

# **Governance for sustainability? Balancing social and environmental concerns in Harare**

Amin Y. Kamete

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### **Indexing terms**

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Sustainable development

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## List of Acronyms

AAG:	Affirmative Action Group
CBD:	Central Business District
CCZ:	The Consumer Council of Zimbabwe
CFH:	Civic Forum on Housing
CIDA:	Canadian International Development Agency
CFH:	Civic Forum for Housing
CHOGM:	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CSO:	Central Statistical Office
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DSHZ:	Dialogue on Shelter for the Homeless in Zimbabwe
DSW:	Department of Social Welfare
E2000	Environment 2000
ESAP:	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FPL:	Food Poverty Line
HAVAZ:	Hawkers and Vendors Association of Zimbabwe
HC:	Holding Camp
HCC:	Harare City Council
HICP:	Harare Inner City Partnership
HDAs:	High-density areas
HPZ:	Housing People of Zimbabwe
LDAs:	Low-density areas
LGNH:	Local Government and National Housing
LGPWNH:	Local Government, Public Works and National Housing
MDAs:	Middles-density areas
MFED:	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MLGPWNH:	Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing
MoHCW:	Ministry of Health and Child Welfare
MPSLSW:	Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare
MYDGEC:	Ministry of Youth Development, gender and Employment Creation
NGO:	Non-governmental organisation
PRF:	Poverty Reduction Forum
SCP:	Sustainable Cities Programme
SDF:	Social Dimension Fund
TC:	Transitional Camp
TCPL:	Total Consumption Poverty Line
UN:	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development
WHO:	World Health Organisation
ZCTU:	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
ZESA:	Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority
ZIHOPFE:	Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation
ZISA:	Zimbabwe Informal Sector Association
ZITOA:	Zimbabwe Tuckshop Owners Association
ZRP:	Zimbabwe Republic Police

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Cities and towns are centres of population concentration, production and consumption. Urban space is used as the location of human activity, the source of raw materials and the site for the disposal of waste products from human activities (Merrett, 1995:7). This use makes urban centres critical in the promotion of human welfare, the growth and diversification of economies and the preservation of natural resources (Tietenberg, 1984:17; Woodhouse 1992:103) not only locally but at the national level as well. The nature of urbanisation and urban areas presents challenges and opportunities for immediate production and consumption (cf. Kamete *et al.*, 2001). Furthermore, there is the additional and perhaps more formidable challenge of ensuring that the basis of this production and consumption benefits all sectors of society now and is maintained well into the future. Therein comes the issue of sustainability.

For this reason, urban local authorities find themselves in a situation where they have to look after and satisfy the (not always compatible) needs of society, economy and nature. This is not any easy task. It involves a complex balancing game. How well this game is played depends in part on the system of urban governance. In the search for sustainable urban development the way rulers deal with the ruled is as important as the relationship between nature, society and the economy. It can be argued that urban governance ultimately determines the outcome of this mostly antagonistic interface between the three dimensions.

This paper explores the hunt for sustainable urban development in the face of particular systems of urban governance. It is an attempt to assess how one urban local authority has attempted to integrate poverty and the environment in the search for the sustainable city. The next section discusses sustainability and sustainable urban development. This is followed by an overview of urban governance, urban poverty and the urban environment. Thereafter the discussion focuses on the experiences of Harare, Zimbabwe's capital.

## 2 SUSTAINABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW

The overused concept of sustainability is critical to any discussion of sustainable urban development. Unfortunately, "there is much confusion on the meaning of the concept" (Atkinson, 1994:97). Some commentators distinguish between social, economic and ecological sustainability (see Hardoy *et al.*, 1992). Despite some definitional confusion and disagreements, it can be argued that the basics of sustainability revolve around the issue of maintenance or improvement of 'wellbeing' in any one of the three dimensions. For this wellbeing to be sustainable it needs to satisfy some basic conditions (cf. Blowers, 1992: 27; Brugmann, 1994:129–30; White, 1994), namely,

1. The benefits can be passed on to future generations (intergenerational equity)
2. The benefits are shared across all sectors of society (intragenerational equity)
3. Improvements in one dimension do not retrogressively affect the wellbeing of the other two dimensions.

Perhaps the most succinct conceptualisation of sustainability is that by Castells (2000:118) who argues that for sustainability to be possible it is necessary that "the conditions of production do not destroy over time the conditions of...reproduction." This statement captures the essence of the three conditions above. The conditions of reproduction are among others human, economic and environmental. This agrees with the UNDP (1997: 2), which adopts the characteristic pronouncements on sustainability in the presentation of its "five

aspects to sustainable human development". The agency cautions that the pursuit of the present generation's needs must not cripple "the right of future generations to be free of poverty and deprivation and to exercise their basic capabilities" (UNDP, 1997: 2). The sentiment is shared by a commentary that brings out the multifaceted and dynamic nature of sustainability by stressing the need for long-term focus on "human capacity building, social, economic...and...ecological functions of the natural surroundings and the resources they generate" (RSAS, 1995: 5).

Thus in the search for sustainable urban development it is necessary to concentrate on the natural environment; but the human and economic dimensions are equally significant. In one of the most explicit articulations of the need for balance Habitat stresses "balanced social, economic and environmental priorities" as one of the objectives of sustainability (UNCHS, 2000:16). The agency labels this condition "sustainability in all dimensions of urban development" and stresses that sustainability affects the needs of both present and future generations as (UNCHS, 2000: 12; cf. Boxes 1 and 2).

#### BOX 1: URBAN SUSTAINABILITY: A FULLER CONCEPTUALISATION?

Drakakis-Smith (1997) draws up a list of requirements that must be satisfied for "developing sustainability in an urban context". The list includes:

- ◆ Equity, social justice and human rights
- ◆ Basic human rights
- ◆ Social and ethnic self determination
- ◆ Environmental awareness and integrity
- ◆ Awareness of inter-linkages across both space and time

Be that as it may, some commentators maintain that while the economic and environmental aspects have received widespread attention, the social dimension has at best only received "passing comments" (Yiftachel and Hedgcock, 1993: 139). This virtual neglect of society can be taken as a symptom of that interpretation of sustainability which has been described as "...a narrow concept preoccupied with the sustained use or utilisation of the resource base" (Pierce, 1992: 310–12). Obviously this perception is not an improvement on earlier development policies whose sole concern was the national economy.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast, sustainable urban development should not display evidence of this imbalance in emphasis where any one of the three sectors thrives at the expense of the other two. Evidence from development policy reveals that unbalanced development cannot be sustained over time. Economically biased policies that focus on growth and stability have not been benefiting, and are sometimes even harming, the social and environmental fabric. Wisner (1988: 4) points out that these "development-as-growth" strategies failed to benefit the poorest 60 percent of the population in the developing world. Not surprisingly, therefore, in as much as there is a relationship between poverty and environmental degradation, there is a relationship between prosperity and environmental damage (Priemus, 1999: 218).

At the other extreme, policies aimed exclusively at promoting social wellbeing such as those aimed at redistribution or enhancing access to basic needs and service, have sometimes

---

<sup>1</sup> In this case economic development was perceived as "...a material and organisational process measurable in some monetary unit in which the natural assets of a region or country are transformed to produce an improvement in the general welfare of its population" (Pierce, 1992: 307). The adverse ecological and social impacts of policies based on this conceptualisation of development are well-documented (see below).

resulted in economic stagnation or decline, with corresponding negative impacts on the natural environment. The economic and ecological mess in some former Marxist economies such as those of Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Ethiopia is partly a result of elevating society above nature and economy (Zimbabwe, 1981, 1986, 1991; Kamete, 1998). This indicates that social prosperity that is not supported by a healthy environment and stable economy is at best temporary and therefore unsustainable.

On the basis of these observations it can be argued that policies that are preoccupied with environmental protection regardless of the impact on society and the economy can only achieve their goals at the expense of these two. Similarly economically biased policies will inevitably inflict some damage on society and nature, while policies that are obsessed with social wellbeing to the exclusion of nature and economy will yield unsavoury economic and environmental side-effects (Bartelmus 1980:2; Conyers and Hills, 1984; Wisner, 1988; WCED, 1987; Kamete, 1992; Drakakis-Smith, 1995; UNDP, 1997). Development policy should therefore transcend “mere environmental friendliness”, economic prosperity or social wellbeing, but should aim at “...the establishment of a good symbiosis” between ecological, social and economic components” (Priemus, 1999: 263).

#### BOX 2: SUSTAINABLE CITIES & LOCAL GOVERNANCE

A Sustainable City...

is a city where achievements in social, economic, and physical development are made to last. A Sustainable City has a lasting supply of the natural resources on which its development depends (using them only at a level of sustainable yield). A Sustainable City maintains a lasting security from environmental hazards which may threaten development achievements (allowing only for acceptable risk).

*Source: UNCHS 2000*

In view of the above the introduction of the concept of sustainability to the urban context in the 1990s is a welcome development. This is especially so because in urban areas the link between environmental, social and economic aspects seems to be underplayed. Sustainable urban development seems to answer a pertinent question raised by one commentator concerning "...the form and content of a development model that is economically equitable, socially ennobling, and environmentally balanced..." (Riddel, 1980: x). Some analysts and practitioners have answered this challenge by combining the conventional economic and social dimensions with the quality of the natural environment to come up with indicators of sustainability (Domanski, 2000:1205; cf. Miller and De Roo, 1999). This wider perception prefers integrated urban development that embraces both socio-economic and ecological aspects.

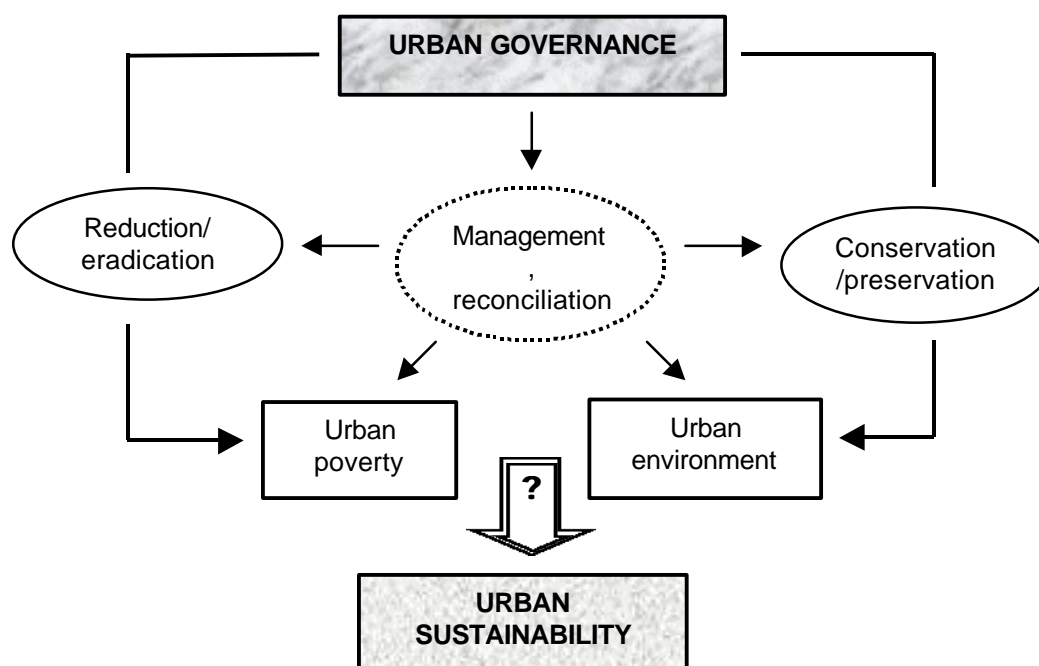
### 3 SOME DETERMINANTS OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

This section attempts to examine the forces at work in the search for sustainable urban development in Zimbabwe. These are urban governance, urban poverty and the urban environment. The aim is to chart out the relationships between these forces so as to draw out the implications for urban sustainability. It should be pointed out that urban governance and poverty are by no means the only determinants of urban sustainability. There are a host of other forces that are equally significant. Among them are institutional, cultural, socio-political and legislative dimensions that are too complicated to be covered under governance and



poverty (see UNDP, 1997; UNCHS/UNEP, 2000; Griffin, 2001). The precise relationships and interaction of the determinants featured in this paper are laid out in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: THE INTERACTION OF THE FOUR DETERMINANTS OF URBAN SUSTAINABILITY



The following section will put these relationships into context by examining individual concepts and the state of knowledge, consensus and controversy surrounding each of them. It is interesting to note here that a recent commentary on urban management points out that for cities to be sustainable they should be “first and foremost livable (sic), competitive, well managed and well governed” (Griffin, 2001: 63). Liveability implies that society and the environment are conducive to life and life sustaining processes and make the urban area worth living in. This rules out poverty and a degraded natural environment. Competitiveness and management, which are easily reflected in society and nature, are themselves products of urban governance.

### 3.1 Urban governance

Sustainable urban development in Zimbabwe hinges on urban governance. Governance in this case is more than the "act of ruling" (see Onibokuni, 1995: 3). It is a perspective that focuses on the relationship between ‘the governors’ (the rulers) and ‘the governed’ (the ruled) (Olowu and Akinola, 1995), and thus revolves around the whole spectrum of civil and political institutions, relationships and processes. Like sustainability, the concept of governance is neither simple nor free of controversy (UNCHS, 2000: 1). The definition of governance by the UNDP (1997: 2–3) is one of the most comprehensive attempts so far. The agency defines governance as:

*The exercise of political, economic and administrative authority in the management of a country’s affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences.*

In a commentary on this definition another UN agency (UNCHS, 2000: 8) emphasises the distinction between governance and government and points out that in the concept of

governance power is viewed as existing within government as well as outside it. Besides government other institutions that are seen to have power include civil society and the private sector. Informal institutions are also factored into the decision-making and power brokering formulae. The argument is that relationships and processes between the stakeholders are (or should be) the basis of decision-making. In the light of this, one source maintains that governance "... is about roles, rules and relationships..." (GDRC, 2000).

Like sustainability governance has been appropriated into the urban arena where it is regarded as reflecting "...the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private plan and manage the common affairs of the city" (UNCHS, 2000: 9). Involved as it is with diversity, urban governance inevitably includes the resolution of conflicts and accommodation of diverse interests in order to promote "co-operative action." The mediation of differences is increasingly becoming a common trait in the discussions of urban governance. It is as important as the articulation of interests and the exercise of legal rights and obligations (GDRC, 2000).

**BOX 3: HABITAT'S "GLOBAL NORMS FOR GOOD URBAN GOVERNANCE"**

- ◆ Legitimacy and accountability of government
- ◆ Freedom of association and participation
- ◆ Empowering women as a key poverty eradication strategy
- ◆ Fair and legal frameworks for a predictable and secure living environment for citizens
- ◆ Availability and validity of information
- ◆ Efficient public sector management
- ◆ Enabling the participation of children in decision-making processes

"For this reason, the campaign proposes that good urban governance is characterized by **sustainability, subsidiarity, equity, efficiency, transparency and accountability, civic engagement and citizenship, and security**, and that these norms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing."

*Source: UNCHS, 2000:11 (Emphasis in original)*

The debate on urban governance has assumed normative overtones through the search for 'good' urban governance. Among the numerous prescriptions for good urban governance are attributes like transparency, popular accountability, efficiency, participation, trust, reciprocity, legitimacy and representativeness in the conduct of public affairs, as well as respect for human rights and rule of law (Olowu and Akinola, 1995: 20; Harpham and Boateng, 1997; Wekwete, 1997; GDRC, 2000). The UNCHS has gone beyond this to search for what it considers to be norms of good urban governance (Box 3, cf. Box 4).

Diversity in urban areas necessitates the incorporation of the mediation, management and resolution of conflict as an integral component of urban governance. It also makes it imperative that all different groups, interests and viewpoints are taken on board in the planning and management of the common affairs of the city. It is not surprising therefore that the Global Campaign for Good Urban Governance amplifies the concept of the "Inclusive City" and "inclusive decision making" to deal with the "...messy reality of competing interests and priorities" in order to "...balance, reconcile and trade off the competing interests" (UNCHS, 2000: 9). The Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP) describes the outcome of this strategy as "broad-based local governance" (UNCHS/UNEP, 2000: 2).

#### BOX 4: ATTRIBUTES OF GOVERNANCE

Governability  
Accountability  
Transparency  
Participation  
Compliance  
Capacity  
M and E  
Interdependence  
Legitimacy  
Rules and Regulations  
Conflict Resolution  
Dispute Resolution  
Negotiation  
Rule-making  
Equity  
Efficiency  
Tenure/Ownership

*Source: GDRC, 2000*

This is an important recognition that brings to the fore the immensity of the potential and problems in urban governance. Urban areas are not like isolated villages that are mostly homogeneous and share common perspectives in important matters. Urban areas are cosmopolitan. They have a multiplicity of social, economic, political, religious compositions, orientations and persuasions. Even within one category, say race, there will be several subcategories in terms of economic standing, age, gender and political persuasion. The management of diversity is thus complex. Indeed, as noted by Habitat, it is a “messy reality”.

### 3.2 Urban poverty

Urban poverty, like sustainable urban development and urban governance, borrows heavily from its wider global parent concept, which in this case is poverty. Discussions on what poverty is, how it is measured, who can be considered to be poor and how it can be addressed are among the richest and most enduring (see World Bank, 2000, 2001; Kamete *et al.*, 2001 for a fuller discussion).<sup>2</sup> However poverty is defined, diagnosed or measured there is one common thread, namely that it is something undesirable and those affected by it or being threatened by it are in a bad situation. Whether poverty is about incomes that are below the minimum required for basic survival, lack of access to basic services, a lack of power, exclusion from basic socio-political and economic processes, vulnerability or insecurity (cf. Chambers, 1995: 175) what is being implied is that something is wrong and it should not be so. If development is taken as “good change” (Chambers, 1995: 174) then surely any change in the direction of poverty is ‘bad change.’ By extension poverty is not conducive to ‘development’ including sustainable urban development.

The Recife Declaration (IFUP, 1996: 3) summarises what many commentators have realised for a long time. The landmark declaration observes:

---

<sup>2</sup> This section will not reproduce the debates but will instead capture the basic essentials in these debates and trends.

