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UNIVERSITY OF WITWATERSRAND

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS FOR ZIMBABWEAN CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN THE AFRICAN UNION POLICY INITIATIVES

BY

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Dedication

To my wife Ritta, my daughter Nomathamsanqa, my son Mqhele and all Zimbabwean patriots who endured the tough and repressive times of the Mugabe regime. To all of you, I say “one day we will be able to look back and smile with pride as we celebrate the fruits of our sacrifices”.

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To my main man Dick Masala of the University of Zimbabwe, thank you providing your technical expertise by editing this work. I am deeply indebted.

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Abstract

This study set out to examine the opportunities and constraints for Zimbabwean civil society participation in African Union policy initiatives. The work came up after a realisation that there are serious challenges that inhibit participation of Zimbabwean civil society organisations (CSOs) in the policy-making initiatives of the continental body.

The problem arises from the structure of the African Union (AU) in that it is an inter-state organ and, as such, any engagement with the African citizens has to be done through the various governments of members' states.

This means that for Zimbabwean CSOs' voices to be heard in the AU policy-making, they have to go through their Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Zimbabwean situation is a very unique and problematic one in that the government and CSOs are sworn enemies. The animosity arises from the allegations by the government that the CSOs are part of a well-orchestrated plot led by the United States of America and Britain to effect illegal regime change in Zimbabwe. It is the argument of the ZANU PF government that the West is sponsoring the opposition as a response to the land redistribution exercise. Given this background, it has been difficult for CSOs to make their representations to the government.

This work therefore sought to determine alternative avenues for engagement by CSOs. The research was done through interviews of 20 CSOs involved in issues of democracy and good governance. It also utilised a lot of secondary information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the AU. The research came to the conclusion that CSOs need to improve their working relations with the government and also try to utilise other avenues for engagement like the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC). The work further concluded that the "cat and mouse" relationship between the government and civil society in Zimbabwe has created a situation where the latter has been demonised, if not totally criminalised to the extent of limiting its access into mainstream AU affairs. This, in brief, has presented a situation

where the feasibility of a democratic experience in Zimbabwe becomes increasingly remote and misty.

Zimbabwe‘s contribution to African political and economic life has been disabled by the Zimbabwean government’s next to single-handed approach to African and international affairs. The absence of the Zimbabwean civil society‘s voice in the African economic and political life reduces Zimbabwe’s place in African affairs to a narrow and shallow location. The democratic doctrine of multiplicity of voices and diversity of opinions, which are important ingredients of democracy as it is globally perceived, are negated by the Zimbabwean government’s enduring interest to collapse the civil society to dormant national shareholders whose role is theoretical at the expense of being real and meaningful.

At a *prima facie* level, the Zimbabwean civil society is an isolated and hindered entity through legislation and economic and political conditions that the Zimbabwean government has caused. On the other hand, on a point of strategy and creative positive thought, this creates a window of opportunities and some interesting challenges to the actors and players in the Zimbabwean civil society to generate methods and approaches relating to the greater African economic and political reality without the co-operation, or the consent, of the Zimbabwean government. This presents a case study to the test of Africa and the globe that governance is not only a preserve of the governments, but is an all-inclusive process that must also involve non-state actors, lest it becomes a partisan and narrow meaningless affair. That, in the African context, can be summarised in a West African saying that “no matter how big your hand is, it can not cover the sky”. In this context, no matter how big the AU can be, it cannot adequately serve the interests of the whole of Africa without involving other key players like the civil society movement.

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List of Acronyms

APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	African Union
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
ECOSOCC.	Economic, Social and Cultural Council
IGIs	Inter-governmental Institutions
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
PAP	Pan African Parliament
PRC	Permanent Representatives Council
PSC	Peace and Security Council
REC	Regional and Economic Communities
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

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Chapter One: Introduction

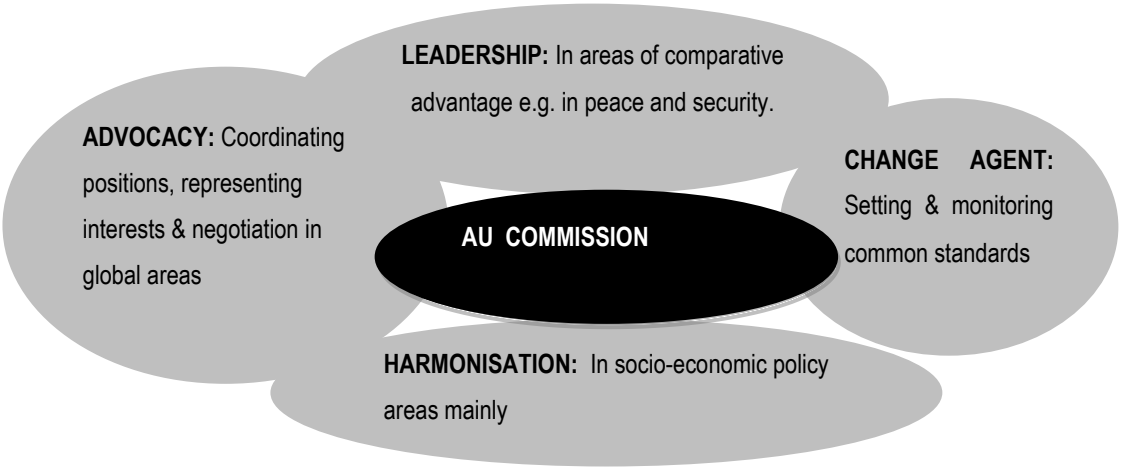
1.1 Introduction

There has been an increase in calls for wider and more effective participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) in the developmental and governance processes of continental and global organisations. These loud calls have seen attempts and great strides being made towards the creation of strong continental structures aimed at achieving solid partnerships and co-operation between states and their citizens. The establishment of the African Union (AU) demonstrates steady progress in Africa's quest for ownership of its own agenda. It has been described as constituting a historic opportunity for the revival of the Pan African spirit in the face of the waves of globalisation. The AU was formed to replace the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), formed in 1963. Evidence is already emerging of a stronger, more co-ordinated African voice in the international arena. The World Vision Report (2006, 72), states that,

> The articulation of a desire to build a people centred Union constitutes the clearest statement yet that Africa has put autocratic rule behind it and is ready to proceed along participatory democratic and accountable trajectory

The AU's desire to promote civil society participation in the policy processes of continent is clearly articulated in the in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and its Strategic Plan (2004).The role of the AU is best summarised in Figure 1 below. The diagram indicates that the AU Commission is at the centre of spearheading leadership in areas of comparative advantage like peace and security. It also plays the role of coordination of various positions and interests in negotiations at the global level. The AU also has the role of coordination of harmonisation of socio economic policies as well as being a change agent in setting up and monitoring of common standards in policy making.

Figure 1.1: Role of the African Union



(Source: AU Strategic Plan 2004-2007 page 12)

The avenues for participation of civil society in various policy initiatives of the AU are provided for in the Pan African Parliament (PAP), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the Regional and Economic Communities (REC), as well as the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC). ECOSOCC is the official platform of the AU for CSOs to interface but they can choose to interface at any level with any organ or department. Detailed documents on the founding statutes and related information on each of these organisations is available in Chapter 4.

The increased calls for civil society participation are motivated by a belief that to promote good governance, there is need for a deliberate strengthening of citizens' involvement in public policy processes. This is in line with the notion of deliberative policy-making which challenges the citizens and civil society actors to engage and influence government decision-making processes. This approach seeks to give a voice to the voiceless and is based on an important assumption that public participation in public policy is an important tool for development. It therefore encourages that all public institutions have to take the attitude and activities of the institutions constituting civil society into account when making decisions and implementing these decisions. It is recommended that for African governments to promote good governance there is need for strengthening of citizens' involvement. This is also true of the

AU which, in its attempts to create vibrant and meaningful continental development initiatives, has to take on board civil society voices.

This work recognises the importance of this engagement, more generally by exploring the opportunities and constraints of engagement for the Zimbabwean civil society in the AU policy initiatives. Important questions can be raised as to why the focus is on Zimbabwean civil society interactions at a continental level when there are national structures through which such engagement can be done. In other words, the issues of why the researcher had to leap to the continent and, most importantly, the thematic reasons for this interface. This study and the specific focus on Zimbabwean civil society are important in that they can unravel the constant suspicions between civil society and any governmental policy initiatives. This problem arises from the fact that the AU is an inter-state organ and, as such, engagement has to be done through government structures. However in the Zimbabwean context, there is a bad working relationship between the government and CSOs as the two do not see eye to eye. This has had an adverse effect on representation of CSO voices in the AU because the Ministry of Foreign Affairs disregards their views at the AU engagement level. This suspicion has had a negative impact on how the Zimbabwean government development initiatives influence the continental policy initiatives.

The effects of this cat-and-mouse relationship cannot be clearer than in the Zimbabwean context. In this context, the question of deliberative democracy and the notions on invitation become contentious as civil and, in some instances, uncivil, organisations wanting to engage with the state-driven initiatives are perceived as threatening. This is an undesirable situation because, in most instances, citizens just want to be part of decisions that affect their lives. Zimbabwe, with its current economic collapse, is seeking means and ways of solving her problems, yet at the same time it ignores the views of civil society who are the voices of the masses. This challenge of a suspicious relationship arises from the government perception of CSOs as a tool of the West to effect illegal regime change in the country. As a result of this, civil society input has been ignored, yet they have vital ideas that can

help improve governance in the country. CSOs have started to direct their lobby campaigns to regional and continental organisations like the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the AU. It is my argument that, in the absence of effective democratic governance within the country, it is vital for CSOs to be extra creative in order to find alternative routes to influence policy-making at AU level.

