EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Local government in Zimbabwe has gone through various phases of reform since the country’s independence in 1980. The Prime Minister’s Directive of 1984, a decentralisation initiative sought to correct the power imbalances of the colonial era and empower the rural communities towards inclusive development. Until 1980, the reforms in local government were oriented towards development of marginalised communities and decentralisation of power.

- The post-2000, an era characterised by more intense political contestation has been a turnaround in the nature and scope of local government reform in Zimbabwe.
- The post-2000 local government reforms while indicating progression in urban governance, the reforms also presents a case of functional retrogression in urban governance.
- Hence, the post-2000 reforms have been characterised by enactment of legal ambiguities and establishment of symbolic institutional structures of local governance.
- Questions regarding this phenomenon proliferate to; how have the urban legal and institutional frameworks reformed in post-2000? Do reformed legal frameworks promote urban autonomy? What are the implications of the established local government institutional framework on urban governance?
- This paper examines critically the legal and institutional local government reforms in the post-2000 period.

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DISCLAIMER

This paper should not be reported as representing the views of the African Urban Development Institute (AfUDI). The views expressed are those of the authors, they do not necessarily reflect the AfUDI’s. The earlier version of this discussion paper was presented at the 4th Annual International and Comparative Urban Law Conference on 17 July 2017, University of Cape Town. Authors would like to thank conference participants for their feedback.

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INTRODUCTION
Local government in Zimbabwe in both pre and post-colonial has been contestable a result of development innovations and political conflicts. Local government is a critical entity for power regulation in pre and post-independent Zimbabwe sometimes acting as an extension of central government in exercise of state power. The entity has always been fundamental in setting up any governmental administrative structure. In colonial, the occupations of the British Pioneer Column in Zimbabwe started with establishment of administrative and military ‘forts’. Five forts were established in the country which were sub-national authorities to control the regions (Wekwete, 2014). In the post-colonial era (1980-onwards) nevertheless, local government has been more corrective development-orientated, using decentralisation to address the power imbalances that existed during the colonial era. In the post-2000 era nevertheless (an era of political pluralism and intensification of political contestation in Zimbabwe) local government reforms have shifted to an arguably retrogressive or stagnation trajectory.

The recognition of local government as a legal entity in the Constitution Amendment number 20 of 2013 was a flagship reform towards decentralisation in the post 2000s era. These reforms nevertheless, have culminated to variations in regard of progress towards local governance in Zimbabwe. ActionAid, 2014; Wekwete, 2014; and Kurebwa, 2015, argue, local governance has improved over the years due to the progress in the reforms of local government and its recent constitutionalisation. Chirisa et al (2013) and Chatiza (2014) nevertheless, raised scepticism on the progress that devolution has been promoted in the 2013 local government constitutionalisation.

The debate of Local Government reform in Zimbabwe, feeds into the argument of Linz and Stepan (1996); Bratton, and Chang (2006) on the relationship between the state and democratisation. Bratton and Chang (2006) highlight the sense of identity in state building as a critical foundation to country’s democratisation. Democratisation in Zimbabwe as a unitary state however, has been argued in the lenses of protection of national unity, (Brand, 1991). These realities beneath state building at national level and functional processes of democratisation barometers gleans a complex and controversial picture on the progress of democratisation in Africa at large. In efforts to recentralise power, local government systems often become the rugs, which obfuscate non-democratic processes, processes that apparently do not feature in national state building rendering the local government reforms cosmetic.

This paper charts between the two polarised debates on the trajectories of reforms towards local governance. It pays particular attention to the autonomy of urban authorities. The paper seeks to explore the processes that have shaped the local government reform initiatives in Zimbabwe and how it resulted to the prevailing disparities in debates on reform and local governance. The paper argues, the post-2000 period in local government
reform focused on urban authorities and has been oriented towards recentralisation of power and decapacitation of urban authorities at the loss of their autonomy. This emanated from the political pluralism that has intensified in the urban areas, a phenomenon evidenced by domination of political opposition in urban constituencies. The paper further notes, the constitutionalisation of local government and introduction of devolution was a result of the 2008-2013 Government of National Unity (GNU) as a precondition for holding of 2013 elections. Its functionality and development therefore, was not grounded on genuine political will to materialise effectively beyond its inception, rather it was a political compromise of the GNU.

