Bindura Urban: A battlefield between Bindura local authorities and street vendors

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Abstract

The study was set to assess the causes of the high conflict rate between street vendors and Bindura Municipality between the period of 2015 and 2017. There have been running battles between Bindura Municipal police officers and the vendors in Bindura urban. Vending has been going on in the pre-independence and post-independence periods in Zimbabwe. In pre-independence Zimbabwe, vending was very much prevalent in African locations and designated markets (Smout, 1975). During the colonial period in Zimbabwe, unemployed urban dwellers resorted to street vending, beer brewing, market gardening, prostitution, and other income-generating activities. The informal economy survived into independent Zimbabwe, where it experienced a steady growth until the late 1980s (Musoni, 2010). Under the auspices of the neo-liberal Economic Structural Adjustment Programs (ESAP), the 1990s saw a rapid expansion of informality in urban employment and housing as hordes of people who lost jobs in the shrinking formal sector established their own small and medium enterprises (Zimbabwe Democracy Institute, 2015). ESAP was followed by a series of social, economic and political developments that necessitated the further growth of informal trade, vending being one of the major informal trades. Whilst this has been the trend in vending, we noted with concern that conflict has protracted and escalated between the Bindura local authority and vendors during the period of 2015 and 2017. This rise has been disturbing the general peace in town, endangering the lives of innocent civilians going about their business. The conflicts have been noted to be escalating compared to previous times thus we found it prudent to establish the causes of the escalating conflicts. Qualitative methodology was used for this study and descriptive method was used. Data was sourced through interviews. Findings were that the vendors wanted the council to allocate them space in the Central Business District (CBD) where they meet more customers compared to the places currently designated for vending which are overcrowded. Bindura Municipality had it that allowing vendors to sell in the CBD is violation of the council by-laws and also that the present town planning does not allow for such expansion. Constructive dialogue between the local authorities and vendors can lead to positive solution of the conflicts.

Key Words: Bindura local authority, street vendors, conflicts
Introduction

There is a growing culture of vending in Zimbabwe’s urban centres, a trend which was uncommon especially in the years just after Zimbabwe’s political independence in 1980 (Zimbabwe Democracy Institute, 2015). The recent influx of vendors into the central business districts of all of Zimbabwe’s towns has without doubt created tension between the responsible urban authorities and the vendors.

Part XII of the Zimbabwe Urban Councils Act which specifies about Trades, Occupations and Other Activities, paragraph 99 defines a street vendor as “any person who sells goods from one or more fixed places in or on any public place, but does not include any person in respect of the sale of publications sponsored by the State or newspapers. The same act also defines a hawker as “any person who carries on the business of selling any goods while travelling about for that purpose from place to place with the goods, either on foot or with a vehicle, animal or carrier.” For purposes of this study, vendor, street trader and hawker were used interchangeably to mean the same thing.

Running battles between municipal police sometimes aided by the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) officers and the vendors are a common sight in most of Zimbabwe’s urban centres, Bindura included. In the case of Bindura Town, the confusion is worsened by the frequent and sometimes life threatening running battles between kombis and municipal police and ZRP details in the town are that are overcrowded by vendors. Vendors are on a daily basis arrested by the municipal police. Their wares are often confiscated and they have to pay fines and sometimes bribes to reclaim them. Soon after the municipal police raids, vendors reoccupy the same places on which they would have been ejected from. In the first week of June 2015, the then Minister of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, Ignatius Chombo, announced that the government had ordered vendors operating from illegal sites all over the country to move to approved vending sites with emphasis made to those operating in the Harare’s Central Business District (CBD) or face the wrath of the law (www.zbc.co.zw). The government’s directive seems to have fallen on deaf ears as vendors continued with their operations, albeit on the lookout for municipal police and ZRP details. This has also been the case in Bindura urban.