The purpose of this research is to determine the alternative avenues that can be used by Zimbabwean non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to bypass the government red tape to get to the AU level.

In this research, civil society organisations referred to are NGOs. Specific focus is on those that deal with promotion of democracy and good governance issues. A study will be done on 20 Zimbabwean organisations stated below. Profiles of these organisations are attached in the appendices.

- Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN),
- Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU)
- National Constitutional Assembly (NCA)
- Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition
- Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET)
- Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR)
- Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA),
- Bulawayo Dialogue Institute
- Leadership Institute for Transformation and Social Change
- .Zimbabwe Human Rights Trust ,
- Legal Resources Foundation (LRF)
- Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA)

- Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU)
- Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development
- Uluntu Platform
- Christian Alliance
- Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP)
- Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ)

Each of these organisations represents a solid constituency of Zimbabweans that have a desire to see the country following the path of democratic governance. Most importantly, these organisations were created to open spaces for public participation in governance of the country and also create avenues for channelling of these views to national, continental and international bodies

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

The policy-making and decision architecture of the AU is designed to facilitate intergovernmental interface. Policy inputs from different countries are channelled through the foreign affairs ministries and the Heads of State. What this means is that all citizens that have a desire to contribute in the policy-making process of the AU have to engage through the respective government foreign relations structure. Civil society organisations therefore have to channel their policy inputs and proposals through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs .This situation is ideal as it attempts to discourage cumbersome engagements at the AU. However, it presents problems in countries like Zimbabwe, where the relations between the government and CSOs is heavily strained due to suspicions by the former that the CSOs' movement is a creation of the West to destabilise the country and effect illegal regime change. The net effect of this animosity is that the Zimbabwean CSOs' voice is unheard at the AU level because there is no interface between the CSOs

and Foreign Affairs ministry, which is supposed to be the channel of the voices of all Zimbabwean players.

The situation creates a dangerous information gap as only the side, that of government, is heard yet civil society and all other social formations have an important role to play in the policy and governance processes of the continent. This broader engagement ensures that there is an interactive relationship between the governed and the governors, as there is no single actor who has the knowledge and resource capacity to tackle problems unilaterally.

The African Union Strategic Plan (2004-2007) states that a united and strong Africa can only be achieved through solidarity, partnership and co-operation between states and their citizens. This creates a framework for Africa's development based on the creation of well-defined institutional structures and effective linkages between various processes and initiatives that seek to develop it. However, the power and political dynamics in the policy processes of the continent have undermined the participation of CSOs, the clearest example being in Zimbabwe. This is made worse by the fact that the AU is an inter-governmental organisation and civil society movements are expected to engage through their governments, yet in Zimbabwe the relations between government and CSOs are heavily strained as alluded to above.

The problem is that while the AU provides some spaces for civil society participation, these spaces are not publicised enough to civil society and, in the end, the Zimbabwean government deliberately monopolises these avenues for participation. What has worsened the situation is that relations between CSOs and governments and inter-governmental institutions have been conducted on an *ad hoc* basis or by invitation. What is desired is to have Zimbabwean CSOs participating directly in the AU policy initiatives. This is critical especially for Zimbabwe as the national crisis, characterised by a collapse of governance and the economy, requires attention at continental and global level. Engagement by Zimbabwean CSOs in the creation of policies that promote deliberative democracy is important. The current setup where the government views CSOs with suspicion and accuses them of being agents of

regime change, have created a gulf between the two. This has not helped solve national problems at all.

Zimbabwean civil society attempts to engage directly with the AU has been unproductive as the continental body interfaces with states. While the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) has been created as the interface between civil society and the AU, it is not properly co-ordinated and equipped to seriously deal with a CSO/AU interface. The critical problem is, how then do the Zimbabwean CSOs circumvent the red tape and engage directly at the level of AU?

This work therefore seeks to investigate the opportunities and constraints for Zimbabwe civil society participation in the AU policy and development initiatives particularly the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Pan African Parliament (PAP), ECOSOCC and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

1.3 Core argument

According to Peters (2004), politics refers fundamentally to the relations of power and influence between states and their societies (and a more or less wide range of interests within them) and, in particular, to that complex set of processes whereby governments come to choose between a variety of collective goals for society and seek to implement them. In a functioning democracy, it is thus important to ensure that the citizenry participates effectively in governance. This is particularly important because the active participation of citizens in the process of deliberation helps in the alignment of the policy decisions of governance. It has been argued by some critics like Hyden (1999) that legitimate democratic public participation is vital because the authoritative decisions imposed by governments demand the justification from those burdened by authority and this justification must appeal to evidence and arguments acceptable to reasonable citizens.

At the core of my argument is that democracy is an ideal of popular sovereignty in which the legitimacy of the governors is ultimately assessed in terms of the judgements of those under that rule. The citizens are also an integral part of the governance process, as argued by Kalu (2004) that the interaction of people, ideas and institutions provides the focus for understanding how values are allocated and resources distributed. Thus, as argued by Foucault (1994), analyses of who gets what, when, how, why and where are central, as are concepts of power, justice, order, conflict, legitimacy, accountability, obligation, sovereignty and decision-making. As Africa moves closer to the creation of an African Union Government, institutions like the AU should thus be more vigorous in the operationalisation of citizens' participation in governance of the continent. It is in this context that Zimbabwean civil society has to participate actively in the formulation of the Union policies so that an independent voice of Zimbabwean communities is also heard. The current setup of the AU militates against this participation in a number of ways. The AU *modus operandi* is geared towards promotion of states' participation in the policy initiatives of the continent and excludes the CSOs' voices .Spaces created through ECOSOCC are limited and cannot effectively promote meaningful participation .It is important to have the input of non-state actors in the AU policy initiatives, hence the focus of this study on how Zimbabwean CSOs can directly interface with the AU.

But if the participation is promoted only through the state, the question arises on how this is feasible in countries like Zimbabwe where the state and CSOs are at loggerheads. This shows that in a setup like that one, the CSOs' input into the continental body is very limited. The glaring reality is that this stifles participation, hence the need for crafting of other avenues to promote this engagement.

1.4 Primary Research Questions

Given the national blockade of Zimbabwean civil society participation in the AU policies making, what other options are available?

This is an important question that needs to be attended to urgently as the Zimbabwean government views civil society organisations involved in governance issues as agents of regime change of what they term the "imperialist West". This has not only stifled their operations at national level, but has seriously limited their opportunities for influencing policies at regional and continental level. The architecture of the AU encourages inter-state interface and assumes that there are avenues available for citizens to channel their views through governmental structures. However, the Zimbabwean situation is different in that the government ignores the voices of civil society players and, as such, most of the policy inputs it makes to the continental body ignore the voices of civil society movements. This has resulted in Zimbabwean CSOs' views on policy development at a continental level not being well-transmitted due to the bad blood with government. The net effect of this blockade is that Zimbabwean civil society has found it difficult to participate meaningfully in the AU policy initiatives. Their scope of influence has thus remained confined to Zimbabwe, yet they can contribute meaningfully to the entire development of the continent. The key issue, as already defined, is to make a determination of the opportunities and constraints for Zimbabwean CSOs' participation in the policy initiatives and how this can assist national, regional and continental development.

Secondary research questions are:

- Do existing institutional and spaces for CSOs' participation in the decision-making architecture and policy-making framework of the AU allow for participation of organisations from Zimbabwe?
- What are the constraints and political power dynamics that stifle Zimbabwean CSOs' participation in the AU policy initiatives?

- Is there a well co-ordinated CSOs movement for engagement with the AU and in which policy initiatives is it directed?
- Is the Zimbabwean CSOs movement well capacitated to participate in the spaces provided by the AU as well as contribute meaningfully to strengthening policies and Africa s position in the international arena?
- If there is already some engagement between the AU and the Zimbabwean CSOs, what activities characterise this engagement?
- Is the relationship between the government of Zimbabwe and the CSOs facilitative or limiting for an effective engagement in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring in the AU policy organs?

1.4 Limitations/Constraints

The relationships between government and Zimbabwean civil society organisations are strained and, as such, it may be difficult to get well-defined information on the areas of co-operation. This might be misinterpreted as unacceptable limitation since the study is on the AU and Zimbabwean civil society and not the government and civil society. However, the fact that the AU is an inter-state organisation and that the input from the CSOs has to be channelled through the government, the strained relationship of Zimbabwean CSOs and the government presents serious information gathering challenges for this research.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework for CSOs Participation in Policy-making

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to explore literature that has been developed in the area of inclusion and participation of citizens in governance. The study will rely on secondary literature from journals, internet, textbooks, African Union statutes and protocols, among others. The aim of going through the literature is to inform and direct the study based on researches and experiences previously encountered. It will assist to provide the research with adequate information on how similar cases have been dealt with before and then arm the researcher with tools as how best to approach the research. Previous literature in the same area of study is important for any researcher as it informs the theories and case studies for the research. The chapter is crafted in the following way. It first addresses general theories on democratic governance and the importance of public participation. It looks at works by such important scholars in public affairs like King, Foucault, McLennan, and Mafumanisa, among others. After that, it explores the statutes that create the important policy bodies that are provided for by the AU. These are then critically analysed with a view of how they can inform the participation of Zimbabwean civil society organisations in the African Union Policy Agenda. The AU organs scrutinised are: ECOSOCC, NEPAD, APRM, PAP, Commission, Assembly and the Permanent Representative Council (PRC). It is, however, important to start by defining civil society in the context of this study.