THE STRUCTURE AND HISTORY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ZIMBABWE

Local governments are creation of central government partly to perform tasks the central government (for justification of logistics, efficiency and effectiveness) find difficult or cumbersome to execute from the centre. As Tordoff regard it, ‘political decentralisation, the local government forms the integration part of the process of devolution of power to representative local authorities that separate legal entities. In this role, the local government always balances the needs of local communities and serving the interests of the central state. While the two can be served simultaneously without conflict, in federal states the former finds more expressions while in unitary states the latter is more prominent. Where conflict arises between the needs of local communities and the interests of the central government, the local government always becomes the battle ground for power and control. Sullivan et al highlight this by characterising local government as ‘a creature of statute subject to the vagaries and predilections of central political administration’. Thus the central government can alter structure and functionality of local government and rewrites rules that govern its relationship. The origins of local government institutions in Zimbabwe is debated between the arrival of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) in 1890 and traditional institutions that governed pre-colonial population. Nevertheless, the more pronounced form of local government institutions that were established by the arrival of the BSAC in 1890 which started as administrative and military forts. These institutions were predominantly for land allocation and racial segregation in colonial period. The legal and institutional setup of the colonial era was racially segregating in power structures, and resource allocation and management and marginalised the native population against the British land occupiers. This emanated to various local government institutions governing the urban areas, commercial farms and the tribal trust lands, (Mutizwa-Mangiza, 1986).

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1 Keating, ‘Size, Efficiency and Democracy’, pp. 117-34.
3 Five forts were established in Zimbabwe. Fort Victoria, Fort Tuli, Fort Melsetter, Fort Salisbury
Two types of local authorities make up Zimbabwe’s local government system. The urban councils that govern the urban areas and the rural district councils that govern the rural authorities. These two types of authorities have different levels of autonomy from central government, fiscal capacity, responsibilities, and technical capacities. Thus, the urban authorities are governed by the Urban Councils Act while rural authorities are governed by Rural District Councils Act. Governed by Urban Councils Act, Rural District Councils Act and Regional, Town and Country Planning Act, the three acts form the principal legislative framework for the local government system, (ActionAid, 2014). On top of the local authorities are Provincial councils which are administrative structures rather than political hence they do not have elective structures, (De Valk and Wekwete, 1990).

Until 2013, Zimbabwe’s local government system was not recognised as an entity separate from the central government. As Jordan (1989) put it, “it existed as a central government ‘creature’. At the helm of local government is the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing which is mandated with supervisory oversight. The Ministry has an overarching supervisory role over local government units with intervention and suspension powers of local councils. Its interventions are stated more than 250 times in Urban Councils Act and Rural District Councils Act (Chatiza and Chakaipa, 2014).

The Evolution of Local Government Reforms

Local government system has been the long established and important part in governing of countries. Distinctively, three reform eras can be identified in Zimbabwe. Colonial (1890-1980), post-colonial (1980-1999) and post-2000 reforms.

The colonial Local Government System (1890-1980)

During colonial period (1890 onwards) establishment of administrative and military ‘forts’ was crucial for the colonisation process of then Southern Rhodesia (Wekwete, 2014). To demonstrate the importance of local institutions, in 1894, four years after colonial settlement establishment a municipal system was set up. Local government system in the colonial period was oriented on infrastructure development and was divided based on race (Mutizwa-Mangiza, 1986). Urban Councils and Rural Councils (stemmed from road committees in the 1960s) covered the urban areas and the white settler farms. Native Councils (later African Councils) covered the communal areas under the Native (later District) Commissioner appointed by the central government. Thus, the establishment of Local Government institutions in the colonial era was inclined towards strengthening of the colonial settlements through resource reallocation and racial discrimination.