*The poor experience not only a lack of income or access to basic assets and basic services, but also a devalued social status, marginalisation in urban space and a degraded living environment, limited access to justice, information, education, decision-making power, and citizenship; and vulnerability to violence and loss of security.*

The summary reflects the increasing complexity of urban poverty. However, it does appear that the diagnosis and monitoring of urban poverty, particularly in terms of measurement, is still dominated by monetary aspects typical of the popular – and convenient – poverty lines. Income continues to exert an irresistible attraction among both academics and practitioners (Wratten, 1995: 12–13; Box 5). The perennial linkage between poverty and ‘low-income groups’ is a testimony to this. This in part explains why strategies to address poverty almost always have dominant income components (Box 5; see Mitlin, 1997; cf. Hanna and Oh, 2000).

#### BOX 5: ASSESSING URBAN POVERTY: THE POWER OF INCOME

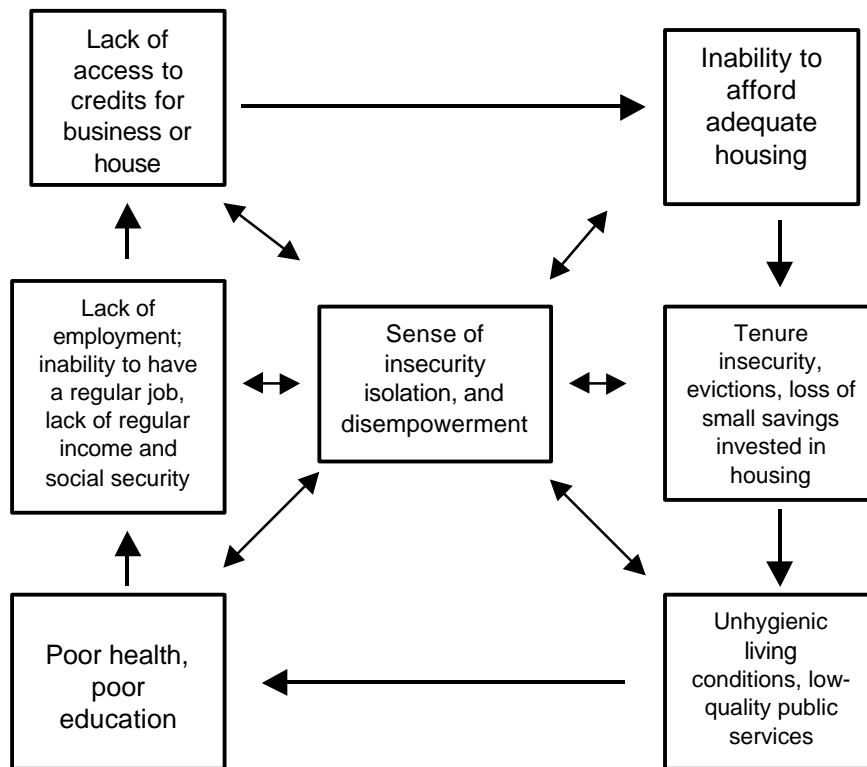
Income (or consumption) is the most frequently used proxy for poverty. Money-based poverty definitions and assessments provide a standard scale so those different population groups can be compared. For comparisons across very different types of settlements (such as between rural and urban areas), it is important that quantitative measures take adequate account of major differences in the minimum essential “consumption basket” and the differential prices faced for goods and services. Social indicators, such as life expectancy and infant mortality are also important. Definitions and benchmarks should allow the living conditions of different population groups to be compared with others.

*Source: World Bank, 2001: 8*

According to Moser *et al.* (1996) urban poverty is linked to three features of urban life, viz., commoditisation, environmental hazard and social fragmentation. Commoditisation signifies reliance on the cash economy, environmental hazard stems from high densities, “hazardous location of settlements and exposure to multiple pollutants” and social fragmentation primarily means a “lack of community and inter-household mechanisms for social security, relative to those in rural areas” (World Bank, 2001: 3). Some analysts strongly argue that there are some policies and management practices that cause or exacerbate urban poverty. Among these are corruption, mismanagement and bad governance (see Olowu and Akinola, 1995; World Bank, 2001).

The impacts of urban poverty are all too obvious. They are as undesirable as the phenomenon of poverty itself. But they are not simple and straightforward. Because poverty is “...characterised by cumulative deprivations” (Baharoglu, and Kessides, 2001: 6), poverty ‘types’ can generate or worsen other manifestations of poverty. Figure 2 illustrates the cumulative impacts of urban poverty as conceptualised by Baharoglu and Kessides.

FIGURE 2: CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF URBAN POVERTY



Source: Baharoglu and Kessides, 2001: 6

The diagram suggests that the complexities in the identification of poverty can easily spill over into the diagnosis of its impacts. Some impacts of poverty directly produce their own distinctive impacts. An example in Figure 2 is the lack of employment, which directly results in unemployed persons not having access to credit. In addition, these simple direct impacts create their own impact while at the same time contributing to the aggravation of the impacts of other processes and events in urban development. For example, the inability to access credit, which as noted above is a result of unemployment, results in those affected not being able to afford decent accommodation, which itself results in unhygienic living conditions. This further heightens the sense of insecurity and disempowerment.

### 3.3 The urban natural environment

This section looks at the natural environment in urban centres. It is not a detailed ecological description but rather a highlight of the important position the environment occupies and how it feeds into the wider concept of urban sustainability. Urbanisation in part involves a change in economic activities. It is a change that is clearly manifested in the structure of the economy which becomes less agrarian as urbanisation boosts industrialisation (cf. World Bank, 2000; Kamete *et al.*, 2001). Obviously this signals a change in the use to which the environment is put as well as the intensity of that use.

The establishment and growth of urban centres result in a concentration of people in limited spaces (Kamete *et al.*, 2001.). These are people who are in no way self-sufficient and have to be served by a variety of urban functions and services and networks in order to be able to exist and indeed function in urban space. Urbanisation thus introduces ‘novel’ land use

patterns that rely more on secondary activities – like processing, manufacturing – and tertiary activities –like finance and other specialised services – than on primary extractive activities.

In such ‘modernised’ urban economies the natural environment finds itself being used in three principal activities, namely source, site and sink (Merrett, 1995: 7). Of critical importance in determining the fate of the environment in the face of such usage are indicators like population size, production per capita, consumption per capita, production structure and efficiency (Stolwijk *et al.*, 1998 in Priemus, 1999: 218). As Priemus (1999: 218) notes, some factors like increased population, production and consumption “show a positive correlation with environmental damage” while others among them input-output efficiency and changes in production structure “cast a different light on the issue”.

FIGURE 3: USING THE URBAN NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

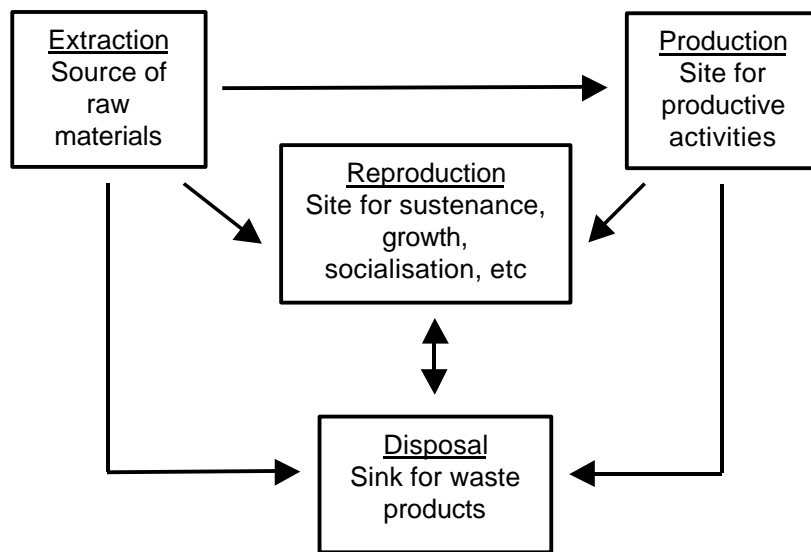


Figure 3 shows the multiplicity of purposes to which urban residents and institutions put the environment. The arrows indicate that the principal human activities of extraction, production and reproduction churn out waste products that are sunk back into the environment. There are two points that should be noted here.

First the environment can and often does become overstretched and overloaded. This is borne out by the abundance of studies on such aspects as carrying capacity, bubble concept and the ecological footprint whose object is to measure and communicate pressure on the environment (Priemus, 1999: 216; Rees, 1999; Price, 1999; Costanza *et al.*, 2000; Witten, 2001; Jenkins and Bond, 2001;). These studies are meant to sound out whether environmental damage is running out of control as shown by negative effects on environmental quality, biodiversity, health and wellbeing (van der Waals, 1997 in Priemus, 1999: 217). What makes these measurement concepts important is the fact that “both the human population and the average consumption are increasing while the total area of productive land and stocks of natural capital are fixed or in decline” (Rees, 1996: 195). Nowhere is this more evident than in urban areas.

Second, the environment can and does become the victim of misuse and abuse (Hoffman, 2001). While some of this is motivated by greed and some by need the common denominator

is that the environment is being used improperly. Cases of industrialists dumping toxic waste and effluent into water sources are common in Zimbabwe (see below). The industrialists in question would rather pay a paltry fine (*if* they are caught) than invest large amounts of money in proper waste disposal facilities. The same has been observed in the management of hazardous waste (Mubvami, 1997). Again urban areas are home to most of these misdeeds.

These two points explain the abundance of prescriptive and protective instruments in the form of carefully crafted and often complex legal, policy and institutional frameworks (see Mubvami, 1997; Kamete, 2001). Consequently for some time now there have been lively debates on environmental preservation and human livelihood (Merrett, 1995; Kamete, 1998;). In these debates “the preservation of the ecosystem by a careful use of natural resources” (Bolay and Du, 1999: 66) is juxtaposed with – or even pitted against – such welfare indicators as employment, public health, basic services, poverty, sanitation and general wellbeing. Even though there is general agreement that it is impossible to preserve or improve the environment without attending to living conditions and vice versa, the debates still rage on.

#### BOX 6: SUSTAINABILITY: PRESERVATION OR CONSERVATION?

Pearce *et al.* (1990: 20) present an interesting definition of sustainable development (cf. WCED, 1987: 43). They conceptualise development as a value word that implies desirable change. It thus becomes a vector of desirable social objectives, representing “...a list of the attributes which society wishes to achieve or maximise” (page 20). The list might include access to resources, a fairer distribution of income, and increases in real income per capita. Representing all these attributes by a single proxy indicator will define sustainable development as “... a situation in which the development vector **D** does not decrease over time” (page 3). This gives rise to two variants of the concept, namely *strong sustainability* and *weak sustainability*.

1. ‘Strong sustainability’ requires that the change of **D** with respect to time must be positive each and every period. Incorporated into cost-benefit analysis (CBA), this means that netted across a set of projects the sum of individual damages should be zero or negative at all times.
2. In ‘weak sustainability’ emphasis is placed on the *present value* of development benefits, which ultimately should be positive. This allows for periodic negative values of **D** with respect to time (cf. Bojo *et al.*, 1990: 13).

Merrett (1995: 11) provides useful enlightenment on this debate. In an insightful article rarely quoted he picks out two strands of environmentalism, namely, preservation and conservation (cf. Kamete, 1998). Preservation is more aggressive. It seeks to protect nature against humankind. Conservation is more conciliatory. Its goal is to protect the environment “for the benefit of man (sic)” (Merrett, 1995: 11). These two strands can be fitted into what Pearce *et al.*, 1990) refer to as “strong sustainability” and “weak sustainability” (Box 5). This groundbreaking redefinition of urban environmentalism has major repercussions on urban sustainability. There is a possibility that one dimension (nature) is shoved into battle against others (society and the economy). How this tension is resolved and the outcomes therefrom depend largely on the system of urban governance.



## 4 THE URBAN GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

Urban governance has a lot to do with sustainable urban development. This becomes clear when urban governance is conceptualised as a system with identifiable inputs, processes and outputs. As will be argued later in this discussion, if the inputs into the system of governance consist of wrongly defined concepts of sustainability and governance, it is these concepts that will be processed; and the outputs will by no means usher in an era of sustainability.

The preceding and following discussions hinge on three key issues. Firstly, urban sustainability should never be perceived or operationalised in terms of a single dimension. This approach can lead to negative repercussions on the other dimensions. Secondly, the realisation and achievement of sustainable urban development depends very much on urban governance. It is the type of urban governance that is in a way entrusted with achieving urban sustainability. By virtue of this stewardship the system of urban governance is in a position to 'make or break' urban sustainability. The third issue relates to the argument that the destruction, degradation and deterioration of the urban natural environment including the biosphere can in part be explained in terms of the survival strategies of the poor.

This part of the paper reviews aspects of urban governance that have implications for urban sustainability. The urban 'governors' (elected policy makers and professional policy executors) feature prominently in this discussion by virtue of the crucial role they play in terms of the institutions they create and/or operate in and the operational procedures they adopt. They are the 'drivers' of the governance system. It is them who decide whether civil society, the private sector, households and individuals are invited and/or 'admitted' into the system. The discussion will tackle the governance system in terms of inputs, processes and outputs.

### 4.1 Some inputs into the system of urban governance

The inputs into the urban governance system are manifold. They come from a variety of sources. For the sake of convenience the paper will limit itself to those that are of direct relevance to sustainable urban development. Table 1 summarises some of the major inputs in terms of source, instrument and effect. The inputs are viewed in the context of local governance at the urban level. From Table 1 three principal sources can be identified, namely the governors (central and local government) the governed (civil society, private sector, households and individuals) and observers (international organisations).

An examination of the system over the years leads to the conclusion that urban local authorities in Zimbabwe are very receptive to input emanating from the first two sources, that is, central and local government. Those from central government are obligatory and the urban governors have no choice but to conform. Those generated from within are binding. It is the last two sets of inputs that present an interesting area of analysis.<sup>3</sup> In their dealings with civil society, the private sector and international agencies, urban governors have a choice as to what to accept or reject. As noted in the table their exact responses to the stimuli from civil society, the private sector, households and individuals are shaped by the internal characteristics of the issue being addressed and the system of governance itself. Among the

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<sup>3</sup>It should be noted that these last two also feed into central government. But for the sake of simplicity they will not be dealt with at length.

important “issue characteristics” are the issue’s sensitivity, particularity, fashionability, repercussions and emotive aspects (see Hogwood and Gunn, 1984).

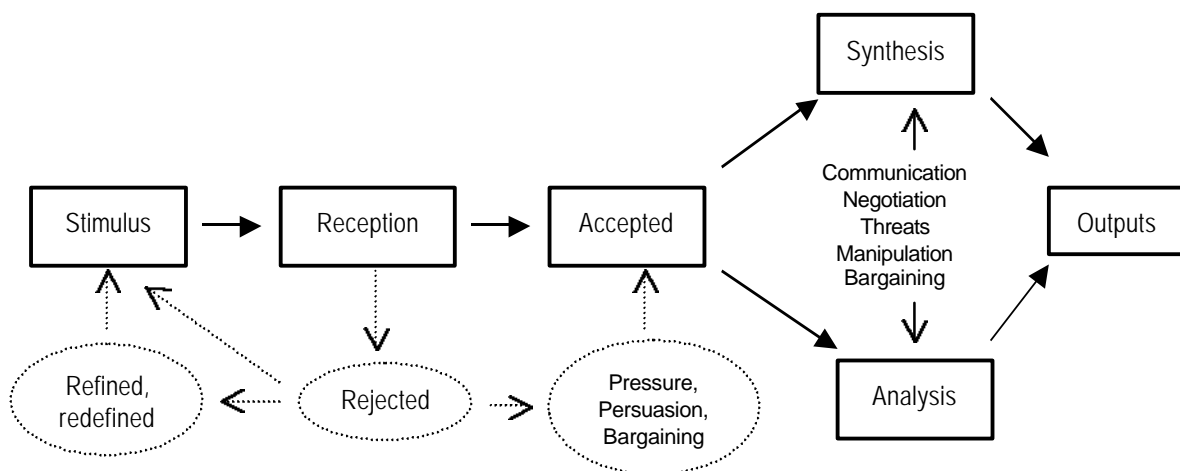
**Table 1: Inputs into the system of urban governance in Zimbabwean**

Source	Instrument	Effects on local authority
Central Government	Statutes, policies, circulars, regulations, directives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Compulsory</li> <li>◆ (Should be) wholly and actively implemented</li> <li>◆ Cannot be amended at local level</li> </ul>
Local Government	By-laws, plans, policies, aspirations, resolutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Binding</li> <li>◆ ( Normally)wholly and actively enforced</li> <li>◆ Can be suspended, reversed, or amended internally</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Civil society,</li> <li>◆ The private sector</li> <li>◆ Households</li> <li>◆ Individual residents</li> </ul>	Petitions, suggestions, protests, threats	Depends on the sensitivity of the governance system and the particularity or fashionableness of the issue, as well as the perceived gains
The international arena	Concepts recommendations, conditionalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Potentially influential;</li> <li>◆ Most accepted and acted on</li> </ul>

## 4.2 Processes

How the inputs are processed will determine the outcome of any activity the governance system is involved in. The same applies to urban sustainability. Zimbabwean urban centres have a complex array of politicians and professionals whose processing of the received inputs has shaped the governance system over the years. Figure 4 captures the processing of various stimuli by the governance system. As indicated in the diagram the processes comprise variants of two major activities, namely, analysis and synthesis. The former consists of the identification, examination and sometimes dissembling of the stimuli into its constituent components in order to understand it better. It is this process that results in particular interpretations and understandings.

FIGURE 4: THE PROCESSING OF INPUTS BY THE URBAN GOVERNANCE SYSTEM.



Synthesis is basically the composition or combination of separate or diverse elements of stimuli into a whole. It is by synthesis that the basic building blocks for policies, strategies and other instruments are put together. Analysis and synthesis are by no means clean-cut processes. Some critical background processes, among them communication, negotiation,

threats, manipulation, placation and bargaining to a large extent influence the processing of the inputs from the various sources (Figure 4). Whether and how analysis and synthesis take place, where, when, with and by whom these processes are done are issues that are critical in moulding the outcome of the processes. It is the opinions and groups that are heard and/or represented and/or consulted whose understanding and interpretation of the situation will determine the output. As will be seen later the structure of the system and its *modus operandi* can and does result in exclusion, which is an indicator of bad urban governance (UNCHS, 2000; UNCHS/UNEP, 2000; GDRC, 2000).

### 4.3 Outputs

The outputs from the system can loosely be labelled perception and translation (Figure 5). Perception is the attachments of particular meanings to events or other forms of external stimuli (see Dunn, 1981; Hogwood and Gunn, 1984). For example, sustainability can be given an exclusively environmental tag. This will directly affect the translation of the issue *as perceived*. The outcome of this perception is the production of action instruments that are solely designed to protect the environment.