2.2 Conceptualisation of civil society

In this study, civil society is defined as those organisations that are completely divorced from legislative and judicial power of the state. These organisations include, but are not limited to, labour unions, advocacy groups, religious groups, cultural and educational associations, student groups adhering to their

own rules and code of conduct. Activities of civil society are important in the running of any state. According to Mafumanisa (2004:490), it is important that "public institutions in making decisions and implementing these decisions have to take into account the attitude and activities of the institutions constituting civil society".

This work focuses on civil society movements that are involved in the promotion of democratisation and good governance. It will also thus focus on those AU policies that are aimed at achieving these two stated thematic areas. The work seeks to ascertain ways in which the CSOs movement in Zimbabwe can effectively contribute to the AU policy initiatives .These avenues are what the work perceives as the opportunities for participation in the AU policy structures while the constraints are those barriers both at national and continental level that hinder the participation of CSOs in the policy-making initiatives of the continental grouping.

2.3 The theoretical framework

Zimbabwean civil society movements, like all other stakeholders in governance of the country, have an inherent right to participate actively in policy-formulation initiatives that affect the country. This is particularly important as it encourages inclusive and accountable governance to develop equitable democratic consensus. Facilitation of citizens' participation in the policy-making organs buffers the public from state domination. This is what Habermas (1987:364) says provides "effective restraining barriers to protect civil society from state domination". The same argument is shared by Kohn (2000) and Medearis (2005:87) who argue that "disempowered actors who carve out autonomous spaces and act coercively against dominant interests can influence governance outcomes better than those collaborating with governing elites". It is in this light that this study argues that involvement of civil society movements from Zimbabwe in the African Union Policy initiatives will promote collaborative governance. For the AU to be very successful in its programmes, it needs to embrace the notion forwarded by Loundes *et al* (2006:552), which states that "responsiveness is a pre-condition of efficiency

and creation of public value demands participatory governance through dialogue with citizens". Indeed, effective governance stems from deliberative democracy, which Dryzek (2000 :781) defines as "the essence of democratic legitimacy should be sought in the ability of all individuals subject to a collective decision". In this manner deliberative democracy entails not only citizens' participation, but also equal access to decisions by all citizens with a stake in them.

This process requires that the affected actors be included in the construction of an open-ended policy discourse and also have a voice and an opportunity. This view is further shared by Skelcher (2005) who advocates an associational solution in which the agents of the community should be given a veto over partnership decisions as a guarantee against domination by their powerful counterparts. He advocates for what Skelcher (2003:101) calls consociationalism which underpins a "democratic policy-forming" model of governance where disadvantaged groups can have an equal voice.

The importance of opening avenues for participation by a wider group of citizens in governance is what gives alternative voices and ideas spaces to compete effectively in shaping policies that would affect them. Kohn (2000:425) argues that "the separation or critical distance permits the creation of protected space, where social movements can explore and test genuinely alternative ways of framing collective problems." In this manner, there is need for community empowerment and strategic co-ordination by CSOs to influence policy-making at the level of AU. The challenge faced by Zimbabwean CSOs is that the AU is an inter-state organ, and as such, engagement is usually at the level of government, leaving very little or no space for civil society. The situation is worsened by the bad relations between CSOs and government, hence the need for creation of new avenues and opportunities. Davies (2007:789) argues that:

> if governing institutions tend to reproduce the interests of dominant groups, then the disempowered have to build new institutions, incubating alternative approaches capable of gaining widespread acceptance and influence.

To that end, CSOs in Zimbabwe, being networks for national development, have a duty to ensure that they promote citizens' participation in governance in line with Sorensen and Torfing's (2005) argument that:

> The post liberal theories of democracy render it possible to see how governance networks might contribute in new important ways of organising and regulating processes of democratic policy making process assists in the alignment of policy decisions with overall objectives of national development.

McLennan (2007) concurs with the above notion and argues that the legitimacy of those in power depends on the extent to which they are able to use and sustain governance rules in relation to policy development and implementation. She further argues that "a consequence of effective governance is the legitimacy or social capital that is the engagement of citizens in public issues". This approach is effective and leads to good governance because the art of government, according to Foucault (1994:15), is essentially concerned with answering the question of how to introduce the economy. He argues that:

> to govern a state will therefore mean to apply the economy, to set up an economy at the level of an entire state, which means exercising it towards its inhabitants and wealth behaviour of each and all a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of head of family over his household and goods.

It is in the same light that Leftwich (1993:25) argues that governance needs to be understood fundamentally as the provision of direction to the economy and society. He further argues that "stated more simply, governance involves deciding upon collective goals for the society and then devising the mechanism through which these goals can be attained". In order to attain the goals and objectives of development by the state or inter-state organs, there is a need for effective involvement of citizens. Leftwich (1993) states that "there should be an inextricable bond in the relations of the state and citizens in the making and implementing public policy" because formal structures are not the

only ones involved in governance. This is important as governance is not only the business of government, but a whole cross section of the citizens.

According to Hyden (1999), “a tendency for most countries has been to increase the involvement of non-government actors with networks playing increasingly important roles both in advocating policy and implementing public programmes.” This is not only true at the level of national government, but also at the level of multilateral groupings like the AU as effective governance requires extensive citizenry participation as argued by Hyden (*ibid.*:28) that “the capacity of a political system to provide governance to a society is therefore very much affected by the structure of institutions and the manner in which these institutions interact with each other.” It therefore follows that there is a need for greater interactions between civil society movements and the AU for development of policies that promote continental growth. Participation of citizens in governance ensures accountability in which the governed can exercise influence over their governors.”

In post-independence Africa, especially in Zimbabwe, the government has alienated civil society from developmental activities. This is line with Kalu’s (2004: 14) argument that:

> The trend in post independence politics in most African countries has been to disintegrate the civil public realm inherited from the colonial powers and replace it with rivalling communal or primordial realms, all following their own informal rules.

He further argues that this has resulted in four shortcomings which have led to bad governance in Africa. These shortcomings are:

1. The personalised nature of rule
2. The frequent violation of human rights
3. The lack of delegation by central authorities
4. The tendency for individuals to withdraw from politics

The marginalisation of civil society, according to Kalu (*ibid.*:20):

> Has been effected to curb any independent political activities outside an institutional network controlled by a ruling party. By curbing associated life, African regimes have fostered blind compliance and a lack of concern for a strong public realm.

This is against the much heralded current models of governance, in which governance is viewed essentially as the increased role of non-governmental actors in policy-making and generally regarded as implying an increasingly complex set of state society relationships in which networks, rather than hierarchies, dominate the policy-making process. Kooiman (1993) argues that from a governance perspective, the process of governing is an interactive one because no single actor has the knowledge and resource capacity to tackle problems unilaterally.

The arguments forwarded above essentially focus on what Sloat (2002) calls the co-ordination of multiple actors and institutions to debate, define and achieve policy goals in complex political arenas such that the state no longer dominates the public policy-making process and decisions are made by problem-solving rather than bargaining. In this way, democratic governance can be achieved in the AU as argued by King (2004) that democracy is an ideal of popular sovereignty, according to which legitimacy is ultimately assessed in terms of judgements of those concerned. Indeed, democracy is a system of bargaining among various interests, hence the advocacy by this study for inclusion of Zimbabwe civil society in the African Union Policy agenda.

2.4 Framework for CSO participation in the African Union

It is the responsibility of governing institutions to ensure that they formulate policies that create a conducive environment for good governance and further create structures for continuous feedback to the public in order to maintain accountability to the governed. It is a generally accepted position that public

participation in governance is not a favour by government to its citizens, it is a right and the governments have a duty to effect it. The same also goes for continental governance structures. The AU offers space and platform for civil society engagement in its policy initiatives, but the platform has lots of limitations, especially in Zimbabwe.

The AU Constitutive Act (2000) reads:

> Guided by our common vision of a united and strong Africa and by the need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular, women, youth and the private sector.

Article 3 of the Constitutive Act further provides for the AU to promote principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance, promote and protect human rights and people's rights in accordance with the African Charter on human and people's rights and other human rights instruments. Article 4 of the same Act provides for "the participation of African people in the initiatives of the Union". Further to that, in its Strategic Plan document (2004-2007), citizens of Africa are a Priority Programme 2. The following objectives are advanced:

- To ensure that the talent and resources and dynamism of the African people and the Diaspora are fully utilised in the implementation of the programmes of the AU.
- To enhance the meaning and value of citizenship in Africa, and establish the overall transparency and accountability of the AU to the African people.

Among some of the activities, the plan recommended:

- The establishment of adequate frameworks for the full participation of various groups in the society in the activities of the AU.
- Developing the AU network
    a. National commissions at the level of each member state.
    b. AU delegations to the Regional Economic Commissions (REC)

c. AU offices
d. APRM Headquarters

The establishment of ECOSOCC as the principal formal channel through which the voice of the civil society organisations can be heard in the AU:

- The establishment at national and regional levels of consultative frameworks.
- Supporting Pan African civil society organisations and networks including financial support and observer status.
- Systematic civil society and private sector meetings before each AU summit

The objectives stated above clearly show that civil continental bodies must work towards the interests of the citizens as argued by Mbogori (2006), that the sooner the civil society sector understands these bodies and the stages they have reached in their evolution, the better they will be prepared to interact with them and hopefully infuse them with the human face that they invariably will require if they are to genuinely serve the needs of citizens of both the region as well as the continent as a whole. This will lead to the ultimate goal of all citizens securing ownership of all African Institutions in the manner that ensures accountability and enhances their value to each African. This strengthens the case for participation of citizens in policy processes of the continent in order to achieve what Mbogoni (*ibid.*) describes as the need to perceive Africans as part of a larger continental infrastructure which we have a duty to constitute and maintain. He further argues that it is in the spirit of deliberative democracy to ensure that it promotes citizens' participation in decision-making in what he vehemently makes a pronouncement that organised civil society and those with access to resources have to engage in initiatives that promote the poor, marginalised and unorganised to have access and participate in policy decisions.