Urban areas nevertheless, have always been a threat to the status quo of the central government. During colonial era, major urban areas were breeding grounds of African nationalism. Urban strikes, demonstrations and political
violence were prevalent. Colonial regimes controlled urban areas by direct administration of African townships rather than leaving it to local authorities\(^5\). Other than the political threats of African townships, urban areas had no too much administrative control from the central government. The Municipal Act of 1897 increased the powers of Harare and Bulawayo to run their affairs with minor periodic changes to the municipal instruments. The urban administration of the late 1960s and 1970s was devoid of party politics. Attempts by the Rhodesian Front to introduce party politics in local government only resulted into independent councillors. However, the tensions that existed between the central government and the local government did not lead to serious reforms that occurred in the post-2000.


On attainment of independence in 1980, major decentralisation initiatives were conducted. As alluded earlier on the consolidation and amalgamation of rural councils and district councils, the Prime Minister’s Directive of 1984 decentralised power to the lowest tier of local government. The directive laid out principles and a hierarchy-based model of Village Development Committees (VIDCOs), Wards Development Committees (WADCOs), district councils and provincial councils (Wekwete, 2014). Thus, the decentralisation initiative of the directive focused on rural development and empowerment of the rural communities that were marginalised during the colonial period.

Also, all the local government institutions of the colonial era (urban, commercial farms, Tribal Trust Lands) were consolidated and placed under a new single Ministry of Local Government. The consolidations of the local authorities included the renaming of the Tribal Trust Lands to Communal Lands and amalgamation of the 220 African Councils into 55 District Councils which were later consolidated with Rural Councils that governed Commercial farms into Rural District Councils.

In the early 1990s following the adoption of the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP), the progress of decentralisation initiative stalled. The adjustments led to the functions of the central government reducing subsidies on local authorities, lowering the direct planning and implementation of local government programs. One of the observations of the late 1980s on decentralisation was the incapacity of rural authorities to take responsibilities decentralised to them. The incapacity that was caused by reduction in subsidies, the central government lost confidence in the capacity of rural authorities. Education services that were transferred to the rural authorities were recentralised and the School Development Committees (SDCs) began to be managed directly by the Ministry from 1992 onwards\(^6\). Following the loss of decentralisation momentum after ESAP, the adoption of the Rural District Councils Capacity Building Program (RDCCBP) in 1996 revived the momentum. Under this programme, the thirteen principles of decentralisation

\(^6\) Schools Development Committees were established under Statutory Instrument 87 of 1992
were adopted. The programme went on to build capacity of rural authorities that had declined with adoption of ESAP.

Urban local authorities during the colonial period were governed by the Municipal Act of 1930 and the Urban Councils Act that was later enacted in 1973. The metropolitan urban areas such as Salisbury and Bulawayo were decentralised into Town Management Boards. The local government reforms of post-colonial Zimbabwe demonstrate rural authorities as critical target of reforms. Urban authorities then however, did not experienced major reforms since they were decentralised and operating effectively during the colonial era. The increase in the political contestation against the ruling government in the post-2000 which was mostly in urban areas, led to a turnaround in the local government reform focus from rural to urban.

THE POST-2000 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS
The year 2000 was a turnaround in the political and development landscape of Zimbabwe. As result of worsening economic performance, political contestation increased and long-time ruling party, Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) faced stiffer political opposition. First was the rejection of the Constitutional Referendum followed by loss of all urban parliamentary constituencies to the opposition party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in the 2000 general elections. The emergence of political pluralism led to urban authorities being won by opposition parties, executive mayoral positions taken by the opposition parties. As a result, the ruling government sought to recentralise power to take back control of the urban areas which it had lost to the opposition party.

The Dynamic Mayoral System
The Mayoral system forms the backbone of the urban institutional framework as it governs urban authorities. The system has existed in both the Municipal Act of 1930 and the Urban Councils of 1973. Prior to the amendment of the Urban Councils Act in 1996, mayors were chosen from councillors that would have been elected into the Council. The 1996 Amendment of the Urban Councils Act introduced the Executive Mayoral system where a mayor is directly elected and participate as a full-time member of the council. The powerfulness of executive mayoral system during the post 2000 period led to more interference by central government in local authorities’ affairs, particularly major cities, Harare and Bulawayo. In 2003, the Minister of Local Government appointed a Commission to come up with a ‘turnaround plan’ for City of Harare. The refusal by the opposition party Mayor of Harare, Elias Mudzuri to work with the Commission led to his suspension. What followed was appointment of two further commissions, one to investigate the suspended mayor and the other to conduct a hearing probing the same mayor. After the dismissal of the mayor of