Translation is the effectuation of the results of the synthesis and analysis. In the example given above, the translation can be done through criminalising all activities that are perceived to be harmful to sustainability, which in this case means the natural environment. This translation is done through such instruments as by-laws, policies, plans, agendas and directives. It is this ‘final’ activity that is normally felt by the urban population in general.

FIGURE 5. OUTPUTS OF THE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM

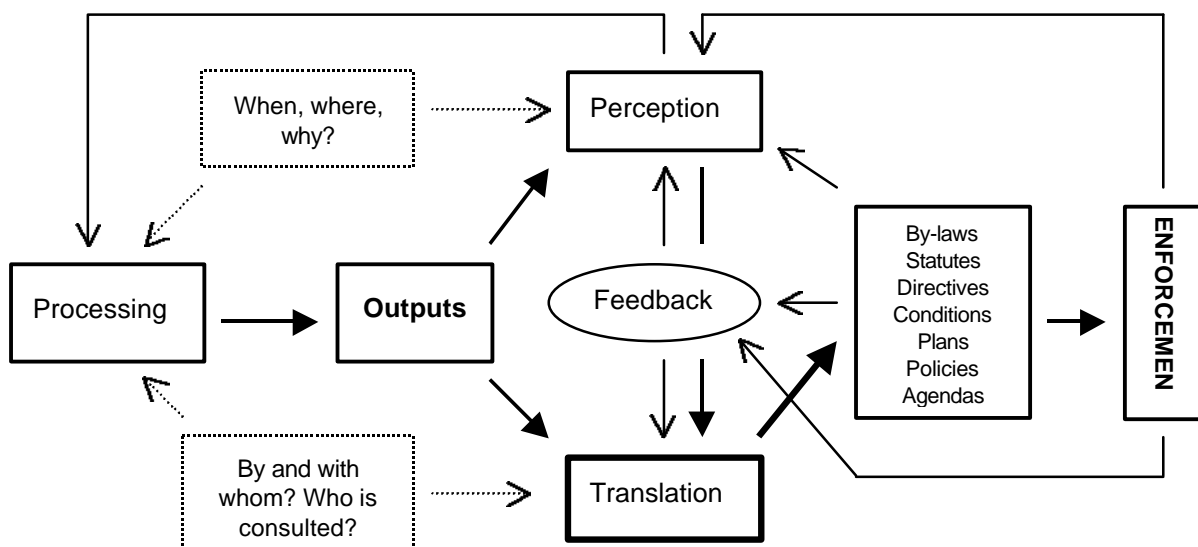


Figure 5 reveals a complex web of processes that result in these instruments. It is an intricate web that besides relying on the players involved in decision-making and negotiation, also draws much of its ‘inspiration’ from perception and feedback. Even the resultant instruments are sometimes not the conclusion of the matter. Before, during or after enforcement feedback can have ‘a say’ in this web and trigger off another round of activity. This usually happens when it is perceived or realised (usually by the decision-makers) that the instrument is not having the desired effect or when its crafters believe it can be adjusted to perform better. This iteration sets off another sequence of processing, perception, translation and feedback.

## 5 URBAN POVERTY AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN HARARE: A PREVIEW

### 5.1 Urban poverty

Since the adoption of the first wave of economic reforms in 1991 urban poverty has been on an upward swing in Zimbabwe. More than three in four (75.6%) Zimbabweans are classified as poor while 47.2 are very poor<sup>4</sup> (ZCTU, 1999). The proportion of the poor is a 43 percent increase from 52.8 percent in 1991 (CSO, 1998). It represents an increase of over 25 percent from the 1995 figure which was below 60 percent (Nyakazeya, 2000). It is not surprising therefore that every three in five (63%) of the urban residents of Zimbabwe are poor. The official urban poverty line in Zimbabwe is set at over Z\$16,980<sup>5</sup> (CCZ, 2001). The magnitude is made clear when it is remembered that the 1995 urban poverty line was Z\$2,213.28 (MPSLSW, 1997). At that time 54 percent of the urban residents were poor. Half of these were classified as very poor, meaning that their incomes were insufficient to access the basic food items as represented by the basic food basket. Table 2 summarises the growth of poverty in Harare between 1995 and 2001.

Table 2: The growth of poverty in Harare

Category	Proportion of population (percent)	
	1995	2001 <sup>6</sup>
Very Poor	21	32.3
Poor	20	30.7
Non-poor	59	37

Sources: MPSLSW, 1997; CCZ, 2001

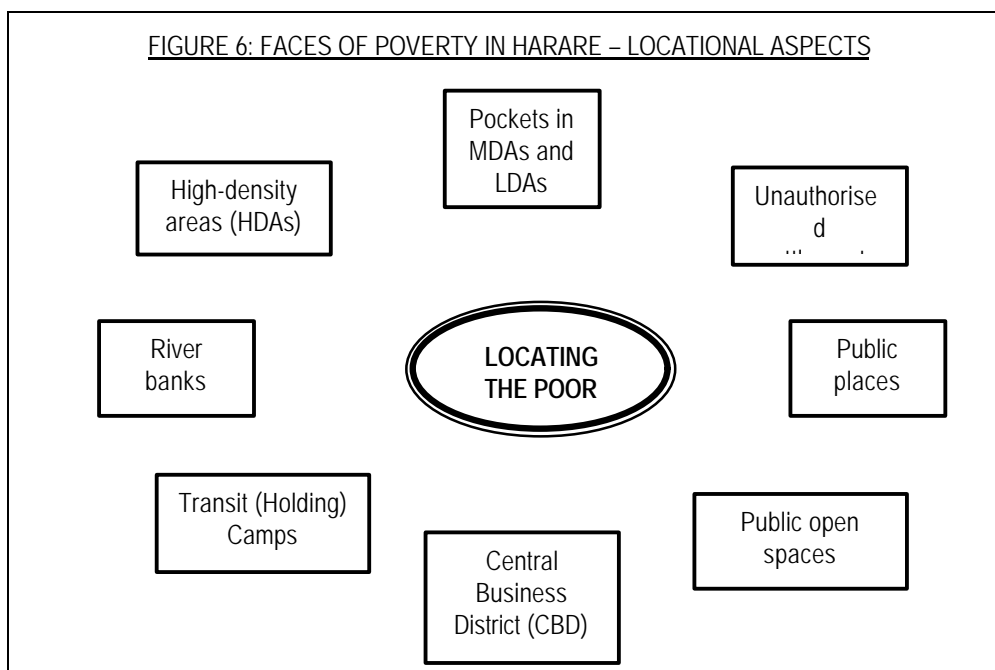
#### 5.1.1 The faces of poverty in Harare

This section examines how urban poverty manifests itself in Harare. It combines the manifestations relating to basic necessities, activities and circumstances. Figure 6 examines the issue of location. The diagram illustrates the ubiquitous nature of urban poverty in Harare. It is everywhere. Geographically most people afflicted with various kinds of poverty come from and/or reside in the high-density areas (HDAs) and informal or squatter settlements. Some pockets of urban poverty exist in the Central Business District where the main feature is vagrancy, homelessness and the increasing phenomenon of street children. Poverty is also invading unlikely parts of the urban landscape such as industrial areas, the middle-density areas (MDAs) and low-density areas (LDAs). This is especially so among pensioners, widows, orphans, domestic workers, squatters and homeless wanderers who colonise open spaces and/or fragile land as well as bridges, or seldom used buildings. Table 3 captures the exact nature of the poverty afflicting these people. It also presents estimates of the numbers in each category.

<sup>4</sup> In Zimbabwe the poor are people who earn incomes below the Total Consumption Poverty Line (TCPL), while the very poor earn below the Food Poverty Line (FPL).

<sup>5</sup> At the time of writing US\$1 = Z\$55

<sup>6</sup> Calculation based on CCZ figures.



**Table 3: Glimpses into Harare’s poor**

Location	Nature	Who?	Proportion (%)
High-density areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income absence or inadequacy</li> <li>Inadequate housing</li> <li>Vulnerability</li> <li>Decreasing access to basic services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lodgers</li> <li>Retrenchees</li> <li>Retirees</li> <li>female headed households</li> <li>Orphans</li> </ul>	40
Pockets in MDAs and LDAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homelessness</li> <li>Inadequate incomes</li> <li>Depreciating incomes</li> <li>Increasing vulnerability</li> <li>Loss of employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Domestic workers</li> <li>Security guards</li> <li>Pensioners</li> <li>Vagrants</li> </ul>	8
Squatters (permanent)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homelessness</li> <li>Voicelessness</li> <li>Powerlessness</li> <li>Income absence or inadequacy</li> <li>Lack of access to basic services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unemployed</li> <li>Evicted</li> <li>Retired</li> <li>Retrenched</li> <li>Poorly paid</li> </ul>	5
Informal settlements (official Transit Camps)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homelessness</li> <li>Lack of access to basic services</li> <li>Voicelessness</li> <li>Powerlessness</li> <li>Income absence or inadequacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ex-squatters</li> <li>Evictees</li> </ul>	2
Unauthorised settlements, public places, riverbanks,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homelessness</li> <li>Voicelessness</li> <li>Powerlessness</li> <li>Income absence or inadequacy</li> <li>Lack of access to basic services</li> <li>Exclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unemployed</li> <li>Evicted</li> <li>Retired</li> <li>Retrenched</li> <li>Poorly paid</li> <li>Vagrants</li> </ul>	5
CBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homelessness</li> <li>Voicelessness</li> <li>Powerlessness</li> <li>Income absence or inadequacy</li> <li>Lack of access to basic services</li> <li>Exclusion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vagrants</li> <li>Street children</li> <li>Street homeless</li> <li>Temporary street dwellers</li> </ul>	1

Sources: Research findings, 2000–01; Estimates also based on CSO, 1998; Mubvami and Hall, 2000; DSHZ/ZIHOPFE, 2000.

As shown in the table there is a ‘rich’ diversity in the experience of poverty in Harare. It ranges from the obviously poor in the shacks and streets to the hidden poor in the middle and high-income residential areas and institutions. Most of them are already poor, but some are clearly at risk as incomes become eroded and assets are seized or sold involuntarily to make up for immediate needs and commitments which current levels of existing incomes are unable to satisfy. The fact that current incomes are less than 10 percent of the 1991 levels (Zimbabwe Independent, 2001) is a harbinger of worse things to come (*Daily News*, 08 October, 2001).

In addition to incomes and consumption it can be seen that the affected people, especially those in unrecognised or unauthorised settlements, are also affected by the inadequacy or unavailability of services particularly education, sanitation and health. They are also victims of powerlessness and voicelessness which adversities combine to exclude them from mainstream socio-political and economic processes.

## 5.2 Environmental issues in Harare

Until recently Harare was indeed ‘The Sunshine City’. The streets were clean, the water was not a subject of debate, garbage was regularly collected and the quality of the air was not a source of alarm. Services and utilities were arguably a cut above most of sub-Saharan Africa. Things have not deteriorated that much but the suspension of the whole council by the Minister of Local Government and National Housing in 1999 was a clear indication that the capital’s reputation was at stake as the quality of the city took a tumble (*Daily Mail & Guardian*, 26 February, 1999). Most conspicuous in the decline of the city is the state of the environment. Table 4 shows the topical environmental issues in Harare.

The table reveals disturbing developments in the ecological profile of the city. There is scarcely a facet of the environment that is left unscathed. From the tangible like water to the highly abstract like amenity things are as it were ‘falling apart’. The table does admit that some of the ‘badness’ has not reached crisis proportions. The water is still safe by WHO standards. Some aspects of atmospheric pollution, for example the levels of sulphur dioxides are still within acceptable limits (Santren, 2001). The same applies to the degradation of soils and, by national and regional comparisons, the siltation of water bodies (cf. Gumbo, 1997). However, as Table 4 shows there is reason for serious concern. The city’s water is slowly becoming undrinkable unless expensive purification processes are undertaken, an aspect which is increasingly becoming doubtful considering the state of the national economy.<sup>7</sup> The greenbelt surrounding the city is fast becoming a luxury as woodlands are decimated (E2000, 2001). Adding to this the appearance and increase of irritations like the ubiquitous eyesores, stench and the cacophony resulting from noise and chaos leads to the conclusion that the city is losing its glamour. The question then would be who is responsible?

The generally accepted diagnosis is that the poor are largely responsible (see E2000, 2001a; Gumbo, 1997). It is what the poor do that is leading to the collapse of a once solid and enviable environmental profile. This enquiry revealed that the poor through their practices are deemed to be responsible for atmospheric pollution, for chemical pollution, for eyesores, for the stench, for siltation and for poisoning water sources. It is agreed though that some ‘high-

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<sup>7</sup> In fact the city almost ran out of chlorine in early 2001. Government was forced to allow local authorities access to strictly rationed foreign currency, which they now share with the oil and power utilities.

tech' pollution by the 'not-so-poor' is responsible for atmospheric pollution, effluent discharges into the rivers and loss of amenity through negligence (Table 4).

**Table 4: Environmental concerns in the City of Harare**

Sector	Issue	Popular diagnosis	Comments
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increased levels of organic pollutants in major sources of water. Still safe by WHO standards, but getting worse.</li> <li>◆ Rising phosphate and nitrate levels</li> <li>◆ Occasional mass fish death</li> <li>◆ Water treatment difficulties</li> <li>◆ Hyacinth infestations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Industry,</li> <li>◆ Urban agriculture</li> <li>◆ Colonisation of catchment are by squatters</li> </ul>	Industry is the biggest polluter. Low fines and lax enforcement Not mentioned are the discharges from sewerage work operated by the local authority and the neighbouring Chitungwiza municipality and chemicals used by commercial farms
Deforestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Disappearing woodlands within the city and in surrounding areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Wood poaching by low-income groups for sale and use</li> </ul>	Correct diagnosis. Exacerbated by shortage and high cost of paraffin, costly electricity, and lack of electricity in some parts as well as growing illegal settlements and official slums (TCs)
Atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increased pollution</li> <li>◆ SO<sub>2</sub> emission (80ug/m<sup>3</sup>) still within WHO standards, but getting worse.</li> <li>◆ Air pollution levels above who limit of 50mg/m<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Wood fuel,</li> <li>◆ Vehicle emissions</li> <li>◆ Industry</li> </ul>	Firewood use has its own causes (see above). Over 400,000 cars on the load main course Not mentioned unavailability (or high cost) of unleaded fuel
Solid waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Pollution of the landscape by rubbish paper, plastic, cans, food leftovers, uncollected and tipped bins</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Local authority negligence,</li> <li>◆ Residents in formal and informal settlements,</li> <li>◆ Vagrants,</li> <li>◆ Street children</li> </ul>	Often not cited is dumping by industries, oil companies, garages, filling stations, large retail outlets, hospitals and other institutions
Soil degradation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Loss of soils by water or wind</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Urban agriculture through cultivation along stream banks, hill slopes cultivation,</li> <li>◆ deforestation</li> </ul>	Flagrant and sometimes politicise violation of standing regulations. Not mentioned is settlement in fragile lands sometimes authorised by authorities
Siltation of rivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Loss of water sources by soils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Soils from the above</li> </ul>	See above
Stench	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Linked to solid waste management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Rotting garbage</li> </ul>	As above
Loss of amenity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The increase in eyesores e.g. rubbish dumps, shacks, ageing and neglected buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Growth of unauthorised settlements,</li> <li>◆ Owner negligence,</li> <li>◆ High renovation, costs,</li> <li>◆ Regulated rentals</li> </ul>	Often ignored are the dilapidated office blocks in the city centre
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Not a major concern</li> </ul>		

Sources: *Research findings, 2000–01*; Gumbo, 1997; ZNOL, 1997; Madava, 2000; Civitas2004, 2001; E2000, 2001, 2001a; Santren, 2001

Figures often quoted *ad nauseam* include the more than 400,000 cars on Harare's roads and the 2,000,000 litres of mostly leaded fuel consumed a day (cf. E2000, 2001). Other facts include the pollution of Manyame and Mukuvisi rivers by 'rational' industrialists who would rather pay a small fine than be saddled with the high costs associated with safe disposal of effluent (ZNOL, 1997). Often cited too is the 'rational' neglect of maintenance because the government imposes rent controls resulting in landlords not being able to earn enough to care for the buildings.



### 5.2.1 The contribution of the poor to environmental damage

From Table 4 it can be seen that Harare's environment is under assault from all sections of the city's community. Virtually every resident and institution in the city plays a part in the destruction of the environment. Thus individuals, households, the public sector and the private sector acting in various capacities are, in one way or the other, culprits in the deterioration of the capital's environmental profile. For their part, the poor sections of the urban community, as shown in Table 3 and Figure 6, also make a significant contribution to the upsurge and intensification of the environmental maladies afflicting Harare.

#### 5.2.1.1 Deforestation

When poverty and the environment are mentioned together the plundering of trees in and around the city almost always tops the discussion (E2000, 2000a). Harare's greenbelt is no longer green. Large proportions of the poor residents in the formal (>30%) and informal (>80%) settlements use wood as their main source of energy for cooking and, to a lesser extent, heating. Some have taken the opportunity to generate income by selling illegally acquired firewood to urban residents in both high and low-income areas. There are over 200 illegal permanent firewood dealers operating openly in Harare. Many more are engaged in sporadic and/or clandestine operations. Having exhausted what can be safely poached from within the city, the illicit firewood dealers have turned their attention to surrounding farms and further afield. Fetching an average of Z\$20 a bundle (about 4kg) wood is a lucrative form of business.

Beginning in 1999 the situation was worsened by the shortage of nation-wide paraffin and subsequent frequent fuel price hikes. In mid-2001 the predictable hikes culminated in a 600 percent increase in the price of the vital fuel, pushing it further away from the reach of most low-income residents. Electricity, the alternative to paraffin, does not come cheap either. The sole national power utility (ZESA) has government permission to increase tariffs every quarter, indefinitely. Moreover, there are formal residential areas of the city where the voltage provided is not enough to power cooking appliances. To complicate matters the appliances are themselves very costly compared to the incomes of the residents.<sup>8</sup> Out in the informal settlements, both authorised and unauthorised, the products of stolen wood have an added use as construction materials. As can be seen deforestation, which is rampant among the poor, is a result of reinforcing conditions and processes, some of them structural, operating among all sections of the residents, with the most negative effects being felt among the poor.

#### 5.2.1.2 Atmospheric and water pollution

The air is another victim of the 'harmful' activities of Harare's poor. As noted above the poor are blamed for using firewood for energy. The smoke issuing therefrom is cited in some authoritative sources as a major polluter of the atmosphere (cf. E2000, 2000; Santren, 2001). The background issues to firewood usage have been discussed above. However, there has been no attempt to quantify the exact contribution of the poor compared to the 'high-tech' pollution by industry and vehicles.