Despite the Bindura Municipal authority’s resolve to clear the town centre of vendors, the vendors have been equally resolute in remaining on the streets of the town centre, selling their wares against all odds. The researchers noted with concern that conflicts have increased between the Bindura municipality and vendors. Vendors have been plying their trade in the town centre at undesignated places and Bindura Municipality have been beating them up or forcibly taking their good. This conflict has been in existent for a long time now, but the year 2015 marked the height of it. Till today, conflicts between Bindura authorities and vendors does not show any signs of ebbing. The positions and actions taken by both the Municipal authority and the vendors are incompatible, leaving Bindura Town resembling a battlefield. This study was motivated by the fact that no study has been carried out to establish the causes of continued escalating conflicts between Bindura local authority and Bindura vendors.

The following questions guided our study:

- Are Bindura Municipality policies on vending favourable to Bindura residence vendors?
- What factors are causing increased conflicts between Bindura local authority and Bindura residence vendors?

Review of related literature

Available literature indicates that conflict between urban authorities and vendors is a
common phenomenon in many African urban centres. Solomon-Ayeh; King and Decardi-Nelson (2011) in a study on street vending and the use of urban public space in Kumasi, Ghana; noted that urban public space has become the place of work of the urban poor in many cities all over the world. Findings by Solomon-Ayeh, King and Decardi-Nelson (2011) revealed that, street vending is a visible and controversial component of the urban economy and vendors operate their businesses in areas that can be classified as public spaces and are originally unintended for trading purposes. Consequently, conflict is evident in the relations of the Kumasi urban authorities and the vendors are frequently evicted from their trading points by municipal law enforcement agents. (ibid)

In Nigeria, Basinski (2009) noted that vending is rampant in Lagos, one of Africa’s most populated cities. Basinski’s (2009) report states that Lagos is one giant marketplace, and nowhere is that more evident than on the streets and roadways, where everything from bread to board games are readily available. That also created conflict between the Lagos authorities and the vendors. According to Basinski (2009), the Lagos authorities have led a massive crackdown on street vendors in an effort to clean up and shape Lagos but vendors keep retuning to the streets of Lagos.

The Lagos government provided four main reasons for its aggressive enforcement of the ban on street vending (Basinski, 2009). Vendor harassment is also a common occurrence in other towns in Africa. Mitullah (2003) points out that in Kenya, vendor harassment by municipal authorities is very rampant. This is despite the fact that the same authorities also collect fines and taxes from both the registered and unregistered vendors. To counter the inhuman, gender insensitive and largely exploitative treatment they get from the urban authorities, street vendors in Kenya respond by resorting to corruption, while many enforcement officers openly ask for bribes (Mitullah, 2003). Issue of bribes by local authorities’ workers seem to be common in most African countries including Zimbabwe and yet, the common vending person will be trying to make ends meet on little capital. A Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (2015) report points out that many people have no alternative but to enter informal street vending because they cannot find employment in the formal sector, or they earn insufficient income elsewhere, or they have large households to sustain, or a combination of the above. In addition to this, finding start-up money for small formal businesses through savings or loans is especially problematic for the poor (Zimbabwe Democracy Institute, 2015). Yet, the vendors continue to be harassed despite this attempt at earning a living. The Herald, one of Zimbabwe’s daily papers that is state controlled, in a 7 March 2015 article quotes the first lady, Grace Mugabe, as warning the police to stop harassing vendors because they are also seeking an honest living. It would be interesting to find out whether the involvement of politicians in the plight of vendors is driven by a desire to help the vendors or of protecting political interests.

In a study carried out by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) entitled “Street food vending in West African cities: Potential and Challenges” in 2012, it was noted that street food vending is a large source of employment, offering abundant informal labour opportunities in comparison with scarce labour demand in the formal sector, particularly for unskilled workers. Anetor (2015) investigated the street trading activities and maternal health in the urban area of selected African countries and found that street trading has provided employment opportunities for mothers. The latter scholar also revealed that street vendors, through their transactions, contribute directly to the overall economic activity of a nation. In addition, it forms a potential source of income to the government through the levy of licensing fees, sales and value-added taxes (ibid). Bromley (2000) pointed out that street...
vending provides entrepreneurial opportunities to people that may not be able to afford to buy or rent fixed premises. He further stated that street vending offers a considerable flexibility in hours and levels of activity, and provides choices in terms of locations. According to Bromley (ibid), street vending can be practiced as an extra job that generate and increase gross income.