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7 Kamete A, 2006 The Return of the Jettisoned: ZANU-PF’s Crack at ‘Re-Urbanising’ in Harare
Harare, the fight for control of urban authorities led to the appointment of provincial governors and provincial administrators for Harare and Bulawayo\footnote{New Governors Condemned As ‘White Elephants’, The Financial Gazette, 12 February 2004.}. These appointments acted as additional administrative oversight over the metropolitan urban areas on behalf of the central government.

The realisation of political threats posed on the ruling government by the executive mayoral system subsequently led to its abolition. The Local Government Amendment Act of 2008 abolished the Executive Mayoral System and reinstated the Ceremonial Mayoral System that existed prior to the amendment of Urban Councils Act in 1996. The reinstatement of Ceremonial Mayoral System weakened the political opposition in urban areas as it lacked executive powers to override the interference of the Minister. In 2008, a Government of National Unity (GNU) was formed between ZANU-PF and MDC following contested 2008 general elections, intensifying political contestation. The entrance of opposition party Movement for Democratic Change into the ZANU-PF government led to compromises in the recentralisation of power by the central government. Towards the end of the GNU a precondition to hold presidential and parliamentary elections of 2013 was enactment of a New Constitution (Amendment Number 20). After a series of negotiations in the New Constitution process led to the reinstatement of the Executive Mayoral System. The reinstatement nevertheless, was reintroduced with condition that the mayors should be accountable to the full council.

The abolishment of the provincial councils and governors, while applaudable led to the appointment of Ministers of State for provincial affairs. For metropolitan provinces, Harare and Bulawayo, these appointments added the same layer of administrative oversight on metropolitan regions. The provisions of the New Constitution also included the establishment of an independent tribunal to exercise the function of removing from office mayors, chairpersons and councillors. The grounds on which an independent tribunal can be appointed include, gross misconduct, gross incompetence, offences including corruption, dishonesty or abuse of office. The provisions as they were in contravention with the provisions of Rural District Councils Act and Urban Councils Act last amended in 1996 led to the fast-track enactment of an amendment bill.

To realign the acts, in 2016, a Local Government Laws Amendment Bill was enacted. The Minister of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing fast-tracked it through parliament without public consultation. The bill sought to align the Rural District Councils Act and Urban Councils Act with the provisions of the New Constitution.\footnote{The new law provide for establishment of a three-member independent tribunal to deal with cases of firing or suspension of mayors, chairpersons or councillors by the Minister.} Subsequently, the bill was signed into an act In essence, the reinstatement of Executive Mayoral system has been acting as a symbolic institutional structure
CONSTITUTIONALISATION AND DEVOLUTION OF POWER

Until 2013, Local Government in Zimbabwe was not enshrined in the Constitution as an entity separate from the central government. The principle of delegation formed the foundation of functional and powers of local authorities in Zimbabwe. The enshrinement of local government in the Section 264 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Number 20 (2013) was an initiative that raised momentum for furthering decentralisation through devolution provisions into the constitution. The same constitution also enshrined the provisions for devolution of power to lowest tiers of the government, a long-contested provision.

As the New Constitution was a compromise for the ruling government as a precondition to the elections of 2013, most of the provisions lacked political will to be implemented effectively. The provision on devolution of power also had conditions that the central government should see it deem necessary for power to be devolved and assess the capacity of local authorities to be able to take on devolved responsibilities. The provisions while they demonstrate autonomy of local government, democratic institutional setup and devolution power, in reality there have been legal ambiguities that renders the implementation of these provisions ineffective in promoting local governance.