One of the main problems faced by Africa is that it has very weak institutions, mechanisms and structures for public participation in decision-making processes at the continent level, regional economic blocs and national governments. Participation of civil society organisations in the AU policy-

making initiatives ensures that the inter-state body does not become a mere extension of governmental interests. If citizens do not engage, then these institutions remain both untransformed and undemocratic. Landsberg and Mckay (2005:16) states that, “the challenge is transformation and thus can only happen by means of critical and independent engagement by civil society.” Such a transformation paradigm could be found in a deliberative policy-making approach which challenges citizens and civil society actors grabbing the mandate to participate and play oversight and representative roles in governance and decision-making.”

The main reason for advocating active citizens’ involvement in the policy-crafting initiatives of the continent is to ensure collectivity in addressing Africa’s “big issues”. These big issues, according to Landsberg (*ibid.*), are concerned with:

- Reducing poverty.
- Social development, including addressing HIV/AIDS, unemployment and illiteracy.
- Enduring wars and conflicts.
- Promoting peace-building.
- A new trade regime that is both free and just.
- Promoting human rights and democratic governance.
- Fostering regional integration and co-operation; and
- Seeking a “new” partnership with the outside. world notably industrialised powers.

Civil society in Zimbabwe has to urgently engage seriously into the African Union Policy agenda to ensure that the continental body and national governments steer people-centred programmes. Landsberg and McKay (2005:11) states that:

> While civil society engagement remains poor, inter-state institutions and programmes are building strong policy and programmatic synergies and coherence amongst themselves. And as long as civil society actors fail to

engage strategically, it will remain difficult to steer these institutions and programmes in more people oriented directions.

To that end, a number of models and principles for engagement are proposed by civil society actors, including Landsberg and McKay (2005). Part of the framework proposes that:

- Civil society actors should have the freedom to express their views concerning all issues of national importance regardless of how the state negatively views the same,
- African technocrats and exceptional skilled intellectuals in various developmental areas must be involved in the debates for continental transformation.
- There is need to widen and strengthen the scope of inclusion of participants from all strata of continental and national government in Africa. Inclusion and accommodation should be sought at all levels.
- There is need for a high degree of honesty, integrity and accountability by both the government players and civil society movements.
- Government and civil society actors must ensure co-operation is based on achieving developmental goals.
- All the players involved in the African developmental agenda should commit and live to the commitments of genuinely transforming the African society.

The World Vision (2007), report on Africa-wide CSOs Advocacy Strategy for Africa proposes the following Modes of Engagement with the African Union:

- **CSO as Technocrat:** it is clear that increasingly significant expertise and resources reside in CSOs. The AU commission recognises this and taps into that capacity. This is an important entry point for CSOs but it does raise the issue of power and who determines the agenda.
- **CSO as Advocate:** the AU and CSOs are both advocates, so this is about a division of labour that helps the AU overcome its lack of country presence or mechanism to implement continental norms in countries.

- **CSOs as Implementer**: some NGOs have strong country presence and can harness this to help implement AU initiated norms and standards.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the framework for engagement by non state actors in the governance of national and international institutions. It gave well articulated information on the theoretical framework to do with citizens' participation in governance.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter makes an in-depth presentation of the research methodology used in conducting this research. The research is conducted mainly using a qualitative research methodology .The qualitative research methodology is preferred because it starts with general research questions rather than a specific hypothesis and, as such, allows for considerable use of inductive reasoning. It gives room for analysis which is then used to draw inferences about larger and more general phenomena. This method is preferred because it is likely to present a holistic and detailed picture of the opportunities and constraints for Zimbabwean civil society participation in the policy processes of the African Union. It is the considered view of this researcher that the approach will allow for capturing of views and perceptions of all the actors across the political, economic and social divide. This is an important issue of consideration as the research objective demands an accurate and detailed analysis of the above stated issue .In terms of the data collection, the researcher personally carried out the interviews in the selected organisations.

3.2 Theoretical grounding of the methodology

Theory frames how we look and think about a topic. It gives us concepts, provides fundamental assumptions, gives direction to the important questions and suggests useful ways for us to make sense of data. Neuman (1997:56) states that,

> Theory and research are interrelated. Once the naïve researcher mistakenly believes that theory is irrelevant to research or that a researcher just collects the data, they easily fall into the trap of lazy and vague thinking, faulty logic, and imprecise concepts.

There are three important and tested theoretical approaches to research. These are Positivism, Interpretive Social Science (ISS) and Critical Social

Science (CSS). This researcher is inspired by the CSS and, as such, the methodology will be grounded on that theory. In the justification for the use of this theory, a comparative analysis will be made with other theories so as to justify why it was given preference.

3.2.1 Positivist Social Science

Neuman (1997:63) broadly defines Positivism as an approach of natural science. Varieties of positivism go by names such as logical empiricism, the accepted or conventional view, positivism, naturalism, the covering law model and behaviourism.

Positivist researchers prefer precise quantitative data and often use experiment and statistics. It seeks rigorous, exact measures and "objective" research and they test hypotheses by carefully analysing numbers from the measures.

However, it has been criticised as reducing people to numbers and that its concerns with abstract laws or formulas are not relevant to actual lives of real people.

Scholars like Neuman (1997:63) indicate that

> Positivism sees social science as an organised method for combining deductive logic with precise empirical observations of individual behaviour in order to discover and confirm a set of probabilistic caused laws that can be used to predict general patterns of human activity.

To that end, positivist theorists assert that scientists are engaged in a never-ending quest for knowledge. Positivists view human beings as self-interested, pleasure-seeking and rational individuals. Durkheim (1938, 27) states that "social phenomena are things and ought to be studied as things".

Turner: (1985:39) states that "Social universe is amenable to the development of abstract laws and can be tested through careful collection of data." It is a technical interest that assumes knowledge can be used as a mechanism to fulfil human wants and control the physical. Positivists argue that social reality is not random; it is patterned and has order. Without this assumption (i.e. if the

world were chaotic and without regularity) logic and prediction would be impossible. To them the basic observational laws of science are generally true, primary and certain, because they are built into the fabric of the natural world.

To them there is a clear demarcation between science and non-science. Science takes a lot from common sense but it replaces the parts of common sense that are sloppy, illogical, inconsistent, unsystematic and full of bias. Neuman (1997) views positivists scientific explanation as nomothetic (*nomos* — law in Greek). It is based on systematic general laws. According to him, positivism assumes that the laws operate according to strict logical reasoning. Positivists argue for a value free science that is objective. It sees science as a specific distinctive part of society that is free of personal, political or religious values.

Neuman (1997:67) argues that the positivist view on values has had an immense impact on how people see ethical issues and knowledge

> to the degree that a positivist theory of scientific knowledge has become the criterion of all knowledge, moral insights and political commitments have been delegitimised as irrational or reduced to mere subjective inclination.

This view is shared Brown (1989:37), who argues that:

> a positivist approach implies that a researcher begins with a general cause effect relationship that he or she logically derives from a possible causal law in general theory. He or she logically links the abstract ideas of the relationship to precise measurements of the social world.

It is, however, important that the researcher remains detached, neutral and objective as he or she measures aspects of social life, examines evidence and replicates the research of others. These processes lead to an empirical test of, and confirmation for, the laws of social life as outlined in the theory. This theory will not be used for this research because of its inclination to natural sciences. This research is about humans relating to their institutions of governance and requires an approach focused on human relations and not natural sciences.

3.2.2 Interactive Social Science

This theory can be traced to German sociologist, Max Weber (1864-1920), and German philosopher Wilhem Dilthey (1833-1911). Interpretative researchers often use participant observation and field research. Neuman (1997:68) views the interpretive approach

> as a systematic analysis of socially meaning action through the direct detailed observations of the people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds.

He argues that for interpretive researchers, the goal of social research is to develop an understanding of social life and discover how people construct meaning in natural settings. An interpretive researcher wants to learn what is meaningful or relevant to the people being studied, or how individuals experience daily life. These researchers study meaningful social action, not just external or observable behaviour of people.

According to Nueman (1997:68)

> For action to be regarded as social and to be of interest to the social scientist, the actor must attach subjective meaning to it and must be directed towards the activities of other people.

To that end, the interpretive approach holds a view that social life is based on social interactions and socially designed meaning systems. Access to other human beings is viewed as possible, however, only by direct means: “what we experience initially are gestures, sound and action and only in the process of understanding do we take the step from external signs to the underlying inner life”.

Interactive social scientists argue that ordinary people are engaged in a process of creating workable systems of meanings through social interaction. The researchers in his category want to discover what actions mean to the people who engage in them. It argues that common sense is a vital source of information for understanding people. Neuman (1997:71) argues that,

> Interpretive analysis of a social setting, like the interpretations of a literal work, has internal coherence and is routed in the text, which here refers to meaningful everyday experiences of the people being studied. Interpretative researchers rarely ask objective survey questions, aggregate the answers of many people, and claim to have something meaningful.

