attention. All entry to the farm was watched by guards who reported to the war veterans' bases; the only transport onto the farm was in the form of taxi services that operated from an unofficial rank, run by Chipangano.<sup>136</sup> ZANU(PF) sent buses onto Bobo farm when it needed displays of support elsewhere in Harare and rounded up the whole adult and youth population, saying, 'Today only cats and dogs will remain in Bobo'.<sup>137</sup>

Councillors distinguished between the 'political' housing coops set up by ZANU(PF) and those registered by the council and subsequently handed over to the ZANU(PF)-run Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development. But the multiple different bodies running housing coops, the number of unregistered coops, and the different structures of authority created confusion, which was furthered by the fact that agreements for servicing and developing cooperative land involved partnerships with private companies and individuals. This gave rise to multiple disputes over authority in peri-urban areas, both regarding control over the land itself and those who live on it, between urban councils and their rural counterparts, as well as with war vets acting as *de facto* authorities. Such confusion and dispute can partly explain the apparent proliferation of swindlers and opportunists posing as coops and developers and fraudulently collecting fees.<sup>138</sup>

Of Harare's peri-urban areas, Harare South was particularly violent and surveillance particularly intense.<sup>139</sup> This was the sole Harare City ward to secure both a ZANU(PF) councillor and ZANU(PF) MP in 2008. The MDC-T council candidate and his family suffered extreme violence, and he was forced into exile under the IG. Violence against suspected MDC-T structures escalated in early 2012 in a renewed effort to physically expel activists. On Hopley farm, MDC-T leaders living in settlements that originated as holding camps for displaced people were repeatedly detained, assaulted and hospitalised; one was left for dead by the road in February 2012. They all lived in plastic, as their homes were repeatedly destroyed. Indeed here, 'living in plastic' was a signifier of MDC-T, with those in shacks being victimised as such: 'Those who vote MDC will live in shacks, you won't be given stands unless you support ZANU(PF) – then if you get a stand you're put in front and told to do violence to others'.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Interviews, MDC-T structures, Bobo, 20 April 2012

<sup>135</sup> Interview, 20 April 2012

<sup>136</sup> Interview, MDC-T structures, Bobo, 20 April 2012.

<sup>137</sup> Interviews, MDC-T structures, Bobo, 20 April 2012.

<sup>138</sup> Marongwe *Scoping Study* et al; 'Bogus unions invade Caledonia farm', ZBC 8 January 2012; 'Policy for Housing Coops', *The Herald*, 12 October 2012; 'Government urged to form regulatory framework for land development', 3 September 2012 <http://bulawayo24.com/>, retrieved 30 July 2012.

<sup>139</sup> This section is based on interviews with members of the MDC-T structures living in Hopley and Woodford farms, 22 April 2012

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

MDC-T youth tried to retaliate and resist partisan allocation of resources in Hopley (by attacking some bases in 2009, destroying property and fighting at meetings where MDC-T were explicitly refused stands). But the possibilities for so doing decreased as ZANU(PF) control intensified. Local militia could draw on reinforcements from outside for key assaults, as in one instance in Hopley in early 2012, for example, when Chipangano hi-jacked a kombi in Mbare and drove it out to Hopley to reinforce local ZANU(PF) in assaults on MDC-T supporters.<sup>141</sup>

ZANU(PF)'s control over resources on the farms of the urban periphery for political patronage created a serious problem for MDC-T, who had nothing to offer members. A member of the Provincial MDC-T structures for Harare South elaborated:

People are saying we're suffering for nothing... ZANU gave themselves land and houses, but what of us? We fight together but when you get in, you eat, some of our leaders are doing just the same! We are in a big trouble, a big dilemma of explanation – what of tomorrow? If you have a taste and you can't share, what if you have the whole plate?<sup>142</sup>

The MDC-T youth organising secretary for Hopley used a revealing metaphor for living in ZANU(PF) controlled peri-urban space, and of the role of surveillance in his precarious existence and heightened fears for the future:

The way we are living in Hopley, it's like living in a glass, at any time it can be shattered, and you're always being watched...<sup>143</sup>

## Conclusion

Focussing on ZANU(PF) regimes of surveillance within local authorities and their role in patronage over resources in contested urban spaces can provide revealing insight into the remaking of ZANU(PF) powers. This prism highlights the 'reach' of party/state and its capacity to suffuse work within government institutions and social life in contested areas. As debates over surveillance in Africa have been empirically grounded in the continent's 'strong' militarised, centralised states with consolidated bureaucracies and pervasive ruling party hierarchies, so they avoid the assumption of 'weakness' that has become the 'metanarrative of stateness in Africa' and is misleading in the Zimbabwean context.<sup>144</sup> The role in surveillance of a powerful bureaucratised state security agency such as CIO, and the ways in which ZANU(PF) powers work through as well as beyond state institutions can also highlight how misleading the metaphors 'parallel', 'informal' and 'network' can be, should they carry with them echoes of their original grounding in debates over power and authority in 'weak' states, imply disorganisation, a separation from the state and absence of hierarchy. The extension of ZANU(PF) structures of authority through and outside the local state should not be read as evidence that control of state institutions is unimportant or that local authorities themselves have become a mere façade, but rather can indicate internal resistance and the tensions of trying to achieve de facto partisan control, while also trying to maintain legitimacy through a normative commitment to the law, professional delivery of services and the general good.