Mramba (2015) notes that many African governments don’t earn revenue from the street vending business as many vendors don’t pay tax. In addition, street vendors cause unfair competition with formal businesses which pay tax and other levies that are compulsory before getting a business license. The implication of Mramba (2015) findings seem to be that, most African government through their local authorities prohibit vendors from practicing because they prejudice them of revenue. As such, both sides in the urban authorities – vendors’ conflicts seem to have good reasons for the positions they adopt. Yet conflict can be very costly to human life and to the general well-being of a nation. As such it would be important to come up with measures that minimise the harm caused by any kind of conflict in a town, city or nation.

Other reasons have also been offered for prohibiting street vending. Umar (2009) cited in Anetor (2015) in a study on street vending, particularly its implication on the girl child found that it exposes the girl child to all forms of abuse that ranges from, rape, harassment, to molestation. The finding also showed that the girl child becomes street wise, which culminates in her quest for sex and other immoral and criminal behaviour. In addition, the study asserts that, there is a high tendency for the girl child to forgo her education thus, losing all the benefits of education (Anetor, 2015).

Research methodology

Qualitative methodology was used for this study and descriptive survey method was used. According to Gray (2009) descriptive surveys have often been used to identify the scale and nature of social problems. The method helped researchers to be able to describe, observe, and document naturally occurring phenomenon. In other words, they got explanations of what things were like directly from the phenomenon, that is, the Bindura Municipality key employees and the Bindura urban vendors. Data was sourced through interviews. Three Vendor representatives from three vendor organisations, 2 vendors conveniently selected from those operating in the CBD and 2 Bindura Municipality officials were the key informants. Appointments for the interviews were done in advance before the interviews were conducted in the case of the 3 vendor representatives and the 2 council officials whilst the 2 vendors were approached on the streets and consent was sought before the interviews were conducted. Data collected from the interviews were presented and analysed descriptively.

Presentation of results

Data capture and analysis

The study wanted to find out the causes of high conflict rate between vendors and Bindura Municipality between the period of 2015 and 2017. Data was captured through interviews.
Table 1: Profile of Vendor Representative Participants  N=3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSEUDONYM /NAME</th>
<th>OCCUPATION/POSITION</th>
<th>ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VENDORS REPRESENTED</th>
<th>AGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Tura</td>
<td>Chairperson of Muvhuro Vendors Association (also a vendor)</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Sapurayi</td>
<td>Chairperson of Muvhuro Vendors Association (also a vendor)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Togo</td>
<td>Chairperson of Chitatu Vendors Association (also a vendor)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the profile of the representatives of 3 vendor organisations operating in Bindura. They were all males and all are in their forties. This signified that they were mature people who have had a lot of experience in terms of working for their survival and data sourced from them was thought to be credible. The fact that they were all chairpersons of organisations speaks to their leadership qualities, a fact that also enhanced the credibility of the data they provided.

The profile presented in Table 2 shows the other interview participants comprised of two female vendors and two senior Bindura Municipality officials. The two female vendors were deliberately chosen to participate to enhance gender representation in the study. Their ages indicated that they were in the productive age range of adults working to sustain themselves and their families. They were also believed to have adequate experience to give reliable data. The two senior Bindura Municipality officials were both very mature adults as represented by their ages. They were also trusted with managerial responsibilities in the Bindura Municipality hence they were very knowledgeable about the policies and practices of the municipality in managing daily affairs of the town thus making their responses credible.

**Transcript on vendors’ consciousness on the laws regarding vending**

The interviews sought to establish whether the vendors were aware of Bindura Municipality vending bye-laws. This question meant to elicit the knowledge levels on council by-laws which are meant to regulate all operations in the town for the purposes of order and health related issues.

Responses are captured below:

- **Mamembers edu anozviziva kuti mutemo unoti kudii maererano nepanotengeserwa nepasingabvumirwi** (Our membership is very well aware of the law regarding where they can conduct their vending business).