Perhaps the most celebrated villainy of the poor is in the water resource sector. The misdemeanours are committed in several respects:

- ◆ Chemical pollution through fertilisers and pesticides used in urban agriculture.

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<sup>8</sup> At the time of writing the cheapest hot-plate on the market cost more than four times the monthly salary of more than 50% of the working population (cf. Nyakazeya, 2001).

- ◆ Wood felling, stream bank and hill slope cultivation all of which lead to the loosening of soils which are then washed away into water sources leading to siltation, decreased volumes and the eventual loss of water bodies.
- ◆ Illegal abstraction of pit and river sand for sale and construction, an activity that has the same impact as the removal of vegetation cover.
- ◆ Settling in ecologically fragile areas, mainly river catchment areas, including riverbanks resulting in the washing of topsoil and all sorts of waste products into streams and rivers.
- ◆ The deliberate use of chemicals to kill fish, which end up killing all life in the water and rendering the water undrinkable and uninhabitable for a long time.

This indeed is a strong indictment. And every bit of it is true. Some activities mentioned above in connection with the fluvial and hydrological damage begin with the dislodging of soils. This is done through settlement, farming, wood-poaching and illegal sand abstraction. The last two activities leave permanent scars on the landscape creating eyesores and health hazards.

### 5.2.1.3 Loss of amenity and overloading of facilities

Loss of amenity happens when ‘nasty’ views replace ‘scenic’ sights. In addition to the landscape scars arising from sand abstraction mentioned above the poor are known to build ‘unsightly’ structures which themselves are illegal. In the formal settlements backyard shacks outnumber legal structures five to one. More than half a million people live in these structures. Occupancy rates per stand are several times the design capacity (see below). In the informal settlements both authorised and unauthorised the situation is even worse as residents there use temporary structures in keeping with their ‘temporary’ status.

The overloading of services is one of the reasons why the city cannot perform its responsibilities effectively. Mbare, the poorest and oldest HDA has an average of 13 families occupying one 200-square metre stand originally intended for one family of no more than six people (SDI, 2000). Some stands have as much as 40 people, some of whose structures illegally encroach onto the road (Mashavira, 1999). They share one toilet, one water point and one mains outlet. In the oft condemned hostels<sup>9</sup> in the same suburb an average of eight people share one room of no more than 10m<sup>2</sup>. All this is done in contravention of the provisions of the city’s building, public health, sanitation and safety by-laws.

This brazen overcrowding sets off ripple effects that are felt throughout the urban system. Water and sewerage services are overloaded resulting in frequent blockages, spillage, persistent stench and threats to public health and safety. This is because the design capacity of the water and sewerage services in the affected areas has been exceeded sometimes by as much as nine times. Due to this overload, the city’s water treatment and sewerage works are strained and occasionally break down. The breakdown of the over-stretched sewer treatment works are responsible for some of the pollution of the water bodies (Gumbo, 1997). Since 1998 Harare’s water pumping capacity has started to feel the pressure resulting in instances where some areas sporadically go without water for days on end, an occurrence hitherto unheard of in Zimbabwe. Overcrowding in the face of heavily subsidised water and inefficient cost recovery are thus responsible for some adversities beyond residential areas.

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<sup>9</sup> On more than one occasion the city’s Director of Health has condemned the hostels declaring them unfit for human habitation. They continue to be occupied amid regular and unfulfilled promises of renovation.

The poverty-stricken residents are also notorious for their carelessness in dumping or scattering solid waste. This they do right in the heart of residential areas and the city centre. This practice compounds problems of stench, unsightliness and public health. Whereas those in various kinds of shelters dump wastes, the homeless and street children tamper with bins and loose garbage in their daily scavenging routines. Consequently, in both formal and informal settlements, in the city centre and on the river banks there are piles of dumped wastes and tipped bins. The city's growing incapacity to manage solid waste is not making the situation any easier (Mubvami and Wekwete, 2000).

### 5.2.2 The poor and the environment: a re-appraisal

Table 5 captures the villainous activities of the poor that adversely affect environmental sustainability in Harare. It puts facts and figures behind the accusations and conclusions. Box 7 presents the picture from one of the official Transit (or Holding) Camps set up to temporarily resettle squatters who had been rounded up by the authorities in 1994 as a "permanent solution" to their shelter problems "was being found" (DSHZ/ZIHOPFE, 2000).

BOX 7: HOW TO CREATE AN OFFICIAL SLUM?– AN OVERVIEW OF HATCLIFFE EXTENSION	
Established in 1994 to accommodate people removed from Churu farm, Hatcliffe Extension has seen itself grow from a Transit Camp into something resembling the sprawling squatter settlements elsewhere in Africa. Below are some statistics for the camp.	
Aspect	Figure
Number of families	2,219
Population	13,015
Occupancy	6 per room
Families per borehole	554
People per toilet	2,006
<i>Source: ZIHOPFE/DSHZ, 2000: 16</i>	

There is no doubt that the poor do engage in practices that endanger urban sustainability. However there are underlying reasons why the practices continue and even expand. The role of 'third parties' as shown in the table is significant. This contributory role is shown in the last column of Table 5. There are five principal ways in which other actors aid and abet the poor in their improprieties:

1. The existence and creation of a ready market for products such as those from urban agriculture, illegal tree-felling and illegal sand abstraction.
2. The payment by higher income groups of unemployed people among the poor to commit crimes like resource poaching and illicit farming practices.
3. Tolerance and implicit encouragement when no enforcement is done in cases of illegal urban agriculture, backyard shacks and wood poaching.
4. Undertaking official programmes that 'borrow' from initiatives of the poor, an example being the Transit Camps which to all intents and purposes can be described as a bad copy of the original squatter settlements (see Box 7).
5. Indirect complicity through certain policies or actions, for example those relating to fuel, power and taxes imposed on safer and more benign alternatives such as electric stoves.

It is notable that among the 'accomplices' and 'co-accused' are virtually all sections of the

urban community. Included in the list are ‘non-poor’ residents and households, the private sector as well as local and central government. Although mainstream civil society does not feature in the equation it may well be accused of complicity by virtue of its membership and its interaction with the local authority and central government (Kamete, 1997; see below). Besides being guilty by commission and association civil society has without doubt committed errors of omission (see below).

**Table 5: Villains at work? What the poor do to deserve the tag**

Activity	Facts and figures	Accomplices
◆ Urban agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ 1990 – 8 % of city area</li> <li>◆ 1994 – 16% of city area</li> <li>◆ 2001 – 25% of city area</li> <li>◆ More than 50% illegal<sup>10</sup></li> <li>◆ More than 30% on slopes and stream banks and fragile land</li> <li>◆ 60% cultivated by the poor</li> <li>◆ 75% use chemical fertilisers</li> <li>◆ &gt;90% grow for household consumption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ 40% practised by the non-poor</li> <li>◆ 90% of this illegal</li> <li>◆ 60% of these encroach onto stream banks and slopes</li> <li>◆ 100% of them use chemical fertilisers</li> <li>◆ All of these grow for sell, though some produce is also set aside for domestic consumption</li> </ul>
◆ Deforestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Loss estimated at 4 hectares a year</li> <li>◆ About 200 dealers in the open</li> <li>◆ Most prevalent around low-income areas and informal settlements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ About 70% of dealers employed to poach</li> <li>◆ Urban residents provide a market</li> <li>◆ Some official settlements (TCs) replicating the problem.</li> <li>◆ Shortage of and high cost of paraffin (600% hike in 2001)</li> <li>◆ Shortage of and high cost of electricity (about 15% increase every quarter)</li> <li>◆ Costly electrical appliances</li> <li>◆ Import duty and sales tax contribute to high cost.</li> </ul>
◆ Sand poaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ 10% done by the poor for own building</li> <li>◆ 90% for sell</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ &gt;50% of poachers employed to do poach</li> <li>◆ Ready market among middle and high-income earners</li> <li>◆ 60% sold on sites offered by or in full view of city officials</li> <li>◆ No certification process</li> </ul>
◆ Informal settlements and illegal structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ 10% of city population stay in illegal settlements</li> <li>◆ 13.6% of these along river banks</li> <li>◆ 48.6% in permanent squatter settlements</li> <li>◆ 93% of all stands in HDAs have illegal outbuildings</li> <li>◆ Half the 12,056 tuckshops illegal</li> <li>◆ 40% of city population are lodgers in these shacks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ 2.2% legally settled by government in 3 Transit Camps</li> <li>◆ Government settlement located on catchment area of major river</li> <li>◆ TCs more overcrowded</li> <li>◆ TCs worse in service provision and less healthy than unauthorised settlements (see ratios in Box 7)</li> </ul>

## 6 THE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM AT WORK: INPUTS, PROCESSES AND OUTPUTS

Having set the scene and shown the picture as it obtains on the ground, the following sections will now turn to issues of governance. The purpose is to evaluate how and why the system of governance has responded to the environmental and poverty scenario as depicted above. The analysis is based on sustained observations of the system over a four-year period.

### 6.1 A closer look at the inputs

Table 6 traces the source of inputs into the system of governance and what treatment was accorded those input. The table traces the source and fate of the 58 identifiable inputs that

<sup>10</sup> Illegal in the sense that the farming plot is not allocated by the local authority or is not designated for agricultural use according to the operative plan.

went into the system between 1997 and 2001. As argued in Table 1 inputs from central government are compulsory. This is reflected in the reception they get from the system of local governance as shown in Table 6. Outside of central government and the international community the private sector has the highest acceptance rate despite its small proportion of inputs. Households and individual inputs have the lowest acceptance rate. Civil society is treated well but it also has the highest score in terms of ambivalence. It is interesting to note that the local authority on occasions receives its own inputs with ambivalence.

**Table 6: Origins and treatment of stimuli into the City of Harare (1997–2001)**

Source	Contribution		Reception (% of own inputs)		
	Number	Percent	Acceptance	Rejection	Ambivalence
Central government	10	17.2	100	0	0
Local Government	6	10.3	83	0	17
Civil society (established)	12	20.7	67	0	33
The private sector	3	5.2	100	0	0
Households	6	10.3	17	66	17
Individuals	6	10.3	17	66	17
International	15	25.9	100	0	0

*Source: Research findings, 2001*

Table 7 sheds light on the nature of the inputs identified. The dominance of government agencies in regulatory inputs is to be expected. These inputs are mainly control-oriented and take the form of statutes, policies, circulars and directives. At the local level proposed by-laws are also fed into the system of governance as the local authority is empowered by the Urban Councils Act to make subsidiary legislation. The latest in the list of local authority by-laws are the City of Harare's landmark water pollution by-laws mooted way back in 1997 to combat pollution by increasing spot fines for a single case of confirmed pollution by over 1000 percent (ZNOL, 1997).

In this move the city council agreed with the suggestions of civil society (mainly environmentalists) that the paltry fines then in existence were not a strong enough deterrent. From this and a few other cases such as atmospheric pollution, it can be concluded that civil society in the form of environmental pressure groups does get a favourable hearing in important environmental issues. Three in four of the input from civil society is in the form of suggestions and petitions. Other suggestions from civil society over the period in question covered urban agriculture, illegal sand abstraction and deforestation. The single threat captured in the table was an occasion in 1999 when environmental groups in full agreement with central government threatened to sue the local authority over its pollution of water bodies by means of effluent from the city's sewerage treatment works.

The private sector has a high acceptance rate mainly because it is sparing in its contributions. Moreover, as shown in Table 7 private sector inputs tend to lean towards the offering of material assistance to the local authority. This is linked to corporate social responsibility, marketing and – though they rarely admit it – tax avoidance. In contrast to the laid back approach of the private sector households and individuals are more likely to deliver their inputs in the form of threats, complaints and protests. In fact evidence shows that this is the only way they believe they can get an audience with the local authority. Experience confirms the validity of this conviction. Demonstrations were and still remain a common feature among

groups of residents as well as individuals. The most famous ones relate to tuckshops, food markets and ‘clean-up campaigns’<sup>11</sup> by the city authorities.

**Table 7: The nature of the stimuli**

Source	Nature (Percentage of own inputs)					
	Regulatory	Conceptual	Petitions	Assistance	Suggestions	Protests, threats etc
Central government	70	10	0	0	0	20
Local Government	90	0	0	0	0	10
Civil society	0	8.3	41.7	0	33.3	16.7
The private sector	0	0	33.3	67.7	0	0
Households	0	0	0 <sup>12</sup>	0	0	100
Individuals	0	0	0 <sup>13</sup>	0	0	100
International agencies	0	80	0	20	0	0

*Source: Research findings, 2001*

Among the private individuals reflected in the table are prominent personalities such as politicians or aspiring politicians, religious leaders, business tycoons and freelance activists. In the period under review there were more than twenty politicians, religious leaders and private residents (mostly from high-income low-density areas) who protested, issued threats or filed complaints. Among the controversial issues they were contending against were inefficient garbage collection, illicit urban agriculture as well as the destruction of markets and backyard shacks by the city council. As expected, the international community dominated by bilateral and multilateral agencies injected its inputs in the form of material and technical assistance and concepts on ‘new’ ways of thinking and managing the city. Among the concepts they brought in during this period are good governance, decentralisation, gender, urban environmental management, shelter policy and poverty alleviation.

**Table 8: Classification of inputs**

Source	Distribution (Percent)	
	Environmental issues	Socio-economic issues
Central government	70	30
Local Government	67	33
Civil society	87	17
The private sector	100	0
Households	0	100
Individuals	33	67
International	47	53

*Source: Research findings, 2001*

Table 8 shows the distribution of inputs between socio-economic and environmental issues. Save for the international community, organisations lean heavily towards environmental protection. On average more than three-quarters of the organisational inputs had an

<sup>11</sup> Clean up campaigns consist of such activities as eviction, rounding up and arresting vagrants, and the destruction of illegal structures.

<sup>12</sup> This refers to the primary form of the inputs. Almost all of the threats and protests have petitions and suggestions attached to them.

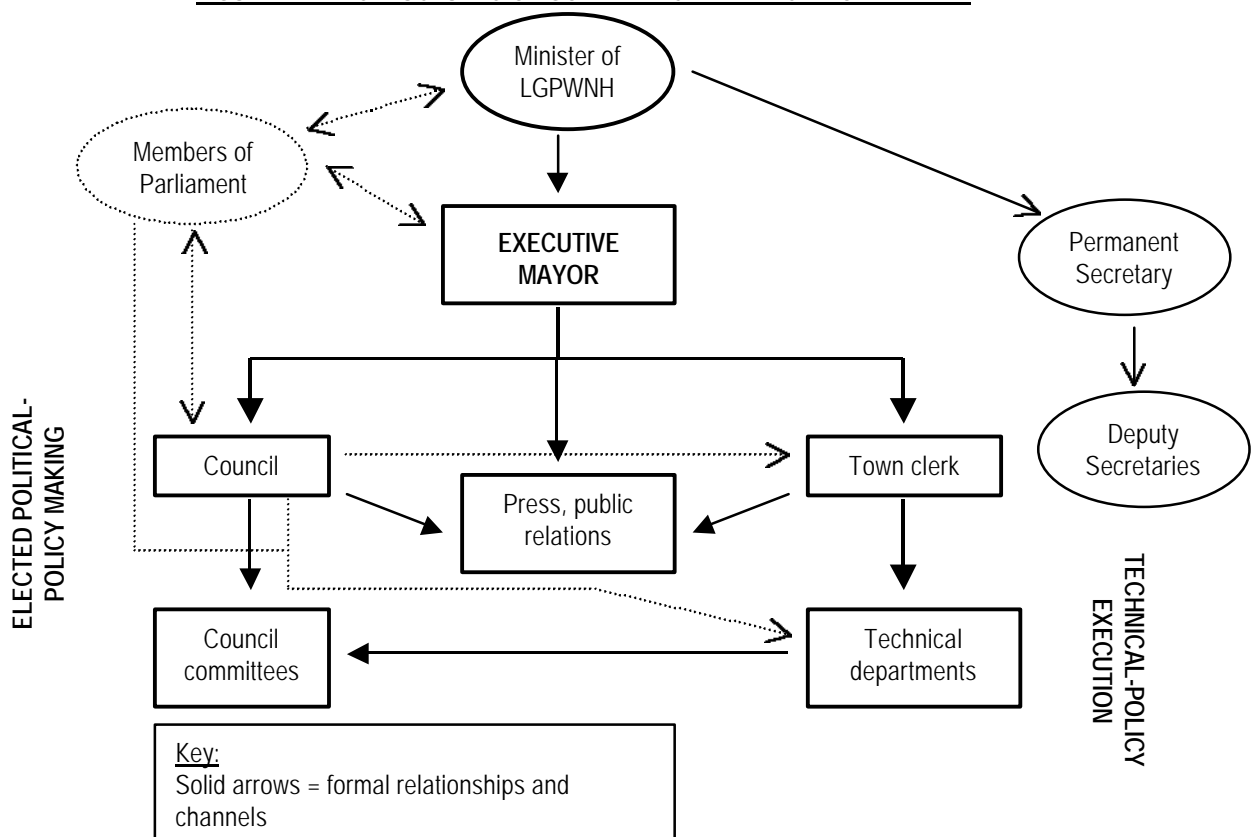
<sup>13</sup> See above footnote.

environmental bias. Even the governmental sector appears to have this bias in its inputs. The explanation for this is not that they do not attend to socio-economic issues. The reason is that these societal and economic issues do not form part of the 'normal organised agenda' where they are received and deliberated on. Instead such issues are mostly included in offhand proclamations and decisions which in the end do not entail long-term commitments. The very limited number of civil organisations with an environmental agenda or sympathetic to it explains the distribution of their inputs as shown in the table (see Table 15). Also evident in Table 8 is the concern of individuals and households with immediate 'bread and butter' issues.

## 6.2 Processing the input

This part of the discussion analyses what happens to stimuli if accepted. This is where a substantial portion of the question of urban governance comes in. What structures are in place, who are involved, who are excluded and why and what principles govern the processes are some of the very important questions the study wanted to unravel. Figure 7 shows the structures of urban governance in the City of Harare.

FIGURE 7: THE STRUCTURES OF GOVERNANCE IN THE CITY OF HARARE.