The interpretation of the survey should be located in a context, e.g., the individual's past experiences or the survey interview situation and the meaning of a view or a questioning context. Most importantly, because each person assigns a somewhat a different meaning to the question and answer, combining answers only produces nonsense. Cuba & Lincoln (1994:115) argue that:

> The interpretive researcher argues that researchers should reflect on, re-examine and analyse personal points of and feelings as a part of process of studying others. The interpretive researcher urges making values explicit and does not assume that any one set of values is better or worse. The researcher's proper role is to be a passionate participant, involved with those being studied.

While this theory does not form the basis for this research methodology, it will nonetheless inform a lot of ideas in the research as it is also focused on people interactive relations.

3.2.3 Critical Social Science

This approach has been defined as a critical process of enquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves.

Critical researchers conduct research to critique and transform social relations. They do this by revealing the underlying sources of social relations and empowering people, especially less powerful people. The purpose of CSS is to transform the world. Stated in clear terms, it uncovers myths, reveals hidden truths and develops means and ways of making sure people change the world for themselves. Fay (1987:27) states that the purpose of critical

social theory is “to explain a social order in such a way that it becomes itself the catalyst which leads to the transformation of this social order”. This view is shared by Neuman (1997; 87) who argues that while positivist researcher tries to solve problems as they are defined by government or corporate elites, without “rocking the boat”, by contrast, the critical researcher may create problems by “intentionally raising and identifying more problems than ruling elites in the politics and administration are to accommodate, much less to solve.”

The ultimate goal of critical research is to empower people and their communities. This is the strongest reason for choosing it to be the research theory which informs this study. This study is basically about means and ways of democratising public spheres to allow for active citizens’ participation in decisions that affect their lives, which is exactly what critical social theory aspires. This position is well articulated by Kincheloe & McLaren (1994:40) in their argument that,

> Critical research can be best understood in the context of the empowerment of individuals. Inquiry that aspires to the name critical must be connected to attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society or sphere within the society. Research thus becomes the transformative endeavour. Unembarrassed by the label “political” and unafraid to consummate a relationship with an emancipator consciousness the critical researcher studies the past or different societies in order to better see change or to discover alternative ways to organise social life.

The African Union, just like the CSS, is interested in the development of new social relations, the evolution of social institutions or societies and the causes of major social change. CSS, just like the AU, focuses on change and conflict, especially paradoxes or conflicts that are inherent in the way social relations are organised. Given the world of similarities in approach to the realities of life of CSS and deliberative democracy, it has been chosen as the theoretical basis of the methodology that is used in this study.

Table 3.1: A Summary of Differences among the three approaches to research

	POSITIVISM	**INTERPRETIVE SOCIAL SCIENCE**	**CRITICAL SOCIAL SCIENCE**
Reason for research	To discover natural laws so people can predict and control events	To understand and describe meaningful social action	To smash myths and empower people to change society radically
Nature of social reality	Stable pre-existing patterns or order that can be discovered	Fluid definitions of a situation created by human inter-action	Conflict filled and governed by hidden underlying structures
Nature of human beings	Self-interested and rational individuals who are shaped by external forces	Social beings who create meaning and who constantly make sense of their worlds	Creative, adaptive people with unrealised potential, trapped by illusion and explanation
Role of common sense	Clearly distinct from and less valid than science	Powerful everyday theories used by ordinary people	False beliefs that hide power and objective conditions
Theory looks like	A logical, deductive system of interconnected definitions, axioms, and laws	A description of how a group's meaning system is generated and sustained	A critique that reveals true conditions and helps people see the way to better world
An explanation that is true	Is logically connected to laws and based on facts	Resonates or feels right to those who are being studied	Supplies people with tools needed to change the world
Good evidence	Is based on precise observations that others can repeat	Is embedded in the context of fluid social interactions	Is informed by a theory that unveils illusions
Place of values	Science is value free, and values have no place except when choosing a topic	Values are an integral part of social life: no group's values are wrong, only different	All science must begin with a value position; some positions are right, some are wrong

Adapted from Lawrence Neuman, (1987, p83)

3.3 Data collection techniques

The research was conducted using the qualitative research method. The method places lots of emphasis on the social context in order to understand the social world. There is a great emphasis on the belief that the meaning or statement depends, in an important way, on the context in which it appears. Qualitative research starts with a research question and assumes that there is no single view of reality but that different methods reveal different perspectives. The qualitative style focuses on the construction of social reality and cultural meaning .It differs from quantitative research, which measures objective facts. In qualitative research, the following are viewed as key elements;

- Focuses on interactive processes, events
- Authenticity is key
- It has inherent values that are explicit
- It is situationally strained
- It focuses on thematic analysis
- There are few case studies
- The researcher is personally involved

In order to understand qualitative research well, it is important to start by comparing it with quantitative research. In that way, striking differences will emerge and these bring out the main reasons on why it is the preferred research method for this study. Table 3.2 below summarises the main differences between qualitative and quantitative research. This research uses a qualitative approach because it is exploring a question for which there is no answer. The answers to the questions posed are highly dependent on a detailed description of the institutional and regulatory contexts of Zimbabwe and the AU. In addition, the strategies posed reflect the world view and understandings of the CSOs interviewed and cannot be generalised.

Table 3.2: Differences between Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Quantitative	Qualitative
Test hypothesis that the research begins with.	Captures and discovers the meaning once the researcher becomes immersed in the data.
Concepts are in the form of distinct variables	Concepts are in the form of themes, motifs, generalisation, and taxonomies.
Measures are symmetrically created before data collection and are standardised.	Measures are created in ad hoc manner and are often specific to the individual setting or researcher.
Data are in the form of numbers from precise measurement	Data are in the form of words from documents, observations, and transcript.
Theory is largely causal and deductive	Theory can be causal and non causal and is often inductive.
Procedures are started and replication assumed	Research procedures are particular, and replication is very rare.
Analysis proceeds by using statistics, tables, or charts and discussing how what they show relates to the hypotheses	Analysis proceeds by extracting themes or generalisations from evidence and organising data to present a coherent, consistent picture.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The data collection method used in this research was a combination of document review and structured interviews. These documents include the AU founding statues, the ECOSOCC founding statutes, The NEPAD, PAP and APRM statutes. These are attached as appendix 3. Document analysis of these was important in that it provided a clear picture on the current operations of these organisations

The researcher used convenient purposeful sampling and manipulated no situation or condition but just allowed people to answer in the manner that they wanted. The research questions were structured and semi-structured. There are basically four commonly used interview methods. These are; mail and self-administered questionnaires, telephone surveys and e-mail surveys. The preferred one for this study is the self-administered questionnaire due to the advantages that will be articulated later on.

3.4.1 Face-to-face Interviews

The preferred choice of interviewing was the face-to-face interview**.** According to Neuman (1997), face-to-face interviews have the highest response rates and permit longest questions. They have the advantages over telephone interviews, as interviewers also can observe the surroundings and use non-verbal communication and visual aids.

It has, however, the disadvantage of high cost as the training, travel and subsistence can be high. There is also a high degree of bias as the appearance or the tone of the voice and questioning can affect the respondent. Despite the stated problems, the face-to-face interview remains the preferred choice because the researcher wanted to capitalise on a big return rate which can give reliable results. As such the data was done through face to face interviews with selected senior leadership of selected organisations

3.4.2 Interviewing

An interview differs from an ordinary conversation. An interview has been described by Neuman (1996:305) as,

> a short term, secondary interaction between two strangers with the explicit purpose of one person obtaining specific information form the other and a conversation is an ordinary informal verbal exchange.

3.4.3 The questionnaire

The major instrument for collecting data in this research was a questionnaire. The questionnaire is attached as appendix 1. A questionnaire is a data-collecting instrument used at an interview or given to respondents to fill in on their own in their own time. It solicits appropriate information from the respondents for data analysis.

The information is needed in order to draw conclusions from the findings of the research. The questionnaire is generally considered to be a simple method of

collecting data. The researcher comes up with questions which are clear so that they are easily answered by the respondents. Lengthy questions are avoided as they may have an effect of boring the respondent. The questionnaire consists of semi-structured and structured questions. In the policy research of this nature, opinions and perceptions matter, hence the need to use both structured and semi-structured questions.

A good questionnaire forms a good basis for any research. The researcher weaves questions together so they flow smoothly. He or she includes introductory remarks and instructions for clarification and measures each variable with one or more survey questions. In the construction of the questionnaire, the following important principles of a good questionnaire were taken into serious consideration. The principles were adapted with modifications from Neuman (1997):

- **Avoidance of confusion** and keeping of the respondent's perspective in mind
- Good survey questions both give the researcher valid and reliable measures and help respondents feel they understand the question and that their answers are meaningful
- **Avoidance of jargon and slang**: jargon and technical terms come in many forms, e.g. plumbers talk about *snakes,* lawyers about contract of *uberima fides*, psychologists about *oedipus complex.*
- **Avoidance of ambiguity, confusion and vagueness:** a researcher might make implicit assumptions without thinking of respondents, e.g. the question: "What is your income?" could mean weekly, monthly, annually etc. Double-barrelled questions can also be a source of ambiguity, e.g. "Do you jog regularly?" *Yes*/*No* hinges on the meaning of the word "regularly". Some respondents may define "regularly" as everyday, others weekly.
- **Avoidance of emotional language and prestige bias**: Words have implicit connotative as well as explicit denotative meanings. Likewise, titles or positions in society, e.g. president, carry prestige or status. Words with strong emotional connotations and stand on issues linked to people with high social status can colour how respondents hear and answer survey questions. As such, use neutral language and also avoid prestige bias.

