Methods description, ethics and consent

**Ethics and Consent**

This study obtained ethical approval from the Institute’s Research Ethics Committee, after a review of its ethical protocol, risk analysis and relevant measures for risk mitigation, and its Data Management Protocol. All respondents were informed verbally about the purpose of the study and the focus of the interviews they participated in. They participated after informed consent was provided verbally.

**Sampling strategy**

Respondents were approached by walking across the markets to purposively invite participants from across different sections of the markets, because our initial explorations revealed that different section leaders operated at Coca Cola, and different committee leaders were based across Mupedzanhamo. We purposively sampled diverse ages (18 to 24, 25 to 30 and 31 to 35) to include participants who were in their formative years (up to 24), and older participants as the Zimbabwe youth policy considers anyone up to the age of 35 to be youth. We aimed to have a gender-balanced sample of those respondents that were traders. Since market leaders and their assistants were mostly male, more male interlocutors participated in repeat interviews that were focused on understanding political dynamics at each of the three markets.

**Life history interviews**

Life history interviews (Table 1) started with an open question and sub-sequent questions addressed various socialization mechanisms, referring back to the life history and events as told by respondents. Prompts would address specifics about the political actors and experiences related to formation of political orientations. The prompts would follow the key events narrated by respondents, so the conversation would flow naturally. When conducting interviews during and after the lockdown enforced during the COVID-19 pandemic, we questions about experiences during the pandemic were added.

**Table 1.** **Interview guide life history interviews**

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| **Open questions and probing questions** |
| Can you tell me about your life and all important things that have happened, where you have lived, from birth to now? |
| Can you tell me about your parents/guardians?  Prompts: How did they talk about politics at home. What was encouraged/discouraged.  Probe further if parents/relatives were political active. |
| Can you tell me about your time at school? Prompts: Teaching on e.g. liberation values  School as political environment |
| Can you tell me about friends that were important to you, and how?  Prompts: Was any of the politically active, what did you think of this, how did this influence you? |
| Can you tell me about being part of any group or association?  Prompts: What was taught/ encouraged, how |
| Which life experiences have been important in forming you who you are today?  Prompts: Experiences related to political parties and political events. |
| At present, how do you feel about the situation in the country?  Prompts: Probe for economic and political situation, economic sanctions, corruption, ability of government |
| Of everything you told me, what has shaped your present-day attitudes with respect to political issues and your political engagement most of all? |

**Semi-structured interviews**

We conducted semi-structured interviews focused on various topics.

The interview guide on Context (Table 2) contained questions to map the social and political structures and dynamics, and general issues regarding to trading at the market.

**Table 2 Interview topic guide Context**

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| How have you joined this market? |
| When did you start vending in life |
| How does one generally access a table here |
| What do you like about this market, compared to other markets |
| Is the security alright at this market |
| What is the interaction with City Council like |
| Tell us about how the leadership of the market is organised |
| What are your experiences with market governance and leaders? |
| How has the role of market leaders changed over time? |
| Would you say there is unity among traders |
| Are there any groups (like saving groups) or other forms of collaboration among traders |
| Are there any associations for traders active |
| What happens at national holidays |
| What are challenges here, what can be improved |

The interview guide on Market Dynamics (Table 3) identified and eliciting details on political dynamics and where possible on socialization mechanisms and experiences at the markets. While topics were similar in each interview, the focus of the interview was adjusted depending on the role of the participant at the market and how long they had worked there. For instance, for male key informants who were the ‘footmen’ of market leaders and had more knowledge on formal/informal rules and the roles and networks of market leaders.

**Table 3. Interview topic guide Market Dynamics**

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| How have you joined this market? |
| Which are the different groups within the market and how do they relate |
| What are your experiences with market governance and leader?  Prompts: role of different actors? |
| How has the role of market leaders changed over time? |
| Can you explain the rules for how to behave at this market, and where did you find out about them? |
| Can you remember instances when you realized what is appropriate/less appropriate behaviour at this market? |
| What behaviours at the market are encouraged and discouraged?  Prompts: Probe for party-related practices |
| Do disciplinary measures exist? |
| Which of those rules and behaviours have to do with political parties? |
| Which of these rules/ codes of conduct do you agree/disagree with? |
| Have you experienced such rules and experiences outside of the market context |
| Would you say you feel safe and comfortable at this market? |
| Who in the market are peers and/or your role models, and why? |
| How are discussions you have with peers outside of the market different than those you have with peers here? |
| Have you ever resisted or avoided activities or behaviours required by market leaders? |
| **Questions added during /after the lockdown in 2020** |
| Role of market leaders and traders in (re)organizing the market and implementing measures |
| Recent shifts in market leadership |
| Recent contestations between the council and market leaders |
| Recent contestations by opposition-aligned traders |

**Table 4. Attitudes**

The interview guide on Attitudes (Table 4) focused on a range of perspectives on the economy and the government, and the state of the country. In some of the follow-up interviews (conducted with a smaller number of respondents that were interviewed multiple times), we made use of a vignette interview technique. We presented two fictional cases. The first case was about an individual who needed to make a choice about engaging in protest. The other case was about an individual who considered confronting market leaders. We asked how they perceived the actions and considerations, and also asked if the responses could have been different if the individual was of the opposite sex to elicit gender difference. This generated further detail on different outcomes in political behaviours, and reflections on compliance.

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| Ideas about the state of the economy |
| Perspective on the currency situation |
| Differences between the Mugabe era and current government |
| Perceptions of ‘Zimbabwe is open for business’ |
| Perceptions of recent protest |
| Perceptions on corruption |
| Notion of the liberation and its legacy |
| Vignette: the case of joining a protest |
| Vignetter: the case of confronting a market leader |

**Table 5. Phone interviews during the lockdown in 2020**

The interview guide used during the lockdown was used for phone interviews and covered a range of topics on coping strategies and developments at the market (Table 4).

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| How are you and your family doing |
| How are you getting food |
| How are you adjusting and coping |
| Support (both providing and receiving, from where) |
| What happened at the market |
| What news is shared about the market |
| How are you engaged in the reopening of the market |
| Will you be going back to the market |