LEGAL AMBIGUITIES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT LAWS

Local authorities’ powers and functions are enshrined in two forms of legislation. The “must” undertake legislation and the “may” undertake legislation, (Moyo, 2014). Because of the principle of ultra vires, (beyond reasonable powers), local authorities are not allowed to perform functions out of the scope of those enshrined in the legislation. The Urban Councils Act and Rural District Councils Act (last revised in 1996) outline vast number of functions, which local authorities may undertake. On the contrary, the Constitution (2013) which is the supreme law renders any law, which is inconsistent with its provisions null and void. Delineating from these provisions, the two pieces of legislation, the constitution and local authorities’ acts are not consistent in their provisions. With the Urban Councils Act and Rural District Councils Act locally empowering the local authorities with power and functions, the constitution gives the central government power of directives and control rendering local authorities non-autonomous.

Thus, Zimbabwe’s mosaic of local government laws poses structural and systematic restrains on urban governance. While the constitutional provisions are now enshrined in the New Constitution, the principle of ultra vires (or outdatedness) poses to be a challenge to Acts and Statutory instruments that are not yet aligned to the new provisions. This entails, their effectiveness depends on their alignment and amendment. 2016 witnessed the fast-tracking of the Local Government Laws Amendment Bill primarily focusing on the appointment of an independent tribunal over the removal of mayors, councillors and chairpersons. The fast-tracking and lack of consultation...
on the bill illustrate the state of urgency the central government had, to control the powers of the reinstate Executive Mayoral System. This has culminated to the continuity of power imbalances that have existed in the centre-local relationship shown in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Powers of Local Government</th>
<th>Powers of Central Government</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plan and Implement local development</td>
<td>Establish, abolish or alter local government status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manage water and sanitation</td>
<td>Fix the areas of a local authority (number of wards and thus councillors)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide and maintain roads</td>
<td>Approve the acquisition of land by local authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manage education and health</td>
<td>Conduct planning and estate development</td>
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<td>Manage refuse removal</td>
<td>Appoint Local Government Board</td>
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<td>Provide housing and serviced stands</td>
<td>Appoint auditors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manage cemeteries</td>
<td>Appoint an investigating team where an inquiry is needed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carry out social welfare</td>
<td>Suspend or dismiss councillors who have committed serious offenses</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Give general direction on policy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authorise anything not covered by the Act</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publish model by-laws, direct Councils to adopt specific by-laws, and approve Councils developed by-laws</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suspend a Council resolution when it goes against the interests of the residents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Correct any omissions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regulate accounting and financial borrowing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prescribe amounts to which Councils should seek tenders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approve income generating projects and co-operatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct Councils to pay their debts and reduce deficits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State the type of local charges that can be raised without approval</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Adapted from ACPDT, 2002:48

THE RHETORIC OF FISCAL AUTONOMY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

Fiscal autonomy is one of the critical components to facilitate local governance. The urban authorities in Zimbabwe have been highly dependent on central government funding for their mandate. Through tied and block grants that have been disbursed to local authorities under the Public-Sector Investment Programme (PSIP), urban authorities have been executing major infrastructure projects. Urban authorities as a result of their wider tax base are financially more capable than their rural counterparts. The PSIP budgetary
system offers loans below market rates as well as allowing the central government to control the local government capital. The limitedness of PSIP funding after structural adjustment programmes nevertheless, have led to some local authorities going to extend or inviting central government control in exchange for more funding (Zimbabwe Institute, 2005). This financing system has jeopardised the fiscal autonomy of local authorities regardless of the democratic nature of legal and institutional framework. Local authorities’ failure to deliver their duties and responsibility both substantively and procedurally has led to central government intervention.

The Public-Sector Investment Programme was financially incapacitated in 2002 a move that constrained the urban authorities financially. This incapacitation was followed by delegation of responsibilities that lacked financial support. To reduce the responsibilities of urban authorities, major urban services were recentralised from urban authorities to government parastatals. Electricity supply was delegated to Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA), water supply to Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) while road revenue collection has been delegated to Zimbabwe National Roads Association (ZINARA). The dismantling of responsibilities of urban authorities in the justification of fiscal incapacity of urban authorities to deliver services demonstrated the quest of central government to reduce the authority of urban authorities in delivering urban services by centralising the responsibilities. This intervention compromised local democracy and the concept of representative governments. Nevertheless, the complex nature of cause-effect to the failure of the authorities seldom disentanglement.