Table 2: Profile of other interview participants  N=4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSEUDONYM NAME</th>
<th>OCCUPATION/POSITION</th>
<th>ORGANISATION REPRESENTED</th>
<th>AGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Simboti</td>
<td>Vendor</td>
<td>Self-represented</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Sinyoro</td>
<td>Vendor</td>
<td>Self-represented</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Muturikwa</td>
<td>Senior Council Official</td>
<td>Bindura Municipality</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Makombo</td>
<td>Senior Council Official</td>
<td>Bindura Municipality</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Kanzuru inongogadzira mitemo yotopasisa pasina kutaura nevanhu. Ndozvimwe zvinokonzera kunetsana kunozotikana nemavendors izvozvo. Nekuti mavendors edu anenge asinganzwiswe kuti mutemo unoti chazvo kana vashina kumbo consultwa pakagadirwa mutemo wacho (The council formulates and implements some regulations without adequate consultation of the concerned stakeholders. This in part, causes more tension between the council and the vendors as there is no appreciation on the part of the vendors on what the laws stipulate and also because there is little if any input from the vendors in the policy making process around issues that affect them).
• Kanzuru inodeedzera misangano nemavendors nguva nenguva ichida kuonesa vanhu pamusoro pezvakasiyana siyana asi kunongouya vanhu vashoma nguva dzese (The council calls for meetings with the vendors with the intention of informing them on a wide range of topics of common interest but attendance is always poor).
• Ukatevedzera zvemutemo unoti titengesere papi hanzvadzi unofa nenzara nekuti kunobvumirwa kutengesera kwacho (I am not bothered by what the law says regarding where I should operate because doing so means that I will go hungry. The designated vending places are overcrowded by vendors and there are few potential customers. You only get more customers in the CBD, where of course we are not allowed to trade from).
• Mutemo chaibo handinyatsoziva kuti inotidzidzisa pasina zvobunyuca (I am not aware of the exact provisions of the law regarding vending in the CBD. I only know that it is illegal because municipal police is always chasing us around and arresting us for vending in the CBD).

Responses from Bindra Municipality Key Informants are capture below:
• The council has made every effort to make the vendors aware of the legal provisions governing the operations of the vendors. It is the duty of the ward councillors to make the vendors and all their constituents aware of the council by-laws and the Urban Councils Act.
• The council publishes all new laws in the public media before implementing. So the council has done enough to make everyone aware of the council by-laws regarding vending. Some of the vendors operating in the CBD are former ward councillors, so there is no way they can claim that they are unaware of the council by-laws.
• Responses on factors fuelling the vendors – municipality conflict

In trying to fulfil the major objective of this paper, the interviews sought to establish the reasons fuelling the vendors – Bindura Municipality conflict. The responses would form the basis upon which to make conclusions on the exact causes of the conflict in question.

The responses from the vendors are captured below:
• Hakuna mabasa saka hapana zvimwe zvatingaite kuti tirarame (There is no alternative employment, this is our only alternative to earn a living).
• Hurmende yakawimbisa kucreata 2 million jobs muna 2013 but hapana chatati taona chiri kufamba. Dai mabasa aitaurwa aya akamutswa zvechokwadi kusina problem yevendors yezve iyi (The government...
promised to create 2 million jobs in 2013 but nothing has materialised up to now. Had these jobs been created as promised, there would be no vendor problem in the CBD.

- **Nzara, huroombo, pay sboma, kumwe kwervinhu munyika nekushayikwa kwemabasa acho ndoziyimwe zviri kupa vanhu kuti vaite zvechivendor chero kanzuru ichivarambidza.** (Hunger, poverty, low paying jobs, the country’s poor economic performance and lack of employment. These are the reasons why people are resorting to vending, against the will of the Municipality).

- **Kanzuru baisi kuda kutipawo pekutengesera mutown. Nzimbo yakagadzirirwa mavendors yacho baikwanwe kuti mutown wese anoda kutengesa awane pekutengesera. Isu tiyoda kwara kuzviri munhu mu mutown ndomwe macustomers.** (The Municipality is refusing to allocate us vending space in town. The designated vending space is inadequate to accommodate all vendors. We prefer trading in the CBD because this is where we get more customers for our wares).

- **Mhosva ndeyehurumende iri kutadza kugadzirisa economy kuti mabasa awanikwe.** (Government’s failure to fix the economy and to create employment is to blame for the problem of vending).