- **Avoidance of double-barrelled questions**: Make each question about one and only topic. A double-barrelled question consists of two or more questions joined together and, as such, makes the respondents' answer ambiguous.
- **Avoidance of leading questions**: It is important make respondents feel that all responses are legitimate. A leading or loaded question is one that leads the respondent to choose one response over another by its wording.
- **Avoidance of questions that are beyond the respondent's capabilities**: Asking something that a few respondents know frustrates and produces poor quality responses. Respondents cannot always recall past details and may not know specific factual information.
- **Avoidance of false promises**; It is important not begin a question with a promise with which respondents may not agree, and then ask about choice regarding it.
- **Avoidance of asking about distant future intentions**
- **Avoidance of asking people how they might do under hypothetical circumstances**
- **Avoidance of double negatives:** Double negatives in ordinary language are grammatically incorrect and confusing e.g. "I ain't got a job" logically means the respondent does have a job.
- **Avoidance of overlapping or unbalanced response categories**; It is important that the response categories or choices mutually exclusive and exhaustive.

The research, as already stated was done using a questionnaire in which the researcher interviewed the selected leaders of the CSOs. The idea of going out to physically interview these leaders is because the questionnaires sent out have a very low return rate. Face to face enquires also provide for probing and as such it allowed me to get information that I would not have managed to get if I had sent out the questionnaires.

Of the twenty organisations that were interviewed fifteen were based in Harare the capital city while five were in Bulawayo the second largest city. The reason

why the majority of interviews were in Harare is because the management of most of these organisations are in the capital where the headquarters are.

The interviews in Harare were conducted between February and April 2009 while those in Bulawayo were done in May 2009. The organisations that were interviewed in Harare are Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN),Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) ,Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition ,Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET),Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), .Zimbabwe Human Rights Trust ,Zimbabwe Women Lawyers Association (ZWLA), Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU),Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development, Christian Alliance ,Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace .(CCJP)Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) and Women of Zimbabwe Arise. The interviews were done with senior management of these organisations.

Those interviewed in Bulawayo are Bulawayo Dialogue Institute, NTCHA, Habakkuk Trust, Uluntu Platform and Legal Resources Foundation.

During the face to face interview process responses were entered into the questionnaire using and when all the twenty organisations had been interviewed, the data was cleaned and each questionnaire given a unique code which for the purpose of data processing. At the end of the coding data was entered into an MS Excel spreadsheet for processing and analysis .The excel programme gave out the results that were analysed by the researcher in line with the research questions and these are well presented in chapter 5.

In choosing the instruments for this research, issues concerning validity, reliability, appropriateness, flexibility, cost effectiveness, time restraints, as well as the researcher's ability were also taken into serious consideration. These issues are well explained below.

3.5 Validity

The issue of validity concerns itself with the ability of the research instrument to provide data that measures what the researcher intends to measure and provide a valid answer. It is effective if the responses obtained furnish the

researcher with the required data which can be easily analysed. Sax (1989:292) defines validity as, “the extent to which measurements are useful in making the decisions relevant to a given purpose”. The measurements in the research process are questions in the questionnaire. The information obtained from the research questions enables the researcher to come up with some meaningful decisions on the study.

- **Wording of questions.** Is the wording of questions clear to the respondents and do all the respondents derive the same meaning from the questions?
- **Construction of sentences.** Are the sentences appropriate? Are they too short or too long? Do they give unnecessary detail that confuse the respondents?
- **Difficult questions.** Are there questions which respondents find difficult to answer?
- **Refusal rate.** Is there a tendency for respondents to refuse to answer particular questions?
- **Time requirement.** What is the approximate time needed to answer the questionnaire? Do the respondents seem to tire at the end?
- **Coding.** Are there problems with coding that data?
- **Usefulness of the data.** Is the questionnaire able to generate the type of information that is expected of it?

It is after analysing the results from the questionnaires of the pilot test that new questions will be developed. Some questions will be modified while others will be retained unchanged. The responses obtained from the test will then be used to modify questions to the appropriate level of the participants’ comprehension.

It is important to have questions that match the participants’ level of understanding. Questions which prove to be too difficult may lead to the respondents abandoning the questionnaire and too simple ones may offend the respondents when they regard the questions as under-rating their intelligence.

3.6 Reliability

The accuracy of the research instrument is how reliable it is for the study. Sax (1989:259) has defined reliability as, “the extent to which measurement can be depended upon to provide consistent and unambiguous information. It can be considered as the extent to which if the same research is carried out in the same manner, everything being equal will yield the same results. The reliability of a research instrument in social studies research is affected by various factors. For example if the same question is asked under different circumstances and condition it must give the same answer. To improve the reliability of the questions, the researcher structured the questions so that the wording of the questions remained the same at any given time. The pilot test enabled that vague questions were identified and modified as they would have given unwanted responses that have nothing to do with the research objective. In this study the test of validity is shown through use of questions that will give the same desired results in different settings.

The issue of participation, or lack of participation, of civil society in policy-making is not peculiar to Zimbabwe, it is a problem in a number of other African countries. The instruments used in this research do pass the test of validity in that they can provide similar results for a research of a similar topic even if it were to be carried out in a different African country.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter explicitly gave a description of the research methodology used in this research. It touches on the strengths of methodology, including the advantages of the research instruments. The chapter thus gives a good background on what to expect in the in the following chapters that deal with research findings as well as conclusions.

Chapter Four: Institutional Framework for CSOs Participation in the AU

4.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the institutional framework of the African Union and how each of its organs can provide the necessary spaces for participation by the Zimbabwean CSOs .The chapter will give an in-depth presentation of all the key organs of the AU with a view of giving a clear outline of how it can provide the spaces for interactive governance.

The primary reason for deliberative democracy and popular inclusion in policy-making is really around democratisation of public spheres. The AU is a continental public body in which African citizens should be encouraged to participate in its policy formulation.

4.2 The AU decision-making architecture

According to Landsberg and Mckay (2005),the AU decision making architecture includes:

- The Assembly of Head of States and Government which is the highest decision-making body and it meets at least twice a year.
- The Executive Council of Ministers which advises the Heads of State and Government and co-ordinates and takes decisions on policy.
- The Permanent Representatives Council (PRC) comprising representatives of member states, which prepares the work for the Executive Council, acting on instructions of the Executive Council of Ministers.

In this structure, Zimbabwean civil society can engage and try to influence policy by lobbying, for instance, the Executive Council of Ministers or the PRC, or even the Heads of State. These are the most powerful organs in policy-initiation and if Zimbabwean civil society gets sympathisers in these, then it can influence policies that can be favourable for its citizens.

It is my proposal that Zimbabwean CSOs can also lobby through another important and influential organ of the AU Commission . The Commission serves as the secretariat of the AU and it comprises the Chairperson, his deputy and ten Commissioners. The Commission is designed to represent the union and also defend its interests. Landsberg and Mckay (2005) argue that the Commission serves under the instructions of the Heads of State and the Government, but also has a clear policy-making and advisory function. He further argues that under the leadership of President Alpha Konare, the Commission proved to be a key policy-making and served to effectively guide the Assembly and Executive Council. The office of the Chairperson is structured around a very powerful cabinet which, in itself is a key policy-making structure. Given the power of the Commission, Zimbabwean civil society can try to influence the African Union Policy direction by engaging directly at the level of the Commission.

4.3 The Peace and Security Council (PSC)

This is a 15-member council responsible for promoting peace and security. It was established in December 2003 and its statutes provide for citizens to bring matters to its attention. According to the World Vision Report (2007), the PSC is currently establishing three sub-organs namely

- **The Panel of Wise** to be made up of five prominent Africans whose role will be to engage in preventative diplomacy and mediation.
- **Continental Early Warning System** designed to enhance the PSC's conflict prevention effectiveness through provision of information timorously.
- **The African Standby Force**, effectively on-standby army for peace-keeping and peace enforcement made up of troops from AU member states and organised at sub-regional level.

This is yet another AU organ in which Zimbabwean civil society can influence policy direction. It should, however, be noted that for Zimbabwean civil society strategies to be effective, there must be no disconnection between the lobby

at continental level and regional level. To that end, it will be important to engage vigorously at the level of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). The simple reason being the AU takes seriously policy decision forwarded by Regional Economic Blocs . According to the World Vision Report (2007)

> Under the AU, strenuous efforts are underway to bring the RECs more fully into the continental fold, and a new AU protocol has been established and negotiated to this end, the recognition that the RECs have more to show in terms of tangible progress towards integration than the AU itself. So at the AU level therefore, anybody who wants to engage with Africa needs to have a sense of what is happening to the RECs.

It is thus crucial for Zimbabwean CSOs to initiate their lobby at the SADC level.

4.4 The SADC Architecture

Landsberg and Mckay (2005) argue that highest decision making body is the summit of Heads of State or Government of all member state .They further argue that

> The summit is the ultimate policy making institution of SADC, and is responsible for the overall policy direction and control functions of the organisation, the summit usually meets once a year and then there is the Troika; consisting of the chair, incoming chair and outgoing chair of the SADC. This instrument has enabled that decisions be made quickly and it provides policy direction.

There is also the Council of Ministers of each member state, usually from Ministries of Foreign Affair or Finance. This organ oversees that policies are implemented properly. This is another body that CSOs can lobby as the policies are formulated at continental level.

The SADC National Committee is a body comprising key stakeholders. According to Landsberg and Mckay (2005,14)

> It comprises of *sic* government, private sector and civil society in member states and is mandated to provide inputs at the national level in the formulation of regional policies, strategies, SADC Plan of Action (SPA) as well as co-ordinate and oversee the implementation of these programmes at the national level."