Enhanced surveillance inside local government institutions with a key role for the notorious CIO was a means of over-riding resistance and 'conscripting' support from technocrats and councillors, creating a 'rule through unease' which played on fears bred of historical experiences of violence and

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Interview, April 2012.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Purdekova, 'Even if I am not here', p.477.

the known dimensions of punishment and suffering on the part of individuals who opposed.<sup>145</sup> Being watched became central to the experience of working for local government or holding the office of councillor, and shaped judgements and decisions. While the legacies of a decade of intense political violence produced characteristic ‘hyper vigilance’ in the form of an alertness to signs and rumours, heightened suspicion and an ominous sense of negative potentiality,<sup>146</sup> such fears were made more tangible by ubiquitous reminders of ZANU(PF) presence and power. This sense of being under constant surveillance and associated fears did not wholly eliminate resistance or professional practice: where political pressures were less acute, some councils managing to rebuild services to a degree under the IG. But in places where political pressures were acute, such as those described in detail here, the scope for public service under the IG remained drastically circumscribed. Where surveillance and threats failed to achieve compliance, troublesome councillors could easily be suspended from office, or expelled from their homes through physical assaults if they lived in urban spaces deemed ZANU(PF) areas.

The political capital conferred by control over urban land and access to the rights to trade is immense, given extensive poverty, the absence of alternative sources of livelihood, and as people have been worn down by years of political violence and scarcity. Although considerable attention has been paid to the politics of resource control and patronage in Zimbabwe’s countryside, there has been too little attention to the ways in which ZANU(PF) also sought to dominate resources, economic opportunities and livelihoods in select urban contexts to comparable ends. My aim here was to shed light on how ZANU(PF) extended its power under the IG through patronage in some urban spaces through control of land on urban peripheries, by perpetuating partisan distribution of the permits, licences and other resources allocated by the local state, and hijacking local state roles and assets directly through ZANU(PF) militia. The investment in surveillance through the CIO and on the part of militia and party structures, and sense of being watched on the part of councillors and urban dwellers in key spaces highlights a mechanism for creating compliance without resort to large-scale overt coercion and direct physical violence. By focusing on MDC-T councillors who were the prime targets of CIO and ZANU(PF) militia surveillance, and on urban spaces where ZANU(PF) concentrated efforts to monopolise the public sphere, there is a risk of exaggerating the degree and capacity for more generalised social and territorial control. My point is not that Mbare or peri-urban locations where ZANU(PF) has sought to monopolise the public sphere are typical, or that the intrusive watching experienced by MDC-T activists including councillors can be generalised, but rather to show how intelligence gathering, and targeted surveillance and resource control plays a key role in leveraging political support.

Urban politics was critical to the dynamics of ‘power-sharing’ in Zimbabwe. Such struggles should feature prominently in assessments of inclusive governments as a tool for negotiated political transition. The debate within Zimbabwe over corruption within MDC-T run local authorities under the IG, and the prominence this assumed as an explanation for mounting disillusion with the former opposition, is in many ways a vindication of ZANU(PF)’s strategy and its capacity to outmanoeuvre and undermine the former opposition. As Bracking has argued, corruption can be considered a strategic technology of governance, and it can be revealing to scrutinise the effects of labelling particular actors as corrupt and what it achieves.<sup>147</sup> The focus on the failings of MDC-T run local authorities and councillors themselves deflected attention away from the extraordinary constraints on the political space elected councillors occupied, as it was shaped by the law and political realities of

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<sup>145</sup> Bozzini, ‘Low tech surveillance’. P.112.

<sup>146</sup> Vigh, ‘Vigilance’.

<sup>147</sup> Bracking ‘Political Economies’



reconstituted ZANU(PF) powers. The ‘sharp learning curve that the MDC-T has had to undergo in terms of statecraft’<sup>148</sup> was replicated at local level, where the challenges were perhaps even more acute.

It is important to conceptualise the politics of patronage in ways other than through the figure of the incapable, corrupt councillor, interacting with an insufficiently civic-minded public. Rather, an historical account is necessary, not only of structural-legal changes that have undermined councils, but also of how ZANU(PF)’s reconstituted powers work within and beyond local government, through CIO surveillance, coercion and enticement of those in public office, and militia control of valuable resources in key urban spaces. In local government, the MDC-T was able to do something notwithstanding the constraints – services were poor but with donor assistance they were better than previously, ‘dinosaurs’ were exposed even if they were not removed. But given the persistence of corruption and patronage in local government, it is also important to ask deeper questions about what is now seen as normal in relation to the nature and understanding of ‘stateness’ and imaginaries of what it should be on the part of those holding public office. If the idea of the state as place to eat took hold in some parts of the MDC-T hierarchy and in the imaginaries of some sections of the grassroots, it is nonetheless important to emphasise that this was also resisted and challenged, and to place interpretations of what is normal in the domain of politics and history and not only the domain of popular culture.

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<sup>148</sup> Raftopoulos ‘An overview of the GPA’