- **Kanzuru baisi haisi kuda kutipawo pekutengesera mutown. Kanzuru inoti haidi kuti titengesere mutown nokutengesa awane pekutengesera.** (The council does not want us to vend in the CBD because they say we cause health hazards such as cholera).

- **Mavendor mazhinji baabhadhare muteru kubanzuru. Ndoziyimwe zvinokonzera bondo mutown. Vamwe vemashops vanomhangara kubanzuru kumi mlavengers akabidzika nekutengesera pamikova yemashops edo.** (Most of the vendors do not pay tax to the council. This in part is causing the ongoing conflict. Some shop owners are also pushing the council to evict the vendors from trading at their shops’ entrances).

- **Kanzuru baisi haisi kuda kutipawo pekutengesera mutown kana kanzuru ichida zvayo.** (The council cannot say there is no vending space in the CBD. They can always create such space if they so wish).

- **Zvinhu zvese zvinongoda kutaurirana kuti zvigadzirisike. Vecouncil ngavagarewo pasi nemavendors vonzwa zvichemo zvavo. Zvikadaro ndoziyimwe panobuda solution yakanakira anedzidzo munhu wese.** (Dialogue always resolves differences. The Municipal authorities should engage the vendors in dialogue and listen to the vendors’ problems. That way, an amicable solution should be found).
in 2013. If they don’t, the problem of vendors in the CBD will worsen.

Responses from Bindura Municipality key informants on factors contributing to conflicts

- Vending has never been everyone’s profession in the past and never before has our council witnessed such a surge in vendor numbers in the CBD. Because of the breakdown of the country’s economy, vending seems a viable option for everyone who cannot find employment, school leavers, college and university graduates and all those who lost their jobs either through company closures or through retrenchment.
- These people need to meet their basic survival needs, hence their persistence in trading in places that they are being chased away from.
- The way the town was planned does not give room for an increase in the number of vendors in the CBD. We cannot turn the whole CBD into vending sites. It is almost impossible to create additional vending space in the CBD because there is no such space. The space that is currently accommodating vendors in town at the TM commuter omnibus rank is only being used as such because we have not found a serious buyer for the space. If today we find someone who gives us a good offer we would remove the vendors from that place and sell it.
- The whole vendors issue has to a large extent been politicised by both the ZANU PF and MDC politicians. These politicians urge the vendors to continue trading in the CBD for purposes of gaining political mileage. Many of the vendors plying their trade in the CBD are aligned to these political parties and they get support for their activities from the political leadership. Therefore it is difficult to deal with the vendors without also addressing the politicians backing them.

Discussion on findings

Presented data generally reveal that there is incompatibility in the positions of the Bindura Municipality and the vendors regarding how the conflict can be resolved. Whilst the vendors feel that the only way of solving the conflict between them and the Bindura Municipality is through the allocation of vending space in the CBD, the council feels that there is no room for the allocation of vending space in the CBD because space is limited and that the present town plan has no room for that kind of expansion.

Presented data revealed that Bindura Municipality authorities were implementing the environmental sanitation policy, street vending was alleged to cause garbage on road ways. Street traders were said to increase congestion on the roadways by taking space from vehicles and pedestrians. Vendors are thought to contribute to an atmosphere of disorder in some areas that allows pickpockets and other thieves to engage in crime. Thus the Bindura Municipality authorities that the banning of street vending was for the safety of Bindura residence which includes vendors themselves. However, some critics against the banning of vending point out that local authorities in Nigeria seem to have noted that street trading was incompatible with their ambitious infrastructure development and re-branding program known as the Mega-city Project (Basinski2009). The findings of this study are at variance with Basinski (2009)’s findings. Whilst the reasons offered by urban councils in justifying the eviction of vendors from urban centres may sound reasonable, vendors justified their actions too.