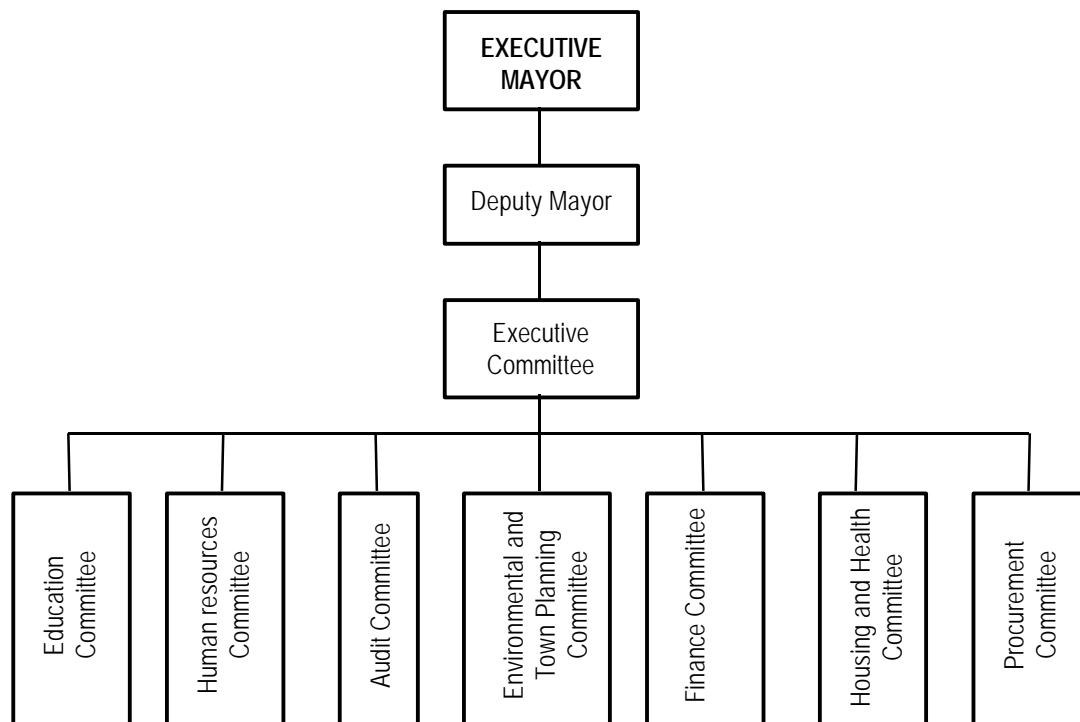


As shown in the diagram the local authority has two parallel structures, one political and the other technical. The political side comprises elected councillors who represent geographic areas known as wards. Led by an elected Executive Mayor, these politicians are a localised version of the national legislature. They are responsible for policy making. The technical side is responsible for the day to day running of the city and is made up of technocrats appointed on merit. Prior to the introduction of the office of Executive Mayor in 1995 the day to day running of the city was under the supervision of the Town Clerk, the chief executive of the

local authority. After the changes, the Town Clerk’s Department is itself under the direct supervision of a fulltime elected Executive Mayor.

The relationships of the officers and politicians are characterised by a wide range of formal and informal interactions. These are further complicated by the parallel national-level structures, in particular the Minister of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing (LGPWNH) and Members of Parliament (MP) (Figure 7). The MP represents constituencies. The constituencies are made up of several wards. The urban governance system thus finds itself having to answer to two types of elected representatives. The fact that there are no guidelines detailing how national and local representatives should relate to each other enhances the reliance on informal interactions. Sometimes this generates confusing signals to the technocrats who in some cases have demonstrated a tendency to pit the representatives against each other. Complicating the whole picture is the position of the Executive Mayor who is elected by the whole city but does not sit in parliament (see Appendix 1).

FIGURE 8: COMMITTEES OF THE HARARE CITY COUNCIL



*Source: Research findings and partly based on Mubvami and Wekwete, 2000*

Issues are deliberated upon in council committees (Figure 8). Only these committees can legally come up with binding decisions that are then passed onto technical departments for implementation. Thus, according to protocol, inputs should be channelled through the ward councillor who will then table the motion for discussion in council chambers in full view of the public. Technical staff headed by directors of departments under the supervision of the Town Clerk (Table 9) will be on hand to provide explanations and give answers to issues needing clarification. After it is tabled, an item that is accepted as warranting further processing will be passed on to the appropriate council committee for deliberation. When it



arrives at a decision, the committee presents that decision to the Executive Committee, which is made up of chairpersons of all committees and is chaired by the Executive Mayor.<sup>14</sup> If accepted by the Executive Committee the decision of the committee is then presented before full council for ratification through a democratic vote (Figure 9). If it gets the majority vote the decision is adopted and becomes binding and is ready to be implemented by the technical arm.

It has been noted that the Executive Committee sometimes exhibits some dictatorial practices thereby becoming an elitist structure that dictates the running of the city with little regard for the committees (Mubvami and Wekwete, 2000). The dissolution of the infamous council and the dismissal of the Executive Mayor in 1999 was attributed in part to this flagrant usurping of the powers of elected councillors, which ultimately created a huge mess that could only be resolved by sacking the entire council (Appendix 1).

FIGURE 9: TRACING THE ROUTE OF INPUTS IN COUNCIL

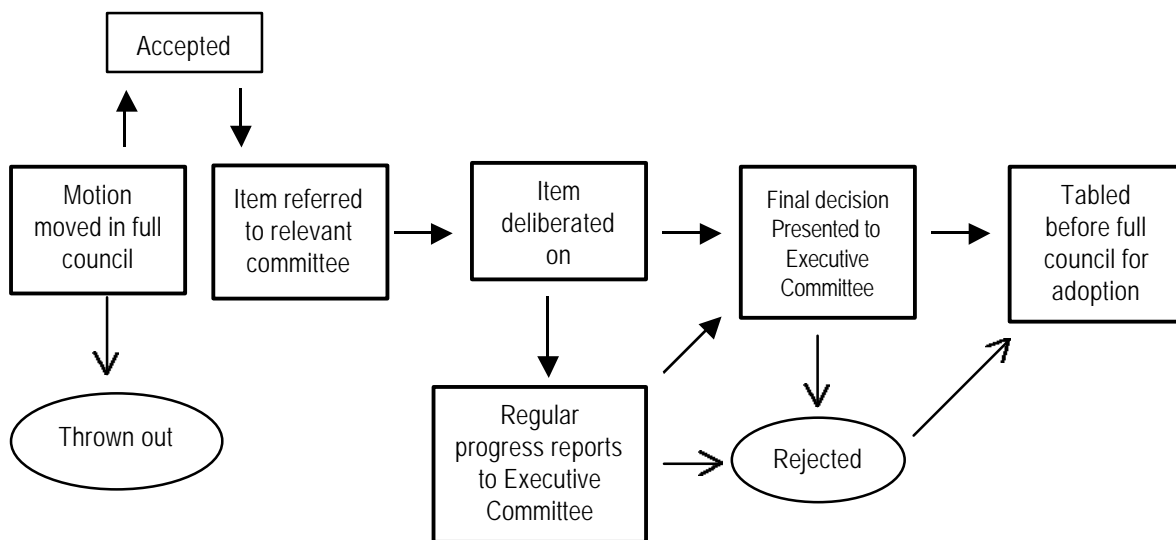


Figure 8 provides an overview of the committees of Harare City Council (HCC). The committees constitute an impressive suite that should be able to help in effectively governing the city. As shown in Figure 7 technical departments (see Table 9) service the committees. In the case of Harare, the departmental staff is very highly professionally qualified. The system has three key characteristics that have implications for good urban governance. Firstly it is democratically elected by registered residents. Secondly it is supervised by a central government ministry (the MLGPWNH), which itself is a combination of professional and political entities. Moreover, the structure allows for double representation, namely a ward councillor who deals with issues of concern to a specific geographic area and a Member of Parliament who represents a larger urban constituency in the national legislature. It should be noted also that all registered residents democratically elect the Executive Mayor,<sup>15</sup> who to all

<sup>14</sup> After the sacking of the mayor and his entire council in 1999 the chairperson of the commission took over as chairperson of the Executive Committee (see Appendix 1).

<sup>15</sup> After the dissolution of the council by the minister of LGPWNH, the policy making function is currently being undertaken by a commission appointed by the minister. The commission operates through the committees that are shown Figure 7.

intents and purposes is the third and actually ‘most’<sup>16</sup> democratically elected representative of ‘the people’.

**Table 9: The technical departments of the City of Harare and their functions**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Key responsibilities</b>
Town Clerk	Overall supervision, legal issues, estates,
City Treasury	Revenue collection, financial management
City Health	Public health, environmental health and health delivery
Works	Land use, engineering, infrastructure, transport planning
Human Resources	Personnel management
Housing and Community Services	Housing delivery, management, allocations, community facilities

The third characteristic is the accessibility of the system in terms of receiving input. Individuals, households, civil society and the private sector can present their cases to the councillor who in turn takes it to council. Alternatively they can approach the MP who can approach any arm of council on their behalf. They can even go through the public relations office, the technical departments, the mayor or even the minister. The MLGPWNH has its own Department of Local Government Promotions and Administration with a strong urban section (Mubvami and Wekwete, 2000). The suspension in 1999 of the Executive Mayor and the subsequent dissolution of the whole council for non-performance was an indication of the effectiveness of this superintendence and the sensitivity of the system (*Daily Mail and Guardian*, 26 February, 1999). The fact that all stakeholders including civil society and the private sector unanimously welcomed the ministerial action is evidence of this.

The chief determinant of urban governance in Harare is the way the structures process the inputs. The synthesis and analysis of the input are virtually closed to ‘outsiders’, meaning here all groups and individuals who are not part of the local authority or its central government counterparts. The processing of the inputs is limited to council and the technical departments. Central government’s occasional intervention through the MLGPWNH constitutes the sole non-local authority participation in the formal processes. Figure 10, which should be read with Figure 9, gives an idea of just how closed the system is.

The diagram in Figure 10 shows that the process of analysis and synthesis is regarded as an private inside job. In the initial and crucial stages of agenda-setting and deliberation, ‘external’ contribution is limited to informal discussions. This happens when councillors and officers seek advice from their peers or other experts. In the case of politicians the purpose of the informal interaction is to ‘enrich’ their contribution to debate or gauge public opinion. Officers will be seeking to perform their task in an area they scarcely understand<sup>17</sup> or where they feel some useful input can be obtained. Sometimes in the latter stages some formal external contribution may be brought in. This usually happens when consultants are contracted to undertake some task for which council has no capacity or is too busy to undertake. Research and planning are some of the key areas normally contracted out.

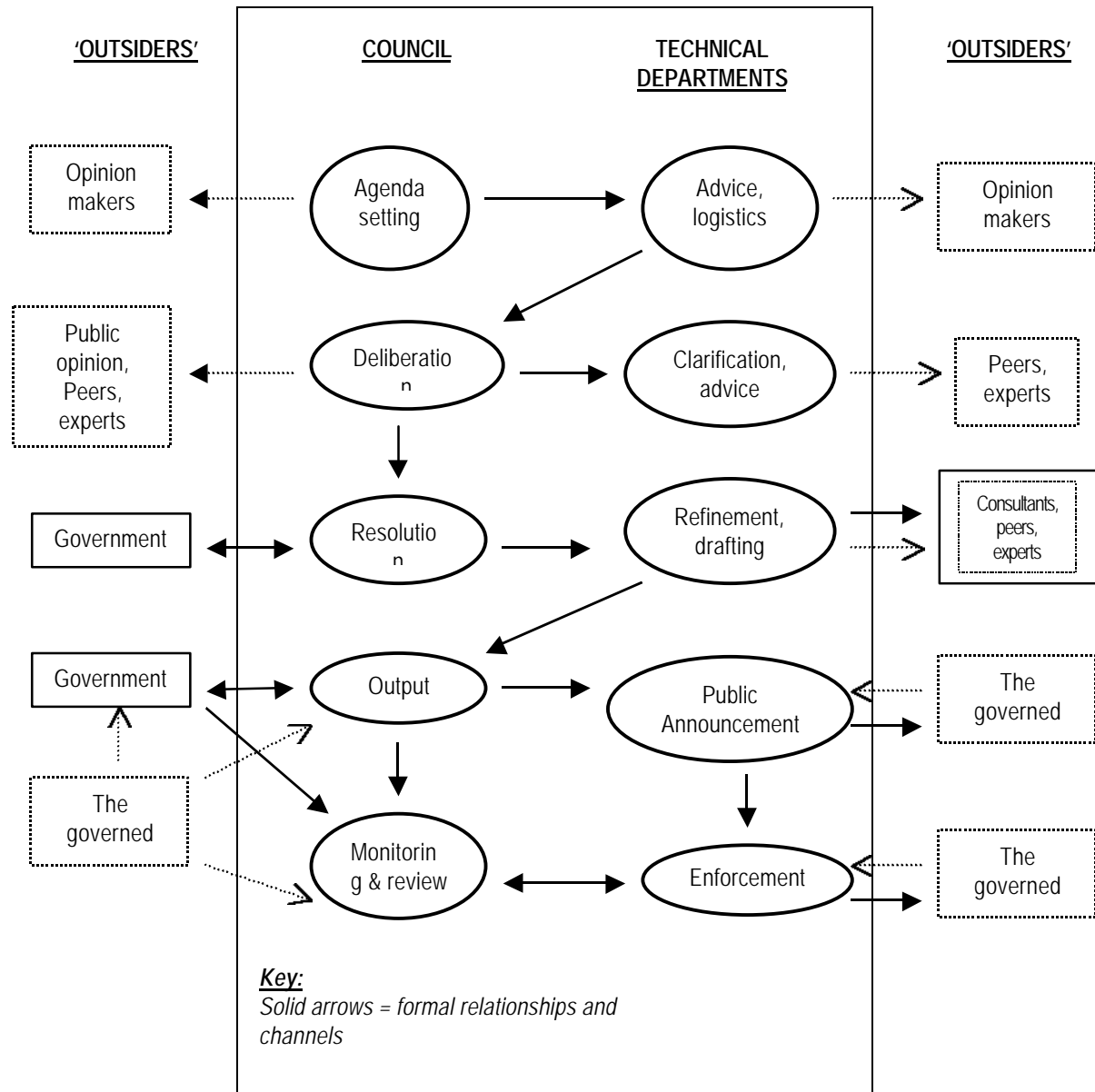
It is in council committees to which the public has no access that the fundamental decision-making processes that ultimately determine the running of the city take place. The general

<sup>16</sup> The Executive Mayor is elected by the whole city in contrast to the other representatives who are elected by parts of the city.

<sup>17</sup> This happens when officers try to find their way in an area they know nothing about but in which councillors demand some technical input.

populace will only come to know of what has been going on when the outputs of the deliberations are presented to full council, which is the only window open to the public and the media. It is here that the public can get wind of what the governors are up to and react if they so wish.

FIGURE 10: A LOOK AT THE PROCESSES IN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY



However, evidence shows that council meetings are not attended by the less affluent. About 95 percent of the low-income groups do not even know that council meetings are open let alone when they are held. An observation of the chambers revealed the same faces from the media, residents associations and analysts. Therefore once some input goes in and is accepted what happens to it remains shrouded in mystery until the final output comes out. The average waiting time is two months. Occasionally some 'intermediate' outputs do leak out through some errant councillors or council employees.

Since the decision outputs come from a legally constituted body and through legally recognised processes there is normally no negotiation. Once passed the rules, regulations, by-laws, policies and other instruments are not easily altered unless central government bulldozes its way into the system to demand some changes, relief or further deliberations. This has happened in controversies involving urban agriculture, illegal tuckshops and unauthorised backyard shacks (Mbiba, 1995; Kahiya, 2001; Kamete, 2001; see below). Cases of the governed 'outsiders' successfully worming their way into the processes were observed in incidents where the governed had got wind of the nature of council deliberations through rumours, the media, peer interaction, leaked information<sup>18</sup> or by attending report back sessions at full council meetings (cf. ZIHOPFE, 2001).

To sum up, apart from some outsiders' fleeting glimpses of official decision-making processes local authority deliberations are confined within council itself and a few privileged stakeholders, mostly from central government and some consultancies. The overwhelming majority of the governed become aware only when law-enforcement agents start implementing decisions. The destruction of illegal structures and the slashing of maize by municipal police are classic examples of residents being caught unawares (see *The Financial Gazette*, 24 May, 2001).

Due to this closed nature there is very little 'outsider' participation in the processes. The negotiations, bargaining and tough talk are confined to council and when needed the privilege is extended to technical officers who, as noted by one commentator, are normally summoned to be "grilled, blasted and roasted." If they find their way in, individuals and groups will only make their 'contribution' while remaining outside. On top of these accidental contributions and demonstrations the governed enhance their voices through media sensations and appeals to higher offices. There are instances when the system has given in to such pressure. However the best that can happen is for the aggrieved parties to be allowed to state what they want or to offer suggestions for council to look into and reconsider the matter. Environmental pressure groups like Environment 2000 have managed to extract concessions in this way (E2000, 2000). The combative Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA) regularly employs similar techniques (*Daily News*, 6 March, 2001, 5 October, 2001).

The foregoing analysis raises some noteworthy points. The synthesis and analysis of input is an important aspect of problem structuring. Policy analysts argue that the definition of a problem will influence the design of the solution (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984; Dunn, 1994). A wrongly formulated problem will lead to a solution that is not suitable for the problem in question. This leads to errors of the third type, viz., solving the wrong problem (Dunn, 1994:134). When key stakeholders are relegated to the sidelines awaiting the local authority to carry out a diagnosis, develop a cure and prescribe it, chances of a wrongly formulated problem are high.

Furthermore, good governance demands inclusiveness and inclusive decision making so as to balance or reconcile competing demands (UNCHS, 2000: 9). As noted above the Sustainable City is an Inclusive City. As indicated before exclusion from decision-making processes is an identifying mark of poverty. Exclusion creates and exacerbates the condition of powerlessness. In view of this it can be concluded that though there are good structures in

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<sup>18</sup> It should be pointed out here that employees of the local authority are not allowed to discuss council business with outsiders let alone the press. The press and public relations offices are responsible for this (see Figure 7).

place the system of governance in Harare is not conducive to sustainable urban development by virtue of it not being open to the majority of the urban populace outside the local authority. Granted, occasionally it caves in under pressure but in substantial terms it still remains fundamentally elitist.

### 6.3 Examining the outputs from the system

The preceding sections have attempted to examine the inputs into the urban governance system. The discussion has also explored and evaluated the processing of those inputs. This section takes a closer look at the system's outputs. Figure 5 is useful for this purpose. To illustrate the analysis and the arguments being presented detailed cases will be used from backyard shacks, urban agriculture, resource poaching and water and atmospheric pollution.