Given the importance of this organ in formulation of SADC policies, the Zimbabwean CSOs can target it as an entry point of influencing regional policy initiatives and ultimately the AU policy initiatives.

4.5 The AU Civil Society Organisations Forum

The African Forum and Network on Debt and Recovery (AFRODAT) AU report (2006) indicates that

> The AU Civil Society Organisations Forum, an event organised by the CIDO ahead of the AU summits, is an opportunity to brief CSOs on relevant developments within the AU. It also has the potential to be an opportunity for civil society organisations to inform AU policy by submitting recommendation to the summit: These AU CSOs forum are an indication of the openness to civil society engagement and the Zimbabwean civil society have to grab all the available opportunities to participate in these.

The Zimbabwean civil society would have to be properly co-ordinated to have effective policy inputs at that level. It requires consensus on certain policy issues so that they are easily defendable at that level. It must not be a victim of what the World Vision Reports (2007,54) calls "one concern was that the AU-Civil Society Pre-summit forum was 'packed with some of the usual suspect', implying that participation was carefully selected to exclude those likely to be critical". Mutasa and Houghton (2006) argue that the summit constitutes work in progress in influencing policy outcomes of the AU. This space will become more relevant as Zimbabwean CSOs organise themselves in such a way as to maximise the opportunities provided.

4.6 AU institutions providing opportunities for policy engagement

There a number of African Union policy organs that provides opportunities for participation of Zimbabwean civil society in the policy-making initiatives of the continental body. This study would restrict itself to the following key policy organs:

- The ECOSOCC
- The PAP
- The APRM
- The NEPAD
- The Commission
- The PSC

4.6.1 ECOSOCC

In its Founding statutes Article 3 of the AU Constitutive Act ,the AU makes a strong commitment to promotion of democratic principles and institutions for democratic popular participation and good governance .It is therefore a fact that the AU, in its common vision of a strong Africa, requires the building of partnerships between the government and all segments of civil society, in particular women, youth and the private sector. It shouts for the strengthening of solidarity among its people, hence the creation of ECOSOCC as the principal formal channel through which the voice of the civil society organisations can be heard in the policy-making of the AU. According to Landsberg and Mckay (2005,30)

> ECOSOCC is designed to provide a mechanism for interface between AU and African civil society. It is to be based on consultation, collaboration and partnership between governments and civil society in Africa.

This organ has a key function of advising and providing a channel so that the African people can contribute to policy formulation of the continental body. According to the founding statutes, its objectives are as follows:

- The promotion of permanent dialogue between the African people and their leadership on vital issues concerning Africa and its future.
- Promoting strong partnerships between governments and all segments of civil society in particular women, youths, children, the Diaspora and private sector.
- Supporting the political and socio-economic development of the continent.
- Promoting democratic principles and institutions, popular participation, good governance, human rights and freedoms and social justice.
- Collaborating with and strengthening linkages with other organs of the Union and with the regional economic blocs.

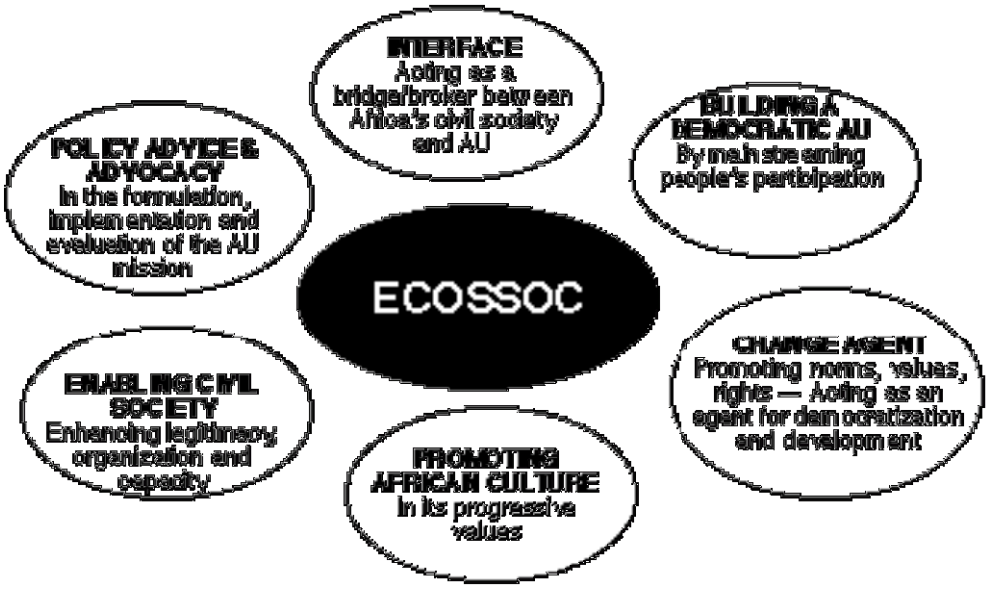
An unpublished ECOSOCC (2006), report indicates that a Zimbabwean chapter of ECOSSOC was established in November 2006 According to the report of the Zimbabwean Chapter (2006), clusters were created in line with Zimbabwe development priorities. A number of sectoral committees were established to deal with key operational issues and further provide inputs to the policies and mechanisms of the African Union. The committees were proposed in the following areas:

- Rural Economy and Agriculture
- Infrastructure and Energy
- Economic Affairs
- Trade and Industry
- Human Resources, Science and Technology
- Public Affairs
- Women and Gender

CSOs in Zimbabwe were encouraged to make policy contributions to the stated thematic areas for onward transmission to the policy-making organs of the AU. This presents lots of shortcomings as ECOSOCC is only established

as an advisory body. The fact is, even if Zimbabwean CSOs make their own input on policy proposals in the stated thematic areas to the Zimbabwean chapter of ECOSOCC, this chapter can work only as an advisory council which works against its strength. According to Moyo (2006), Article 22 of the Constitutive Act reveals prospects and limitations associated with ECOSOCC's advisory function. Article 22 of the AU Constitutive Act reveals prospects and limitations associated with ECOSOCC's advisory function. This raises concerns as to whether the organ has the ability to influence policies within the AU .The figure below outlines the roles and functions of ECOSOCC

Figure 4.1: Key Roles of the Economic Social and Cultural Council



(Adapted from AU Commission 2006)

The glaring reality is that in the power matrix or the decision-making architecture of the AU, ECOSOCC has limited influence. In terms of composition and hierarchy of the AU, at the top is the Assembly of Heads of States and the government which meets twice a year. The first summit in January usually attends to policy and strategic planning while the second one focuses on budget and operational matters . This organ is followed by the Executive Council of Ministers (ECM) which advises the Assembly and takes

decisions on policy issues. After that, there is the Permanent Representative Council (PRC) comprising permanent representatives of member states. Alongside the ECM is the Commission, which serves as the Secretariat under the General Assembly. The Commission in the past has guided the Assembly and ECM. Below the Commission sits the office of the Chairperson, which is structured around a powerful cabinet-like structure. This organ is very powerful in policy-making.

There are other important and powerful influential bodies within the AU architecture and they include the Peace and Security Council, comprising 15 member states responsible for peace and security on the continent and then NEPAD and the implementation committee of Heads of States and Government. The above mentioned structures are all good entry points for Zimbabwean civil society. Zimbabwean CSOs must not limit their engagement only to ECOSOCC and the highest decision-making of AU. It is important to engage right from the bottom, especially knowing that there are serious challenges facing ECOSOCC.

While it is a fact that the ECOSOCC is a platform for civil society to engage and ensure popular participation and people-centred governance, enabling African people and institutions to not only contribute to the programmes and decisions of the AU, but to assume ownership of these programmes and be responsible for their implementation. Moyo (2006) indicates that the challenges facing ECOSOCC as stipulated in article 6 of its founding statutes (2006) regarding the code of ethics and conduct, the election process as well as the selection criteria for civil society organisations that will eventually constitute the General Assembly, seem to cripple the organ. Despite these challenges, the strength of ECOSOCC lies at the cluster communities where in-depth input can be made by civil society based on their expertise. It is important that in the Zimbabwean context, while ECOSOCC does provide a basis for CSOs engagement with the AU policy crafting organs, there are a number of improvements that have to be done before it can be used as a best practice. Some of these institutional challenges include:

- A weak financial base and institutional structure due to its reliance on African Citizen Directorate for funding, advice and administrative support. too much
- An unclear and flawed process of composition of the national chapter which excludes many CSOs in the country as a result weakening the scope of participation.
- There is limited national consultation and knowledge amongst the citizens, even the CSOs in Zimbabwe, on the existence and functions of ECOSOCC.
- The legal framework as initially stated, of establishing ECOSOCC only as an organ with advisory powers, without its own treaty significantly weakens its position.

In Zimbabwe, just like many of the African countries, ECOSOCC is not a truly representative body as it leaves out a number of organisations outside the programmes. The African Union Report (2007,7) states that:

> If ECOSOCC is to play the role intended for it, it must become a much more genuinely representative body, this will require both significant strengthening of the process of electing representatives to its structures and a stronger position for ECOSOCC itself within the AU organs.