At the centre of the Bindura Municipality – vendors’ conflict is the issue of unemployment and related economic factors. In other words, vending for most Bindura residence has become a means of earning a living and avoiding poverty. These findings are in line with Basinki’s research in Nigeria which
noted that vendors continued to vend in unauthorised spaces because they had no other means to support themselves due to limited employment opportunities. Lyons (2013) cited in Mramba (2015) weighs in by stating that street vending is imperative for surviving and poverty reduction in the developing world (Mramba, 2015). This is to say, vending would otherwise fill in the void left by lack of alternative means of earning a living. Traditionally, Bindura is a farming and mining town, where the surrounding mines and farms have employed a significant number of Bindura’s population. Land conflicts among blacks themselves, limited economic resources as well as failure to manage farms by most farm owners have seen many people in farms around Bindura out of employment. The lack of employment situation in Bindura was espounded by closure of local mines such as Ran mine as well as scaling down of employees by two major mines (Ashanti Gold fields and Trojan Nickel) in Bindura. Thus the few employment opportunities left in Bindura urban has failed to consume the labour that is available leaving breadwinners to opt for a simple option, vending as it is the only available opportunity.

The findings also revealed that most vendors were not knowledgeable of the Bindura Municipality by-laws. Thus they believed that the local authorities were depriving them of the freedom to vending. It was also found that the few who were aware of the by-laws deliberately neglected it by selling their goods in the undesignated places.

The study found out that Bindura Municipality had made various efforts to make the vendors aware of the legal instruments that govern the operations of vendors in the town and outlaw vending at undesignated points and especially in the CBD. Some vendors concurred that the council had indeed made efforts to make the vendors aware of the council by-laws. However, some of the participants indicated that they were not aware of any specific legislation except that it was illegal to vend in the CBD. The knowledge gap can also exacerbate the conflict.

The challenge however is that, even if the vendors were to be made aware of the council by-laws, and had an appreciation of these legal instruments, theirs was more of a fight for survival, judging by the responses they gave. This proved the Human Needs Theory true when it propounds that conflict results from unmet human needs and these needs will be pursued regardless of the consequences (Danielsen, 2005). Considering that some participants noted that some of those vending in the CBD were former ward councillors, a good number of the vendors operating in the CBD may be very aware of the legal instruments related to vending, but because they have no alternative source of income, they have no option but to resort to vending against all odds.

Socio-political factors that are also linked to the increase in the number of vendors in the CBD are that, interested politicians especially from the dominant political parties encourage the vendors to continue trading in the CBD, disregarding council by – laws. This, the politicians obviously do, for purposes of retaining political supporters. There could also be more to the interest of the politicians in the vendor affairs in the CBD as noted by Omoegun (2015). In a study on street trader displacements and the relevance of the right to the city concept in a rapidly urbanising African city, in Lagos, Nigeria, Omoegun (2015) noted that the importance of urban public space in the politics of Arab societies has been widely acknowledged and demonstrated over the years. Numerous Arab leaders have made several efforts to monitor and dominate public space in order to prevent any form of insurrection, thereby suppressing the civic function of such spaces, with urban public spaces in the Middle East traditionally a common site in which dissenting voices converge. The prominent role of urban public spaces in the events surrounding the Arab spring around 2011 is therefore not strange,
rather it highlights the potentially powerful political function of urban public space, not just in the Middle East, but globally.

Urban public space thus plays an important role in political processes in societies, as it provides a platform through which power is demonstrated and control maintained. The interest of the Zimbabwean politicians, especially those from the governing party, in the issues of the vendors is also probably due to the realisation that urban public space can be used against them, hence the need to make sure they control the numbers of disgruntled populations who are in the CBD. It is also ironic that politicians can choose to disobey the laws they purport to uphold, all in an effort to curry favour with the electorate, vendors constituting a significant number of the voting population. A conflict resolution strategy therefore also needs to be considerate of the fact that politicians are playing a key role in the urban councils – vendors conflict. As such, a strategy to solve this problem would be inadequate if it sideline these politicians.

In this study, findings were that corruption was also prevalent in the day to day interactions of the vendors and the municipal officers, especially the municipal law enforcement agents in Bindura Town. A situation where municipal police officers allow other vendors to continue operating in the CBD after paying bribes possibly explains the difficulty there is in dealing with this conflict completely. For those officers that engage in corruption, they would be very pleased to have the vendors continue operating at the forbidden places so that they continue to benefit financially. The involvement of such people in conflict resolution strategies will not do much good to the problem because whatever actions they will take will be insincere and driven by a need to enjoy corrupt financial gains.