To recapitulate, after issues are processed and there is a resolution to continue pursuing the item, council advised by its technical team comes up with an authoritative definition of the issue based on the perceptions of those involved in the deliberation. It is this critical phase that will shape the response of the urban governance system as it seeks to translate its perception into actionable programmes. The transition from perception to translation is an iterative process that involves frequent feedback as information, arguments and ideas are exchanges in council committees.

Table 10: Perception, definition and translation in the city of Harare

Issue	Perception and Definition	Translation
Tuckshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Violation of trading, planning regulations,</li> <li>◆ Environmental and health hazard</li> <li>◆ Depriving council of incomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Eradication</li> <li>◆ Directive to technocrats</li> </ul>
Shacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Violation of building, public health and safety regulations,</li> <li>◆ Environmental hazard</li> <li>◆ Depriving council of income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Eradication</li> <li>◆ Directive to technocrats</li> </ul>
Urban Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Violation of planning laws</li> <li>◆ Violation of environmental and public health legislation</li> <li>◆ Increase in poverty</li> <li>◆ Greed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Eradicate illegal and dangerous</li> <li>◆ Direct genuine cases of need to legal and environmentally safe locations</li> <li>◆ Enforce existing environmental and planning policies</li> </ul>
Resource poaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Theft perpetrated by criminals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Step up arrests and prosecution</li> </ul>
Water pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Environmental hazard,</li> <li>◆ Greed</li> <li>◆ Low fines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Eradication</li> <li>◆ More stringent by-laws</li> </ul>
Atmospheric pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increase in wood fires</li> <li>◆ Increase in vehicle numbers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Prosecute cases of wood poaching</li> <li>◆ Use persuasion for vehicles</li> <li>◆ Awareness campaign for vehicle owners</li> </ul>

Table 10 summarises the perceptions of council and the definitions of issues adopted by the local authority in addressing the most contentious issues on the agenda. In dealing with illegal tuckshops, for example, council, on the advice of planners and environmental groups, discerned nothing more than a violation of standing regulations on planning, public health and environmental management. Council also discovered that the proliferation of these illegal structures was depriving it of revenue while undeservedly benefiting from council services

(*Daily News*, 30 May, 2001). The conclusion was that the existence of these structures was a crime and had to be addressed like all other crimes. This perception was translated into instruments whose primary goal was the eradication of the perceived nuisance. Virtually overnight a directive was issued to the technocrats to destroy the structures without notice. The municipal police, protected by the state riot squad moved in and started a two-day demolition campaign in which over 500 illegal structures were destroyed (*The Financial Gazette*, 24 May, 2001). Virtually the same scenario was repeated in council's handling of backyard shacks (ZIHOPFE, 2001; see Table 10).

Figure 10 suggests that the governed, who are normally excluded from the shaping of the eventual programme of action, do make responses that eventually filter into the system. As noted above these 'victims of exclusion' make a two-pronged presentation to the institutions of governance focussing on the city council and central government. This is an additional arsenal to their traditional forms of responses in public forums and through opinion makers, particularly the media.

When council launched its demolition blitz in March 2001, there was an outcry. There were at least 15 recorded public demonstrations and one petition to the government, one to the local authority and an international appeal through the media and the Internet (ACHR, 2001; *Daily Telegraph*, 30 March, 2001; Justgiving, 2001). Government then weighed in ordering the commission to stop the destruction or go (Kahiya, 2001). This added to the international and local outcry that forced council to review its policy. It came out with a revised action plan that echoed what had been raised by the 'outsiders' about livelihoods and employment. In what amounted to an honourable retreat in the face of irresistible feedback (Figure 5), council agreed to regularise the tuckshops while insisting that some of them would still have to go. A new set of regulations was put in place about the number, location, size and taxing of the new regularised tuckshops (*Daily News*, 30 May, 2001).

**Table 11: The fallout from decision outputs: feedback and review (and retreat?)**

Issue	Fallout	Response	Action
Tuckshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Widespread campaigns</li> <li>◆ Government intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Reprocessing</li> <li>◆ 'New' perception</li> <li>◆ Retranslating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Regularisation</li> </ul>
Shacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ As above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Reprocessing, 'New' perception</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Reprieve</li> </ul>
Urban agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Pressure to change by-laws and planning regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Under review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ 'Unofficial' reprieve</li> <li>◆ Laxity in enforcement</li> </ul>
Resource poaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Isolated appeals for council to see big picture (see Table 4)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Unaltered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Same</li> <li>◆ Poorly enforced</li> </ul>
Water pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Appeals to descend on industry and self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Promises,</li> <li>◆ threats to polluters,</li> <li>◆ Threats of more stringent measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Same</li> <li>◆ Poorly enforced</li> </ul>
Atmospheric pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Unaltered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Same</li> <li>◆ Strong media campaign with E2000</li> </ul>

A more toned down review was made with respect to the backyard shacks. In this case council agreed to stop the destruction but did not go so far as to regularise them. In this response council seems to have agreed with demonstrators, petitioners and campaigners that it was treating causes rather than symptoms. There was tacit recognition of the validity of the argument that the 500,000 who would lose their accommodation would, in the absence of a viable alternative, just relocate within the city's boundaries (Justgiving, 2001).

The responses to council's other resolutions are summarised in Table 11.<sup>19</sup> The table shows that the governors have made some concessions where the fallout has been intense. Some changes have been official and explicit, while the majority appears to have been reflected in a reluctance or inability to enforce decisions. Urban agriculture and resource poaching are good examples of cases where the local authority exhibited some kind of 'enforcement paralysis' (Box 8).

## 7 RECONCILIATION AND MEDIATION

This section will focus on examining how broad-based the system of governance has been. It has already been pointed out that as far as deliberations are concerned the system of governance is a tightly closed unit and those who find their way in, do so by sneaking in, 'bursting in', or in the case of central government, authoritatively stepping in to assert its legally enshrined power. This part of the discussion provides a more detailed analysis of how the system has attempted to "...balance, reconcile and trade off...competing interests" (UNCHS, 2000: 9), especially between environmental and social concerns.

Table 12: The contents of outputs from the system by sector

CONCERNS	PRE- AND POST-REVIEW CONTENTS (✓ = Present)													
	Tuckshops		Shacks		Agriculture		Air		Water		Sand		Wood	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
ENVIRONMENTAL														
Public health	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public safety	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Planning standards	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scenic value	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Degradation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FINANCIAL														
Revenue loss	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓				
Deterrence									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SOCIO-ECONOMIC														
Employment creation		✓												
Poverty alleviation					✓	✓								
Making a living		✓			✓	✓								
Greed as motivation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FUNDAMENTAL CAUSE														
Diagnosed				✓	✓	✓			✓	✓				✓

Source: Research findings

<sup>19</sup> The table is to be read with Figure 5 and Table 10.

Table 12 provides an overview of council decisions as they were initially produced and what they were after some review, if any. Table 13 analyses ‘decision shapers’ and ‘agitators’. The former are those who actually participate in the decision-making process and whose contribution is actually taken on board. Agitators are those who protest, usually in reaction to a decision they feel is targeted against them. The pre-review and post review concerns were arrived at by examining the contents of specific deliberations, decisions and the resultant policy instruments produced.

An analysis of the contents of the decision outputs in Table 12 reveals a leaning towards environmental protection. In fact five of the seven components (71.2%) contained the entire standard environmental arguments and prescriptions on public health, safety, planning (mainly on infrastructure), scenic value and degradation. Only concerns relating to urban agriculture and atmospheric pollution lacked the full complement. Even these featured four of the five standard concerns. The ‘post-review’ column of Table 12 shows that even after reviewing its stance council did not relax its environmental line. Council’s normal compromise has been to incorporate some concerns raised by some agitators into its already designed programme (Table 13). Another observation to be drawn from Table 12 is that with the exception of urban agriculture council’s initial conviction is that socio-economic issues are of very little consequence, if any.

**Table 13: ‘Shapers’ and ‘agitators’**

Issue	Pre-review		Post-review	
	Shapers	Agitators	Shapers	Agitators
Tuckshop	Local authority	Opinion makers	Government, Local authority	Environmental groups Civil society, households, individuals
Backyard Shacks	Local authority	Homeless people’s and civil society, international community,	Government, Local authority	Industry, commerce
Urban agriculture	Local authority	Individuals, Groups	Local authority	Individuals, Groups
Sand poaching	Local authority, central government	Individuals, environmental groups	Local authority, central government	Individuals, environmental groups
Wood poaching	Local authority, central government	Individuals, environmental groups	Local authority, central government	Individuals, environmental groups
Water pollution	Local authority, central government	Environmental groups, residents association, commentators	Local authority, central government	Environmental groups, commentators residents association,
Atmospheric pollution	Local authority, Central government	Environmental groups	Local authority, central government Environmental groups	Environmental groups

*Source: Research findings*

Inevitably there have been angry reactions characterised by widespread agitation from various sections of the urban community (Tables 11 and 13). After these disturbances, the system has tended to wake up to the reality on the ground. It is after this agitation that the system has in many cases remoulded its decisions by expanding its view. This it has done by



acknowledging socio-economic concerns while still clinging onto its initial designs. Tuckshops are a good example. In some cases (for example, backyard shacks) council has stuck to its guns by not altering its initial design, deciding instead to grant a reprieve, which one commentator compares to a stay of execution.

A profile of the shapers and agitators sheds additional light on the observations raised above. Concerns are more likely to be heard if they originate from organised groups than if they come from individuals. For their part, individual concerns are more likely to be heard if they are put across by ratepayers. This in essence excludes the homeless and the poor in low-income areas, as these do not pay rates.<sup>20</sup> This non-rate-paying status of the poor also works against the poor in other more subtle ways. For example the CHRA whose mandate is to represent ratepayers rarely takes up issues affecting people who do not have a stake in the city. The stake is always defined in material terms with the ownership of real estate property being the foremost criterion. Indeed, the CHRA regularly teams up with environmentalist to complain about the misdeeds of the poor.

All but four (more than 71%) of the 14 organised groups known to have engaged council are environmental pressure groups or interest groups whose concerns were entirely environmental. Of the four groups with socio-economic bias two (AAG and ZITOA) hardly qualify as civil society. They lack both focus and cohesion. They are to all intents and purposes a registered assortment of individuals who come together to add an emotive black empowerment flavour to on-going controversies (Table 14; cf. Dube, 2001).

Apart from agitation and the occasional review of decisions there is no real mediation in the management of the common affairs of the city. Instead of mediation there may be revision, which revision as stressed above is nothing more than a reluctant inclusion of other viewpoints and needs in the 'redesigning' of council's urban management instruments. Only the loud and influential are capable of causing agitation that can be noticed and acted upon. As noted, even when reacting to 'external' noise and disgruntlement the system still remains closed, opening up only to allow itself to go out get the cause and sense of the displeasure, walk back in and close the door. Once again safely behind the closed doors the local authority still has the monopoly of deciding what to do in the face of the agitation. Only the minister can get an audience and a real meeting where some 'meaningful discussion' can take place.

At least once in early 2001 the minister took some sections of the governed with him to Town House and forced a meeting with the chairman of the commission.<sup>21</sup> However, commentators agree that this was nothing more than 'political posturing' (Kahiya, 2001). To label the encounter between the minister and the commission as mediation would be a misrepresentation. The minister dictated terms, gave an ultimatum and unilaterally set up a committee, appointed wholly by himself, to regularise the structures. At the meeting in question the chairman of the commission running the city "...was told to stop the destruction" (Kahiya, 2001). Predictably, the minister's demands and prescriptions brushed aside environmental concerns and elevated socio-economic issues above anything else. The

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<sup>20</sup>Homeowners in high-density, low-income areas pay 'supplementary charges'. These are flat fees, which bear no relationship to the value of property.

<sup>21</sup> This was the pick of the tuckshops and shacks controversy. The minister took with him members of the ZITOA and the AAG.

constitution of the appointed committee<sup>22</sup> strongly implies that environmental concerns are to be subservient to the socio-economic needs of the tuckshop owners.

**Table 14: Shapers and agitators: the groups**

<b>ENVIRONMENTAL BIAS</b>	<b>SOCIO ECONOMIC BIAS</b>
1. Environment 2000	1. Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation
2. Combined Harare Residents Association	2. Civic Forum on Housing
3. Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce	3. Zimbabwe Tuckshop Owners Association
4. Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries	4. Affirmative Action Group
5. National Property Owners Association	
6. Inner-city Partnerships	
7. Retail Association of Zimbabwe	
8. Zimbabwe Institute of Regional and Urban Planners	
9. Harare Advocacy Centre	
10. Real Estate Institute of Zimbabwe	

In the absence of meaningful mediation there is no effort at reconciling “competing interest and priorities” (UNCHS, 2000: 9) in the management of the city’s common affairs. This lack of “broad-based local governance” (UNCHS/UNEP, 2000: 2) is a result of the deliberate exclusion of all stakeholders outside the ranks of the governors. Observations of the system suggest that the void in reconciling competing interests has three explanations. The first one is that the system does not believe that there are real enlightened competing interests ‘out there’. What the system basically believes in is a unitary interest and that in urban planning and management terms is *the* public interest. The second explanation is based on the conviction that allowing ‘controversy’ onto the agenda would add unnecessary strain to processes that should yield speedy results. Finally the system believes it is entrusted with the responsibility of carving a path for the city and for this it is legally authorised and amply qualified to determine what the valid interests are and to rally the city behind its informed and legitimate decisions.

## **8 URBAN GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY IN HARARE: EMERGING ISSUES**

While the focus of the critique has been on the capital, the preceding analysis is applicable to the whole of urban Zimbabwe. The same structures and processes discussed here obtain in all urban centres. The conclusions reached here are therefore valid for all the 24 urban centres governed by the Urban Councils Act.

The discussions has stressed that the attainment of urban sustainability will depend on the outputs of the system, which outputs, as has been shown, depend on what goes into the system and how it is processed. Empirical evidence suggests that the spirited pursuit for urban sustainability in Harare is fundamentally flawed as it lacks the support of processes and mechanisms that can allow the management of the city’s common affairs to be “participatory, transparent and accountable” (UNDP, 1997: 4). This may mean that the city is moving away from sustainability. The following sections will try to put this assertion into perspective.

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<sup>22</sup> The committee is made up of activists from the AAG and ZITOA. None of the committee members has any interest in environmental issues.

## **8.1 The structures, processes and outputs**

An analysis of the institutional structures of governance reveals an impressive array of state, civil society and private sector stakeholders who if they so wish can interact and work together. A look at the institutions of local governance shows that the system is well structured in terms of the political decision making arm as well as the technical decision execution side. In terms of organisation the system is indeed ripe for democratic governance and accountability. The integration of checks and balances through elected representatives at the national level and the fact that this supervision is endowed with both technical and political attributes (the MLGPWNH and the MPs) makes the system of governance well suited not only to manage but also to govern the city.

The problem of governance lies with how the system is operated. It is here that observers cannot help questioning the seemingly solid structures, which at face value should be conducive for good urban governance. The city's diversity as reflected in the multiplicity and variety of civil society and private organisations is literally shut out when it comes to the actual management of the city's affairs. Evidence shows that after receiving inputs mainly through 'normal' channels the system believes it can handle the stimuli on its own. Admittedly, it does allow its members to occasionally sneak out to get wind of what is going on, but this neither alters the on-going processes nor enriches them.

Granted, the presence of anybody who so wishes at full council meetings does introduce an element of transparency in the process. However, transparency that is not supported by meaningful participation only leads to agony and helplessness as the governed take note of what is going on but realise that they cannot change things without recourse to drastic measures. Which is why agitation results. There is something critically wrong with the processing of the input. The mechanisms in place do not encourage broad consensus. They breed controversy, which controversy as noted has no formal forum to address it except through complaints, threats, litigation and general 'rebel rousing'. In such a situation central government's emotional outbursts and often uninformed intervention is hardly surprising.

In view of the above the efficacy of the structures in place has to be re-evaluated. Institutionally there is no doubt that the potential for good local governance is there. It is the mechanisms that seem to be flawed. The lack of guidelines on how to handle input from diverse stakeholders and how to include the stakeholders at some stage of the deliberations is a major weakness. Legally only full council is open to the public. Legally, the public only comes to full council to observe and be entertained by their representatives' antics. There is virtually nothing in place to compel the local authority to open up. In this, one cannot begrudge the governors because they are in any case exercising their legal rights and obligations as prescribed in the law. But then good governance transcends the state, it allows citizens and groups to wield power and authority as well as influence and enact policies and decisions. In this way good governance is a broader notion than government (see IIAS, 1996). Evidence shows there is no official recognition of this fact in the system of governance in Harare.

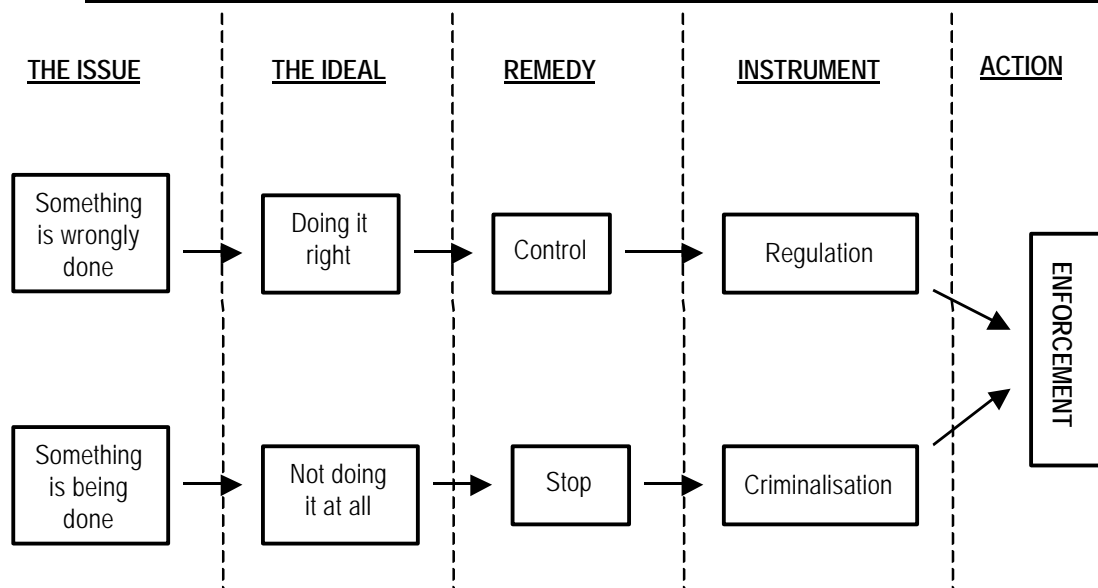
This oversight has significant implications for urban governance. As one commentary notes "governance comprises the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations" (GDRC, 2000). In the absence of this articulation of interests, there are bound to be errors of omission and commission. The result is a flawed type of governance

that barely transcends the state, its views, needs and priorities. This does not usher in urban sustainability. In such a system there are no competing interests – whether environmental or social. There is an imposed unitary interest - that of the governors. Such a system is the exact antithesis of the Inclusive City (UNCHS/UNEP, 2000: 2). The enormity of this oversight becomes clear when one takes into account the fact that the Sustainable City should be an Inclusive City.