SYMBOLIC STRUCTURES?
METROPOLITAN GOVERNORS AND PROVINCIAL COUNCILS

Urban authorities, (more autonomous from central government than rural district councils) have an institutional layer of regulation above them. Metropolitan governor appointed to two metropolitan cities, Harare and Bulawayo complicated the affairs in the two cities. Their existence is not legally enshrined in the Urban Councils Act though the Constitution recognises need to provide for appointment of Governors by the President (Section, 111 A (1). The multiplicity and duplicity of responsibility by metropolitan governors, executive mayors and special interest councils complicates the governance of local authorities while on the outlook the institutional structure portrays democratic reforms.

The 2013 Constitution provided for the establishment of Provincial councils, administrative structures to drive regional development in Zimbabwe’s 10 provinces. While the abolishment of provincial governors who were appointed by the president was a move towards democratic administration of provinces, the 2013 also introduced appointment of

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12 Water supply in urban areas have been flip flopped several times between the two institutions and it is currently delivered by urban authorities.
State Ministers for Provincial Affairs. Chirisa, Muzenda, and Manyeruke, (2013) has regarded this as new wine in old bottles for the same institutional structure oversee running local governments for the central government. The establishment of provincial councils have come with no implementation of yet and their structure proves a congested structure with too many players, making the councils functionally restrained yet symbolically applaudable in lenses of democratic reforms. The Provincial Chair and State Ministers who constitute the provincial councils illustrate power imbalances in local decision making at provincial level, (ActionAid, 2014). The roles of provincial chairs and State Ministers of Provincial acts as a secondary layer of administrative oversight on urban authorities. This renders the autonomy of urban authorities ineffective on deliberating autonomous democratic processes.

IMPLICATIONS FOR AUTONOMY OF URBAN AUTHORITIES
Local government reform in Zimbabwe presents a critical case of “cosmetic” local governance process yet dysfunctional in practice. The divide between local government policies and local government practices adds more uncertainty to the autonomy of urban authorities. This hinders the effective execution of proposals of inclusive cities that require participation of local communities in urban development processes. The applause of the constitutionalisation of local government, the reinstatement of the executive mayoral system and enshrinement of devolution provisions as resuscitation of the decentralisation drive demonstrates a complex case of how the operationalisation of the provisions and frameworks hinders the autonomy of urban authorities.

The provisions of the Constitution Amendment No 20 are ultra vires to the Local government acts (Rural District Councils Act and Urban Councils Act) that were last amended in 1996. Therefore, the superseding of the Constitution without alignment of the local government acts renders autonomy of urban authorities ambiguous. The appointment of State Ministers for provincial affairs (previously provincial governors) provides a secondary administrative layer to oversee the affairs of urban authorities on behalf of the central government. In this institutional framework, autonomy of urban authorities becomes elusive. The recentralisation of urban services such as water supply, electricity supply and road maintenance while it demonstrates reduction of burden on local authorities, for services that were sources of revenue for the urban authorities, it rendered the urban authorities financially crippled to perform other tasks that relied on those revenue streams.

CONCLUSION
The paper has explored the nature, scope and impacts of post-2000 local government reform in Zimbabwe. With contextual focus on urban authorities, it identified, early post-colonial reforms were focused on development and empowerment of marginalised communities particularly the rural areas. While urban authorities had less governance issues compared to their rural counterparts, the proliferation of political pluralism and intensification of
political contestation in urban areas posed a threat to the ruling government. This turnaround witnessed adjustments and amendments in the legal and institutional frameworks that govern urban authorities particularly metropolitan cities. The constitutionalisation of local government in 2013 as well as enshrinement of the devolution provisions into the constitution marked the flagship revival of the decentralisation drive that had succumbed from recentralisation of power. Nevertheless, out of political compromise of the GNU, the constitutionalisation of local government and devolution provisions, have been legally ambiguous. As a result, they have failed to materialise into local governance and promotion of urban autonomy. The establishment of provincial councils, and the appointment of Ministers of State for provincial affairs for urban areas, demonstrate progress in governance structures. Nevertheless, they act as symbolic structures, as their functionality is hindered by incapacitation and bureaucratic complexities of second layers of administrative oversight.

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