One cause of the current conflict is the council’s refusal to allocate vending space in the CBD. Whilst the vendors feel that the council should allocate vending space in the CBD, council is adamant that there is no such space in the CBD and the present planning of the town does not allow for such a development. Council has instead insisted on the vendors in the CBD moving to the designated site between the railway line and Chipadze Bus Terminus, space which the vendors say is overcrowded and not viable for business because of low human traffic. This tallies with the observation Solomon-Ayeh; King and Decardi-Nelson (2011) who noted that street vendors do not locate haphazardly in the places from which they ply their trades because certain areas offer greater locational advantage than others.

Findings on what could be done to resolve the urban council – vendor conflict discovered an incompatibility of the proposed solutions between the council and the vendors. Whilst the vendors were adamant that one conflict resolution strategy should be the allocation of vending space in the CBD by the council, the council was equally adamant that it was not possible to allow vendors to trade in the CBD and that anyone who wanted to take vending as a profession was supposed to be prepared to do so in the confines of the present laws. The maintenance of such incompatible positions will not help in resolving the conflict. Therefore, there is a need for reconsideration of such stances, especially by the municipal authorities because the plight of the vendors cannot be ignored. There could be need to review the current policies so that they also accommodate the welfare of the vendors as bonafide residents of the urban centres and also for the benefit of the municipal authority by utilising a revenue collection avenue. A study by Mramba (2015) notes that the government in India has made such reforms and it has benefitted all parties involved. Manfred Max-Neef, an HNT theorist proposes that complementarity and trade-offs are necessary for needs satisfaction and hence, conflict resolution (Danielsen, 2005).
The Bindura Town council is also faced with numerous financial and human resources constraints in order to manage the increase in vendor numbers. Findings in this study noted that there is inadequate human resources in the municipal police to manage the numerous uncontrolled vendors in the CBD. Even if they wanted to increase the number of the municipal police, the funds to do so are unavailable. The council is also financially crippled to construct proper infrastructure to support the operations of the vendors even within designated points. Given this state of affairs, it would possibly be proper for the council to constructively engage the vendors for possible solutions to the current conflict. Relying on coercive measures is proving to be ineffective in ending the conflict, therefore, it would make economic sense if the council could engage the vendors and find means of making the relationship beneficial to both parties. The Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15) empowers the Bindura Municipality to specify the times when or periods during which hawkers or street vendors may carry on business or allow goods to be exposed for sale at any one place. In light of that, the council can use those same powers to accommodate the interests of the vendors in a way that is beneficial to both the council and the vendors.

**Conclusion**

The study found that, factors causing and sustaining the conflict between the Bindura urban council and the vendors operating in the CBD were;

- Unemployment. Most Bindura residents needed to sustain their livelihoods (food, shelter, clothing, school fees, rentals, etc.), poor economic conditions prevailing in the country,
- Lack of appreciation of the council by-laws,
- Refusal by the Bindura Municipality to allocate vending space in the CBD
- The coercive measures employed by the council in dealing with the vendors
- Corruption by municipal police officers who get money from vendors for their own personal use.
- Implementation of the health and safety laws-laws by Bindura Municipality to ensure that the town is clean and that health hazards are avoided.

**Way forward**

Based on these findings, the researchers suggest that:
- Bindura residence vendors should unite and create a single association board that will be engaging the Bindura Municipality.
- Bindura Municipality and the Bindura urban vendors association should engage into dialogues so as to find common grounds on issues of vending which includes vending space and location.
- The Bindura urban councillors should organise knowledge dissemination of vending by-laws among vendors.
- Bindura Municipality should construct the necessary infrastructure at the designated vending points and decongest the designated points by creating alternative vending space in the CBD or close to the CBD where there is a ready market for the vendors.
- Develop a mechanism of regulating the operations of all the vendors in the CBD to enable the council to generate more revenue for running the affairs of the town and also to curb corruption amongst the council officials.
- The Government of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of labour and employment should enact policies that attracts employment creation in the country.
References


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