## 8.2 The two-type official methodology

Having gone through the decision-making structures and processes in Harare, it is possible at this stage to draw some conclusions on the local authority’s methodology of achieving its version of urban sustainability. The city has two related approaches, namely regulation and criminalisation. Figure 11 presents a simplified diagram of the workings of the two-type methodology and what appears to be the guiding philosophy behind it.

FIGURE 11: OFFICIAL METHODOLOGY FOR ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIETAL ISSUES



The local authority’s methodology is based on two premises. First is the conviction that some activities, while not iniquitous in themselves, are or have the potential of being done wrongly, perhaps through some excesses or oversight. The ideal, according to the local authority, is to ensure that they are done correctly. In such a situation the remedy is to provide guidance and direction by means of controls. This is achieved through regulatory instruments, which for example, prescribe appropriate land uses, quantities, conservation requirements, entitlements and penalties for violations. Urban agriculture best illustrates this approach. While the practice is permissible some controls are imposed on such aspects as location, land ownership and eligibility. The same approach relates to outbuildings, where the local authority requires adherence to building, planning, public health, safety and environmental sanitation regulations.

The second premise relates to activities which are taking place, but which according to the ideal should not be happening at all. The dumping of untreated effluent or raw sewage into the city’s water sources is an example. The only remedy is to stop such activities. The instrument in this case is criminalisation – a process where those who practice such nefarious activities are technically no longer ‘practitioners’ or ‘doers’ but ‘perpetrators’. Having been caught carrying out such illicit activities the perpetrators are hauled before the courts and

charged with a crime where restitution will be required or a custodial penalty is imposed. Spot fines and ‘admission of guilt fines’ are exacted in some instances for those who are not ready to contest the local authority’s case against them.

The two-type methodology is effectuated through enforcement. The city deploys its resources to make sure that things are done correctly and that those that are not supposed to be taking place are effectively stopped. Harare’s own municipal police does the enforcement sometimes with the help of the state police (the ZRP) and the fearsome riot squad. These state institutions come in when the city enforces its edicts in what it perceives to be very volatile environments. Through the years the municipal police has always executed evictions, forced relocations as well as the destruction of shacks, tuckshops and markets while the state machinery keeps a close watch.

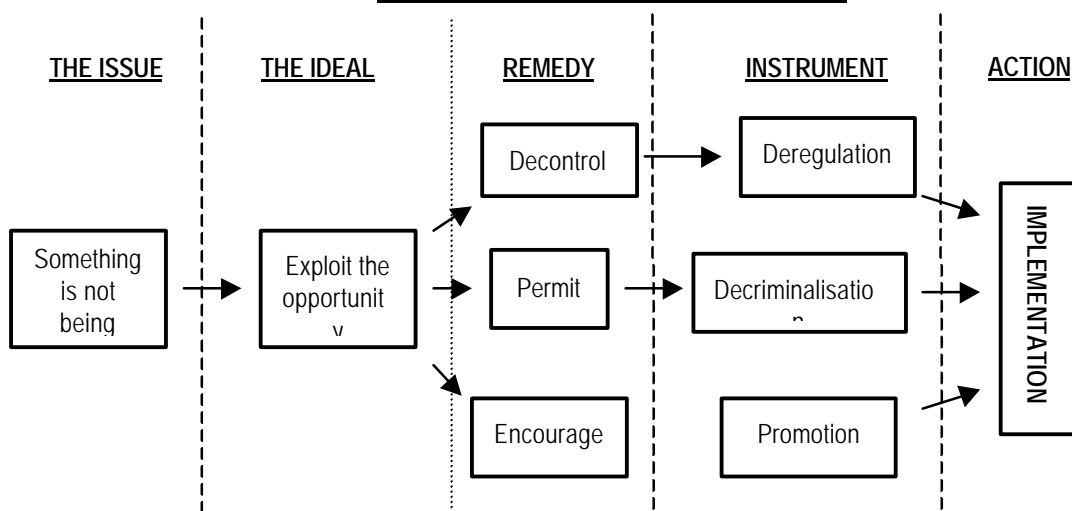
### 8.3 Missing – a complementary methodology?

The system is rightly concerned with controlling and rooting out negative developments in the area under its jurisdiction. Be that as it may, the regulation-criminalisation fixation has become so strong that it crowds out other more innovative methodologies that could compliment this two-type methodology. Policy issues are not always situations that need redress. Policy issues are not always threats; sometimes they present themselves as opportunities (cf. Hogwood and Gunn, 1984). This is where the system misses out. Figure 12 presents a complementary methodology that the city authorities appear not to be aware of or concerned about in their handling of environmental and societal issues.

This is yet another oversight that has implications for urban governance. The city authorities are so convinced that the governed are prone to misbehave that it tries to limit, redress or eliminate the damage that they inflict or could inflict, hence the regulatory and criminalisation mentality. This explains why in pursuing its own framework of urban sustainability the local authority has adopted crude versions of defensive and offensive strategies (cf. Priemus, 1999: 213) aimed at reigning in its errant subjects.

Notably, trust is an attribute of good governance (cf. Wekwete, 1997). In a situation charged with suspicion and a mutual lack of confidence, it is impossible to interact let alone reciprocate. Where there is no interaction, it is difficult to be innovative or discover opportunities. Considering its closed nature, the system’s lack of vision as far as opportunities are concerned is to be expected. Interestingly the UNDP (1997) lists a shared ‘strategic vision’ as an essential characteristic of good urban governance.

FIGURE 12: THE UNTAPPED METHODOLOGY





There is no known attempt to discover opportunities that could be exploited for the collective benefit of the urban system or any of its subsystems. This is true principally in the socio-economic sector (Kamete, 1997a). Figure 12 shows that in this complementary perspective the ideal is to capitalise on these opportunities. As shown in the diagram encouragement is a necessary but not sufficient 'remedy' for this methodology. It may be necessary to do away with regulatory and statutory instruments through the granting of permission and removal of controls. This is not a new realisation. Deregulation and decriminalisation have been proposed before as useful and viable management tools in the quest for sustainability in the Zimbabwean context (cf. Gore *et al.*, 1992). The proposition appears to have fallen on deaf ears.

#### **8.4 Shaping the concept for the local context**

It appears that the local authority single-handedly calls the shots in the management of the affairs of the city of Harare. The system of deliberation and decision-making is closed and only opens up to listen when there is agitation from non-participants. There is ample evidence to suggest that this listening does not alter the system's beliefs, convictions and prescriptions on socio-economic and environmental issues. Instead, if the noise is perceived to be particularly troublesome some placatory measures are taken. The most common response is to allow some elements of the outside grievances to be arbitrarily included in the instruments already designed or still being processed. This placation sometimes creates major contradictions in decision outputs with the result that the whole programme practically becomes paralysed and virtually unimplementable. The case of backyard shacks is a typical example. While the legal, environmental and financial evils in the shacks are well articulated and defended, the eventual addition of crudely conceptualised socio-economic and structural issues made the issue so unwieldy that the governors thought it wise to take no action.

On the basis of the above analysis it can be argued that the city authorities regard themselves as being solely responsible for shaping and operationalising the concept of urban sustainability in Harare. Council filters and defines issues based on its own perceptions and the advice of technocrats in the technical departments. Any contributions outside the governors' circle are at best informal and non-obligatory. Some consultants are sometimes called in to produce some plans or reports on issues the city feels hazy about (Figure 10). Nevertheless this transaction is strictly business. The 'city' can accept or reject the proposals. Even after accepting the proposals the local authority is under no obligation to implement them. Whatever environmental or societal interpretations the city authorities have and likes are turned into official programmes. In the end the whole city is supposed to unite and rally behind the resultant instruments.

To be fair, the diversity of representatives in council does promote debate and a measure of accountability. Representatives are supposed to report back to the electorate. However in all cases they report what everybody else already knows because it has been discussed in a full council meeting, has been leaked or is in the print and electronic media. This shortcoming is not of the representatives' own making. What is discussed in council committees officially remains a secret until the Executive Committee deliberates on it and agrees that it should be

on the agenda of the full council meeting<sup>23</sup> (Figure 9). Obviously, this drastically reduces what little transparency and accountability there is in the process.

On the 'outside', environmental pressure groups monopolise the shaping of the concept of sustainability to suit the local context. The nature of their composition (rich retirees or volunteers supported by industry, commerce and international organisations) means that if they so desire they can mobilise their vast human, material and financial resources to agitate against a decision or drive home a point. And they do almost always become heard. Their contributions to the sustainability debate – which invariably consist of threats, alarms, bargaining, negotiation and brinkmanship (Table 1 and Figure 4) – are the ones that are received and sometimes processed by the governance system. The resultant perception by the city officials, both professional and elected is thus to some extent moulded by these environmental pressure groups. These perceptions are the ones that may be included in the translation and eventually drive the search for urban sustainability.

The moulding of the 'local version' of urban sustainability by influential environmental pressure groups is narrowed down to the natural environment. They are champions of preservation, which according to Merrett means "the protection of nature against man" (1995: 11). To them, the protection of nature is the ultimate and only aim of sustainability. They do not look any further than that. Asked about her understanding of sustainability, the head of one of the foremost groups gave the famous Brundtland Report's definition of sustainable development, namely, "...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (WCED, 1987: 43). Her answers to subsequent follow-up questions indicated that her interpretation of the definition was confined to ecological preservation (Kamete, 1997). It is this interpretation which is, as it were, imposed onto the urban governance system by these civic groups. As noted sometimes they do find willing listeners in the governors.

First to suffer because of this narrow perception is the socio-economic sphere. The poor find themselves at the wrong end of the resultant by-laws, directives, plans and policies. Thus because of the absence of broad based governance, consensus and mediation the "protection of nature against humankind" sums up what Zimbabwe's capital has adopted as its method of achieving sustainability. The fact that Harare is one of the few clean (and liveable?) capitals in sub-Saharan Africa might have prompted the city governors to be overly protective. Somehow they consider the poor, rather than poverty, to be the greatest threat to environmental sustainability.

There is some truth in this viewpoint. After all, experience has demonstrated that it is the poor who colonise undevelopable and fragile land along the banks of the Mukuvisi River that feeds into Harare's main water supply. It is also the poor who engage in illegal and environmentally destructive stream-bank cultivation and other forms of urban agriculture which pollute the city's landscape and water courses (see Mbiba, 1995). These same poor people are seen on street corners, open spaces, shop fronts and pavements where, as vendors, they 'inconvenience law abiding citizens' while at the same time generating tonnes of solid waste every week. This they do, in spite of the fact that there are officially designated vending sites in the city. In the residential areas, it is not uncommon to find several times more people per

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<sup>23</sup> Occasionally the code of secrecy is broken as dissatisfied or publicity-loving councillors leak out some vital information.

stand than is legally permissible (see above). Worse still, the extra population is housed in thousands of illegal shacks, most of them violating every operative regulation on public health, safety and environmental sanitation. Also, tuckshops are littered across the high-density areas, most of them without requisite services and planning permission.<sup>24</sup>

These misdemeanours have made it easy for the governors to readily accept the prescriptions of alarmed environmental pressure groups. Eradication is not a bad term for the methodology adopted. By persuasion and by force, they have been trying to put an end to these maladies in order to preserve nature. This selective targeting of the poor in pursuit of environmental preservation has had complex and interesting results, some of them unintended.

The confirmed obsession with the natural environment suggests that strong sustainability (Box 6), where absolutely no environmental 'disruption' is allowed is the officially chosen version. Nature is perceived as the victim, and humankind, precisely the poor, as the villain. Battle lines have been drawn between the two. The blind and indiscriminate way in which this notion has been translated on the ground has had two significant effects.

Firstly this deformed translation has seriously compromises the ability of the present generation of the poor to meet its current needs, while not guaranteeing the ability of their posterity to meet theirs (cf. WCED, 1987; UNDP, 1997). Effectively there has been an officially orchestrated impairment of the survival of the poor without seeking to understand their side of the issue. Neither has there been broad-based attempts to find alternatives, diagnose underlying causes and therefore come up with workable and acceptable solutions. As noted above the instruments adopted by the urban governors carry only one message, that the poor have to stop harming the environment at all costs.

Secondly, the official translation has led to the adoption of environmental management and protection instruments that are difficult to enforce. This is fully discussed in Box 8. Whether the instruments churned out are not enforced or enforceable because of reluctance, complexity or resistance, it is clear that a significant proportion of the difficulties arises from the internal characteristics of the system of urban governance, how it processes inputs and how it comes up with a package of actionable instruments.

A poor understanding of the role of nature to human activities, coupled with the narrowly defined concept and incorrectly formulated problem, have meant that the outputs of the system are inevitably erroneous, blind and disruptive, at least as far as the urban poor are concerned. As noted earlier in this discussions, economic structural adjustment and an under-performing economy have resulted in thousands of breadwinners being made jobless, this in the face of rising costs of living in the absence of a working national social security system. Even the gainfully employed have had to contend with eroded wages. They have all turned to nature for survival. This nature, as we have seen, is the site of human (survival) activities, the source of raw materials, and the sink of human wastes (Merrett, 1995:7; Woodhouse, 1992: 103). Negative environmental preservation policies, regulations, resolutions, laws and directives have hit directly at the logistics of survival for the majority of the urban poor. Looking at the existing instruments, one can only conclude that they are meant to 'subject' human survival to the preservation of nature.

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<sup>24</sup> At a news conference in July 1999 the town clerk of Harare claimed that there were over 80 000 illegal structures in the high-density areas of Harare. It should be noted that these are the areas that house most of the cities poor.



## 8.5 The reaction

Empirical evidence suggests that the poor have had their reaction shaped by these instruments. All of them view a 'sustainable urban environment', not as a necessity to their survival but as an impediment. Discussions with the poor in various parts of the city reveal that the poor wonder what on earth can be gained from open spaces, beautiful flowers, clean water, preserved bushes and clean streets when people are jobless, hungry, homeless, dirty and naked. To them, preserved nature is a hobby for the rich who do not have to worry about the logistics of day to day survival (compare Thomson, 1990).

### BOX 8. PARALYSIS OF ENFORCEMENT?

There are three primary causes of the lack of enforcement of some key instruments coming from the local authority. These are reluctance, complexity and resistance.

#### **Reluctance**

In Harare there are regulatory instruments that do not allow unauthorised cultivation on publicly owned land and/or open spaces. This is done to prevent among other things the abuse of fragile land and stream-bank cultivation. Every rainy season numerous warnings reading "**NO CULTIVATION**" and translated into the vernacular are placed at all open spaces known to be used for agriculture. Residents ignore them. For over four years now, they have been able to cultivate and harvest their maize and sweet potato crops without any problem. The local authority cannot claim to have lacked the resources to enforce such regulations. What they lacked was something else, perhaps political blessings, 'the will or the guts' (analyst).

#### **Complexity**

The eradication of backyard shacks is a unique case. These unauthorised structures have been condemned *ad infinitum* on environmental, public health and safety grounds. Since 1997 the local authority has tried twice to destroy the shacks. In the first instance it gave notice but could not proceed after the announcement raised a public furore. In 2001 the local authority proceeded to destroy over 500 shacks without giving notice. Then the minister came in and ordered them to stop telling the commissioners that 'they could go'. The destruction was stopped forthwith. Council did not revise its policy. It just became inactive, refusing to regularise them but at the same time afraid to continue enforcing its by-laws.

#### **Resistance**

In a bid to eliminate environmentally undesirable illegal structures and force adherence to its by-laws, council resolved to eradicate illegal tuckshops in the high-density areas. After a two-day destruction campaign, a sustained wave of public demonstrations resulted in the minister flanked with some black empowerment activists ordering a stop to the action. The issue raised political questions and invited so much resistance that the local authority had to regularise the tuckshops. The process began immediately, with the minister appointing his own committee to supervise progress.

This is why when the poor feel they have been unfairly treated by urban management instruments, which in their opinion are attacking their very livelihood they disrupt the processes by literally going on a rampage. It is during this time that they find a force to counterbalance environmental pressure groups. In the same way that environmental groups 'raise a dust' when any action by the poor or decision by council threatens environmental sustainability, national institutions of governance have been known to come up and defend the livelihood of the poor in the face of perceived threats. MPs are more than a match for the environmentalists in forcing an audience with council. They complain, mobilise and become such a nuisance that council eventually listens. The minister, another pro-poor ally is more than a match for the environmentalists. He gets what he wants not by persuasion and

negotiation but by exercising his legal authority. From 1997 to 2001 the two ministers of local government have intervened in five landmark cases<sup>25</sup> in favour of the poor. All the five interventions have shown no regard for environmental consequences.

The reaction of the poor and the subsequent processes that are set in motion show that where questions of survival are concerned, any laws that go contrary to the survival strategies of the poor are not taken seriously. They raise moral and political questions, which is why their enforcement becomes a problem. Harare is precisely in this situation. There is a complex array of institutions, legal and policy instruments in place. These instruments are not being translated into action, because they simply cannot be implemented without raising the fundamental issues mentioned above (Box 8).

## 9 WHAT IS WRONG?

There are some serious deficiencies in the urban governance system. These have to do mainly with (1) the selective and biased reception of inputs being fed into the system, (2) inadequate and inefficient processing, and (3) half-baked outputs that eventually issue out of the system. Significant among these 'wrongs' are the following aspects:

- ◆ Elitist domination of the sustainability debate
- ◆ The dichotomisation and antagonisation of society and nature
- ◆ 'Hooking-on' and 'fashion driven' urban management styles
- ◆ Following the easy way out

The rest of this paper will explain and substantiate the foregoing assertion.

### 9.1 Elitist domination of the sustainability debate

The moulding of and search for sustainability in Harare is a prerogative of the local authority. Sometimes a few privileged stakeholder groups find their way in. Dominating these lucky ones are environmentalists. Once they find themselves in they inevitably force an environmental tag onto the debate and processes. Needless to say there is 'social exclusion' in the environmental debate (cf. Vanderschueren *et al.*, 1997: 40). This lack of broad-based participation means that the ideas put into the system and then processed and eventually churned out are those of a minority, be it the local authority or some sections of civil society. There is virtually no consensus building and no mediation. It is not surprising then that the goals sought, the objectives adopted and the eventual strategies designed are suspect on technical, political and moral grounds. Ironically this social exclusion ends up working against the very environment it is meant to protect against the misdeeds of the poor. As noted above, one way or the other the concerns of the poor get attention through the disruptive intervention of central government. Once this happens the environmental causes are effectively sidelined.

Interestingly the Environmental Planning and Management (EPM) Source Book, which seeks to facilitate the implementation of the Urban Environment Agenda adopted at Habitat II, emphasises the importance of consensus building. It points out that in preparing and implementing environmental strategies in urban areas "...experience has shown the importance of effective processes for consensus building" (UNCHS/UNEP, 1997: 31). The same Source Book states that "strategy building is not simply a technical exercise" but spans across a range of "technical, political, social and economic factors and interests." In view of

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<sup>25</sup> These are backyard shacks, urban agriculture, tuckshops, food markets and squatting.

this it should come as no surprise that the narrowly defined and elitist dominated pursuit of environmental sustainability in Harare is facing numerous hitches in its operationalisation.

## 9.2 The dichotomization and antagonisation of society and nature

It is this narrow-minded ‘environmentalisation’ of sustainability that has led to the separation and eventual estrangement of society and the nature. The perceptions of a few who in the view of the majority do not have to worry about immediate needs of sustenance continue to define environmental strategies and objectives, which as generally perceived, translated and implemented directly impair the survival strategies of the majority. Those who are negatively affected end up being practically nauseated by any issue that has environmental overtones, which as brought out in the preceding discussion, they consider to be a hobby of the rich and/or the powerful. Ultimately they end up identifying conservation with economic status, wealth and power.

Because of their perceived obsession with the protection of the natural environment the designers and enforcers of environmental protection instruments are inevitably identified with oppression. In the minds of those adversely affected by the outputs of the system conservation becomes closely intertwined with repression. This in turn builds up resentment and evokes various forms of resistance that include destruction and defiance. The resistance thus built makes very difficult the enforcement of whatever policing measures adopted.

## 9.3 Hooking-on and fashion driven management styles

Like most of their African counterparts, Harare’s urban managers are conscious of the latest styles in the urban management arena. They are keen to adopt every new concept that happens to be popular. This they do by hooking onto the latest management and administrative fashions. The problem is that there are many concepts floating around at any one time (Box 9). Consequently, as noted by one commentator, like ‘a glutton faced with too much food, the system swallows the concepts, without properly chewing them’. This has led to problems of ‘administrative indigestion’.

BOX 9: THE MANY CONCEPTS AND THE SYSTEM HAS HOOKED ONTO
Sustainable development
Environmental sustainability
Gender and development
Poverty reduction
Local economic development
Increasing foreign direct investment
Commercialisation
Privatisation
Decentralisation
Public-private partnerships
Private sector participation
Creating an enabling environment
Public participation
Good governance

There is nothing wrong with striving to be up-to-date. It is the way that the system approaches the urban management ‘fashion scene’. As one key informant noted, “Fashion-conscious people have the good sense of mixing and matching these accessories, making them all

contribute towards one goal, a well-dressed individual.” The urban governance system has yet to learn this artistry. Like the clothing fashion, the concepts cited above come in separate packages, at different times, usually from different ‘fashion houses’ (such as academic and research institutions, NGOs, pressure groups, and aid agencies) each one focusing on at least one of the dimensions of sustainability, namely society, economy and ecology. Whatever their origin, focus or emphasis they all contribute towards one goal, viz., urban sustainability. In Harare’s case the processing of the concepts received is inefficient at the level of the governors at both local and central government levels. These issues are received separately and compartmentalised. Sometimes they are not institutionalised at all, although the city will be paying a lot of lip service to them. There is virtually no evidence of the system realising that these concepts are but different facets of urban sustainability (Box 9).

#### **9.4 Following the easy way out**

Adopting and implementing environmental policies appears to be one of the easiest options in the search for sustainable urban development. After all in pursuit of environmental preservation, the local authority only has to pass regulations, usually penal, to force the adoption or banning of certain practices. This is done at virtually no cost to the governance system except maybe a redeployment of manpower to do the enforcement. The fact that virtually no active enforcement takes place in most cases (Box 8) makes the environment a relatively convenient dimension to tackle.

This illusion is very attractive when compared to the taxing, arduous and mind-boggling issues like enhancing people's livelihoods, promoting local economic development and addressing poverty. These non-environmental aspects are also involving, time-consuming and controversial. Urban managers are not too keen to be embroiled in such issues, unless they have to. Faced with these realities, the urban governors understandably elevate the environmental dimension as the panacea for sustainable urban development. Environmental preservation is naturally reduced to the easy and convenient method of indiscriminate control epitomised by regulation and criminalisation.

### **10 PRO-POOR AND PRO-ENVIRONMENT CIVIL SOCIETY: AN APPRAISAL**

#### **10.1 Politicisation**

Perhaps due to the fact that pro-poor groups cannot match the intellectual and material resources of pro-environment groups, the local version of urban sustainability, which as noted above rarely goes beyond environmental management, has been politicised. That the poor regularly find refuge in the politics of the day is to be expected. The observation by Pino (1998: 257) of “patronage politics and popular mobilisation” being “weapons of the weak” is applicable in the Harare context. The poor are aware of their political value and are keen to use this asset to extract some “goods or services” from those who would want to receive reciprocal benefits from them.

Needless to say, politicisation changes the texture of the processes in the system of governance. If current development go on unchecked, the situation in Harare is sure to reach a stage where labels will be turned inside out. Already, there are situations where this is happening. For example, where governors and environmental groups talk of ‘law-breakers’, ‘criminals’, and ‘perpetrators’, higher order politics comes in to label them ‘victims’ whereupon the politicians – in particular the minister responsible for local government –

become the ‘protectors’. The villains in this reconstituted ‘struggle’ become the urban governors and the pro-environment groups. Recent developments relating to tuckshops and backyard shacks can be viewed in this new light. As shown above politicisation introduces new dimensions to the debates with some purely political and race-based groups like the AAG and ZITOA stepping in to reinforce the minister’s bid to ‘protect’ the destitute, powerless and the voiceless.

That environmental issues in Harare have been politicised is a fact. It is a fact also that this is in part a result of the wholesale environmentalisation of the quest for urban sustainability. However, to single out the dominance and success of environmental groups as the sole cause of this politicisation would be an exaggeration. Pro-environment groups have managed to sneak into the system because they have a strategy and are quick to pick issues and act on them. Pro-poor groups on the other hand lack a coherent proactive programme. They wait for council to take action and then start crying foul. In this way when pro-poor civil society politicise issues it is partly a reflection of their failure to keep up with the pace of developments on the flawed governance front. If blame is to be apportioned, a large part of it should be allocated to the pro-poor groups themselves and the system of governance, in particular the processes taking place therein.

## 10.2 The shortcomings of pro-poor groups

There is an abundance and variety of pro-poor groups in Harare. Among the 16 groups identified are discussion groups such as the Poverty Reduction Forum and practitioner groups like ZITOA, HAVAZ and ZISA. In addition there are groups that are concerned with the welfare of particular segments of society such as women, the homeless, street children and the disabled. In numerical terms pro-poor groups outnumber their pro-environment counterparts by a ratio of more than 4:1 (Table 15); and this refers to organised and known groups only. In spite of this, the latter heavily ‘outgun’ the former; hence the apparent ease with which they sometimes manage to break into the tightly closed local governance system, while pro-poor groups remain excluded.

Pro-environment groups are true advocates in the sense that they speak for the environment and seem to know what they are talking about. They have successfully tagged their environmental advocacy to issues of urban sustainability, thus getting the attention of not only the local enlightened but also of international donors like Danida (Danida, 2000). In 2000 alone the Danish aid agency poured Z\$28 million into a two-year air pollution campaign spearheaded by Environmental 2000 (E2000, 2000).

Table 15: An overview of pro-poor and pro-environment groups in Harare<sup>26</sup>

Pro-environment		Pro-poor				
Local	International	Discussion groups	Special and interest Groups <sup>27</sup>	Practitioners	Homeless	International
E2000	Danida	PRF	Disabled	ZITOA	DSHZ	UNDP
CHRA			Street children (2)	ZISA	ZIHOPFE	SAPRI
HICP			Women (3)	HAVAZ	CFH	
			AAG		HPZ	
			ZCTU			

<sup>26</sup> This table relates specifically to Harare during the period of the study and on the issues in question.

<sup>27</sup> Number in brackets indicates the total number of groups

In contrast, pro-poor groups do not have this kind of support mostly because they do not appeal to the 'big picture'. They talk about survival as if it is not linked to anything else in the urban system. When they speak out it is to complain or ask for funds or, in the case of discussion forums, to 'analyse' issues and issue out communiqués and recommendations, which in most cases never go beyond the conference proceedings volume. The rare exceptions to this are the Poverty Reduction Forum and the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). On at least one occasion the PRF working with civil society among them the influential ZCTU gave recommendations to central government on addressing the vicissitudes of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) (SAPRI, 1999). The UNDP makes the exaggerated claim that the increase in the health budget for the year 2000 was an immediate result of the PRF's budget recommendations presented to a pre-budget seminar for parliamentarians (UNDP, 2000).

There are serious weaknesses in the pro-poor approach. They 'aim big', concerning themselves with wider issues like proving how disruptive structural adjustment is and trying to figure out what the ideal national budget should be. Consequently they end up ignoring or even bypassing local governance and opting instead to reach out to national governance. This perhaps explains why pro-poor groups always find their defenders from institutions of national governance. Interestingly their main patron, the UNDP emphasises the importance of governance, which it labels as the "missing link" in the quest to reduce poverty (UNDP, 2000: 54). The UNDP report however, leaves no doubt as to what level of governance it considers important. The downplaying of local governance by the PRF, which is a creation of the UNDP, is therefore not surprising.

An analysis of the activities of pro-poor and pro-environment civil society in Harare shows that environmental groups have been able to make two crucial achievements which pro-poor groups have failed to do. In the first instance environmental groups have been able to link their stance to sustainability, thereby adding power and relevance to their demand. The second achievement is that they have recognised local governance as an entry point. This is significant because it is at the local level that fundamental action programmes shaping the running of the city are set out.

### **10.3 Responding to instruments without challenging the basis**

The greatest challenge to the social dimension as shown in this paper is the environmentalisation of urban sustainability. Strangely, pro-poor groups have failed to mount a successful challenge to this perception. Nor have they tried to reorient the city governors or at the least to broaden their view. It seems that the groups remain content as long as they can mount short-term, issue specific challenges to resultant action instruments issuing out of the system of local governance. As demonstrated above with a little noise and politically motivated help this 'guerrilla warfare' does lead to changes in the contentious instrument.

However, this does nothing to change the fundamental premise upon which council decisions are based. For example in March 2001 Dialogue on Shelter for the Homeless (DSHZ) and the Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation (ZIHOPFE) mounted a spirited international campaign to stop the destruction of backyard shacks by the city authorities (ACHR, 2001; ZIHOPFE, 2001). The campaign was a success in getting a reprieve, but the local authority's resolve to eradicate the structures in question has not changed. The acting chairperson of the commission is on record (Justgiving, 2001) as stressing:

*Harare is being reduced to a town of cabins and backyard shacks and the commission is not going to allow that. Our resolution to demolish illegal structures still stands and we are not going to stop at anything. Residents should know that there are by-laws they have to abide by and that the commission has no sympathy for whoever violates the by-laws.*

Thus, like the legendary sword of Damocles the threat of demolition still hangs above the heads of the 500,000 people housed in illegal structures, mainly because council has not changed its view of the structures; and the pro-poor groups have done nothing to engage council with a view to changing the governors' perception. Despite this, groups like the DSHZ, ZIHOPFE, CFH and HPZ continue to concentrate on helping their constituency acquire houses without being 'side-tracked' by the fundamental issues of local governance which have the real potential to adversely affect the people they serve.

There are no partnerships between pro-poor and pro-environment civil society. There are no direct conflicts either. It appears that as organisations the two hardly notice each other. In place of engaging each other, the groups look for support and sponsorship from other quarters. Pro-poor groups, as noted in the preceding discussion, appeal to higher offices of national governance. They also find sporadic interest and sympathy from international agencies as well as the academic and research community (SAPRI, 1999). Pro-environment groups solicit for material, moral and intellectual support from the private sector, some bilateral and multilateral agencies and affluent residents. They also make good use of the academic and research community (E2000, 2000; Danida, 2000).

## 11 CONCLUSION

The preceding discourse suggests that a centralised and undemocratic conceptualisation of sustainability does have undesirable results that are not conducive for the attainment of sustainability in the short or long-term. The system of urban governance is central to the moulding and operationalisation of the quest for sustainability. What goes into the system, how it is processed and what comes out of it are all crucial in this search. In the case of Harare, something is not functioning well in the search for sustainability. While the structures seem to be sound, the processes appear to be flawed. This is particularly so with respect to decision making. Once inputs are received, the system as represented by the local authority becomes a black box.

Apart from the local authority's monopolistic grip on decision-making, the search for urban sustainability is shaped by accidental 'participation' from environmental pressure groups whose understanding of the concept is also suspect and equally myopic. The results of these inadequacies are among others serious weaknesses at the processing stage and the resultant production of action-instruments that do not take into account the economic and social aspects of urban sustainability. The important components of sustainability (economic, social, environmental) are captured separately, never consolidated in policies and strategies, and are seldom co-ordinated at the implementation phase.

These weaknesses have compromised the system in several important ways, the most critical of which is the stepping in of national political institutions to 'restore' justice and fairness by championing the cause of the marginalised and excluded poor. When this happens it is the ecological component that suffers as the 'justice' as interpreted by the 'protectors' of the poor means suspending, sidelining or disregarding what are perceived to be impediments in the

survival efforts of the disempowered poor. In most cases this means going against environmental preservation instruments.

In view of the foregoing it can be concluded that the strategy for achieving sustainability in Harare hinges very much on the governance system appreciating, streamlining and reconciling issues of growth, survival and conservation. It also depends on shaping environmental policies, statutes and strategies to take cognisance of the fact that there need not be a conflict between nature and society and that conservation is far more workable than preservation. The environmentalisation of sustainability cannot bring in the Sustainable City; neither can politicisation.

The very first step that should be taken is a thorough conceptual clean-up. This involves a well thought out incorporation of the social and economic dimensions into the quest for sustainable urban development. The managers and policy makers need a lot of help to shed off some of the myopia that has gripped the system and lulled it into believing that environmental preservation through regulation and criminalisation is the only route to urban sustainability.

The conceptual clean-up should be done simultaneously with the democratisation of the process to go beyond the local authority and some sections of civil society. Other stakeholders from the social sciences (for example economists, planners and social workers) as well as interest groups in human rights, residents' associations, informal sector groups, women's organisations and political parties can contribute a lot in enriching the debate. These broader inputs will also benefit from more efficient processing. The outputs therefrom will be much better in terms of quality and effectiveness than the present ones.

The democratisation of the sustainability debate will also help resolve the emerging conflict between society and nature. As outlined earlier on, the system is badly in need of consensus building. There is definitely no need to separate human and economic development from environmental wellbeing. Once the debate is democratised it will be easy to get rid of the administrative indigestion caused by hooking onto fashionable management and development concepts from all sides of the globe. Different experts and interest groups will be able to position these styles within their range of interests and competence and feed these into the system in a more well thought out and systematic manner.

Thus instead of the indigestion and the indecisiveness that it brings, one will see the conversion of the system into a decisive and incisive receptor and processor of the various stimuli that it gets from all stakeholders. This may help get rid of the tendency to grab onto many similar things and then separating or even pitting them against each other in terms of institutionalisation and resource deployment. The integration of social wellbeing, economic development and environmental protection can definitely benefit from the enriched outputs resulting from better inputs, reception and processing.

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## 13 APPENDICES

### **Appendix 1: From council to commission...but still the same**

In February 1999, the then Minister of Local Government and National Housing (LGNH) suspended the Executive Mayor and the entire council for alleged incompetence. Mubvami and Wekwete (2000: 12) point out that some "...evidence from Harare has shown that the suspended Executive Mayor and his council took many decisions which greatly jeopardised the long-term viability of the local authority." That the suspension was widely welcome is a reflection that there was no love lost between the mayor, the government and the ratepayers (Kahiya, 1999).

The minister who invoked his powers as stipulated in the Urban Councils Act justified his move on the grounds that he was trying to put a stop to the plummeting conditions in the city, a problem that he attributed to bad governance. Among the long list detailing the incompetence of the sacked mayor and councillors were the inability to provide water to some residential areas, in particular the high-density suburb of Mabvuku, failure to pay workers and a marked deterioration in refuse collection. It later emerged that council, in addition to being impervious to 'outside' voices, was increasingly becoming an elitist institution with the Executive Committee, chaired by the mayor assuming dictatorial tendencies and shutting out councillors who were not in that influential committee (see Figure 8).

It was then that the minister appointed a nine-member commission to run the affairs of the city and bring the city back to normalcy, thus paving way for an elected council. The commission, two of whose members were chosen from a list provided by the residents' association took over the tasks of the sacked council and reconstituted the council committees as the decision making structures. This therefore meant that the policy making arm of the local authority retained its structure, processes, mandates and characteristics. What it lost were the personalities. In essence, then the system of governance remained fundamentally the same.

# Summary

The paper examines urban governance in the framework of sustainable urban development. It agrees with most analyses that sustainable settlements embrace social, ecological and economic dimensions. The discussion stresses that a form of governance that neglects any of these components cannot attain sustainability. It proceeds to show that in Harare, sustainability hinges very much on the role of the governance system, especially as it relates to urban poverty and the day-to-day survival of the urban poor. It is this role of urban governance that eventually manifests itself in the state of society, economy and the environment. The paper goes on to examine urban governance in Harare as it relates to urban poverty and the natural environment and pitches this against the search for the sustainable urban development. The paper argues that the achievement of sustainable cities depends on holistic governance and specific but co-ordinated strategies to address urban poverty, urban economies and the urban natural environment. The discussion concludes by suggesting that a system of governance which depends on “hooking” onto misunderstood fashionable concepts rather than definite policies and strategies ends up overemphasising one aspect at the expense of the others, resulting in a move away from sustainability.



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