4.6.2 New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

Moyo (2006) indicates that the other organ of the African Union in which spaces exist for civil society participation is the NEPAD .He argues that the African leaders, in search of a continental economic growth agenda, established NEPAD based on principles of a common vision and participatory democracy . According to Landsberg and Mckay (2005) NEPAD sees a dialectical relationship between politics and economics, and makes an explicit link between development, peace, good governance and democracy. He further argues that the agenda of NEPAD is to inculcate into African politics a culture of democracy, accountability and good governance. Indeed, NEPAD is based on what Landsberg and Mckay (2005,12) describes as a trade off: "in exchange for African leaders holding each other accountable, industrialised

powers of the world would commit themselves to African development". The basis for the establishment of NEPAD was to create an umbilical link between development and stability. It points out at what Landsberg and Mckay (2005) call three pre-requisites for social and economic regeneration, poverty alleviation and empowerment: Peace and security

1. Democracy and political governance; and
2. Economic and corporate governance.

NEPAD framework for development does not only stop at the above but goes on to advocate establishment and protection of an apolitical order and systems of governance that are legitimate and enjoy the support and loyalty of the African people ;

- strong enough to advocate the interests of African people; and
- able to engage effectively with various global processes that characterise the world economy

Zimbabwean civil society have, on a number of occasions, made attempts to involve themselves in the NEPAD programmes, particularly through discussions in the NEPAD business forum. World Vision Report (2007) NEPAD has however suffered in the public eye because it has been criticised as a top-down elitist programme driven by African leaders with very little consultation with civil society organisations . The problem has been the clash of the ownership of the whole initiative. Cilliers and Sturman (2004, in Moyo (2006) argue that a closer look at the NEPAD document exposes two critical and seminal aspects of the NEPAD agenda, namely, NEPAD as a "pledge by African leaders" to place their countries on the path of sustainable growth and development and NEPAD as an "appeal to African peoples to support the implementation of this initiative by setting up structures for organisation, mobilisation and action". This boils down to a conflict in that, on one hand, are the African leaders who believe that by virtue of a popular mandate from elections, they should own the initiative, while on the other hand, civil society organisations felt they should have been consulted and participated in the drafting of the economic plan for Africa.

A study by Kotze and Steyn (2003) indicates sharp ideological differences between non-state actors and states regarding the development of the NEPAD. The outcome of this study shows that some African civil society groupings are opposed to what they call invitation of neo-global organisations to cure Africa's ills. These neo-liberal institutions include the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation, among others. There are many organisations in Zimbabwe who view NEPAD as an elitist move. Moyo (2006:10) argues that:

> There is a view that exclusion of civil society in drafting and implementation of NEPAD resulted in criticism being levelled at the policy itself. The exclusion of civil society in the initiation of NEPAD deprived many CSOs players of important knowledge on how to effectively contribute to the economic plan for Africa.

Participation of all stakeholders has been seen as key to positive developmental initiatives in NEPAD. Wameyo (2003), on the role of civil society within the context of NEPAD, argues that there are at least three interpretations of the role of civil society:

1. They can be recipients or beneficiaries of state benevolence in which they become end-users of state-provided poverty eradication initiatives, with little interests or capacity for contributing to policy deliberations which is better left to experts.

2. They can assume a watchdog role to ensure that state-initiated programmes succeed. On this one, civil society would be consulted on how programmes are implemented and how further to improve delivery and efficiency. Recent studies have shown civil society as a channel through which programmes are implemented on how to improve delivery and efficiency. This situation has presented problems particularly within Zimbabwe in that the CSOs have not become partners in the real sense as the government has continued to have heavy control of these.

3. They have to be integral players in economic and social development, participating in defining the direction of Africa's growth. To that end, civil

society thus participates in governance as well as development initiatives, including the direction of development programmes

NEPAD has been viewed as a practicable and avenue for economic growth but it needs to be more accommodative to non-state actors. For instance, Wameyo (2003), on the role of civil society in NEPAD, states that it is an integral player in the economic and social development, participating in defining Africa's direction as a right and not privilege. He however, raises a question and defines NEPAD as an initiative that selectively provides space for private sector and donors rather than addressing the issue of development in Africa.

Wameyo (2003) ,then makes the following suggestions:

- African leaders should acknowledge that NEPAD ignores the role played by civil society in development.
- There must be a deliberate "opening" up of NEPAD to consultations with civil society organisations, as well as the development of mechanisms with the secretariat to deal with and respond to concerns of civil society organisations.
- A timetable should be drawn to revamp NEPAD, taking into consideration the concerns raised by civil society organisations and contributions already made to the NEPAD debate; and
- A process of national dissemination of NEPAD, which seeks to relate to NEPAD initiatives to in-country process for collective poverty-eradication should be embarked on.

A lot of pressure by continental civil society bodies on the need to involve civil society players in the NEPAD initiatives has seen the establishment of a civil society desk. Moyo (2006,11) , indicates that:

> NEPAD continues to interact with civil society groups at various levels. On a generic level, a civil society desk has been established at NEPAD secretariat with a view to having one stop focal point for civil society. At a sector level, all programmes are being implemented in consultation with relevant civil society groups. However, it must be noted the level and extent

of civil society participation in the implementation of NEPAD programmes is largely dependent on the capacity of civil society groups.

It is however unfortunate that despite the creation of this desk, Zimbabwean civil society effectively remains unrepresented. For instance, there are these limitations:

- Limited information flow between Zimbabwean civil society and the NEPAD civil society desk
- Limited, if any, involvement of Zimbabwean civil society in the programmes formulation
- Little interaction between the NEPAD and Zimbabwean civil society organisations.

This has the effect of limiting the strength of NEPAD. Moyo (2006) argues that "If the status quo continuous, civil society might be perceived as rubber stamps of NEPAD". This raises the question of seriousness of Zimbabwean civil society engagement in the policy input of NEPAD.

According to the World Vision Report (2007), the NEPAD secretariat has set up a unit to put in place and ensure implementation of the NEPAD civil society policies and also to mainstream civil society involvement in the NEPAD processes and share the best practices. According to the same document, NEPAD CSO Think Tank has been created with the following terms of reference:

- Mobilise and ensure effective participation of CSOs in NEPAD initiatives and regional, sub-regional and national levels;
- Create a conducive environment at the REC level for CSO involvement, co-ordination, capacity-building and participation in NEPAD and REC issues;
- Determining CSOs' various niches, identify their roles in different NEPAD processes, including the regional economic regimes;
- Work complementarily with CSOs implementing programmes around NEPAD sectors and win their support in order to use their networking capabilities to implement and advocate NEPAD at the grassroots level;

- Ensure all CSO Think Tank are gender mainstreamed to meet AU gender party principle;
- Better understand CSOs and enhance their capacity to support and participate in NEPAD implementation;
- Strengthen CSOs' understanding of integration at regional and different sub-regional levels, within the context of ECOSOCC ;
- Popularise NEPAD and improve relations between CSOs, governments and the private sector;
- Build the capacity of CSOs to effectively participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of NEPAD;
- Process and step down knowledge on new ideas rolling out of the NEPAD secretariat action plans; such as APRMs to national level
- Develop a framework that can identify best practices from CSOs that can be up-scaled and replicated by NEPAD

There is a need for Zimbabwean civil society to promote genuine engagement with NEPAD structures. Part of this would entail effective utilisation of spaces provided at the national chapters of NEPAD. It should also be noted that the bad blood between Zimbabwean civil society and the government limits the spaces for civil society participation in inter-state programmes like NEPAD. Relations thus have to improve in line with the resolution of the NEPAD civil society forum on building stronger partnerships. The African Union Status report indicates that this meeting held in Accra on 25-28 March 2003 recommended that civil society groupings should improve relations with government. If it is not achieved, then Zimbabwean civil society will continue to lag behind in influencing the formulation of policies at the continental level.

4.6.3 African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

According to the World Vision Report (2007),the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is an important project of the NEPAD . It is designed to promote meaningful interaction between government and citizens on issues of democracy, human rights, poverty and service delivery. The APRM is modelled around the principles of the APRM (NEPAD APRM/Panel 3

guidelines/ 11-2003/ Doc8: 3) which, according to Moyo (2006; 18) stipulate that:

> The APRM process is designed to be open and participatory. Through a participatory process the APRM will engage key stakeholders to facilitate exchange of information and national dialogue on good governance and socio-economic development programmes, thereby increase the transparency of decision making process and build trust in the pursuit of national developmental goals. To ensure transparency and accountability in the APRM, rules and procedures will be developed and approved to guide the conduct of all stakeholders. These include code of conduct for all components of the APRM organisations and every review exercise must be technically competent, credible and free of political manipulation.

The spirit of the APRM is based on the concept of deliberative democracy, which is important for consensus-building. King (2004) argues that deliberative democracy entails that decisions, whether personal or collective, ought to emerge from careful and informed judgements rather than, say, capricious choice or unreflective deference to prevailing opinion. Quality judgements on public matters might be improved by open exchange among different parties. This, of course, entails what McLennan and Ngoma (2004) argue requires a focus on the often contested space where leaders, public officials, citizens' interest groups and institutions negotiate the legitimacy and value decisions and processes related to development of growth. The motivation of this, according to Mc Lennan (2000), is that current notions on governance as the exercise of political and economic authority, has recently been associated with more distributed decision-making processes and structures that include government and civil society actors.

It is the duty of each country participating in the APRM to organise a participatory and transparent process . According to Moyo (2006:12):

> In so doing, each participatory country must establish a focal point for APRM process, which should be at Ministerial level or a person that reports directly to the head of state or government. However, it is critical that the

work of the APRM focal point is inclusive, integrated and co-ordinated with existing policy decision making and medium term planning.

The provision of an “inclusive” process is meant to encourage participation of citizens to promote good governance. Most importantly, it has been argued by scholars like Mafumanisa (2004:492) that, “A robust civil society is a clear indicator of a strong democracy and that to promote good governance; African governments need to strengthen citizens’ involvement.” This argument is reinforced by Pope (2000:247) who argues that “an informed citizenry aware of its rights and asserting them confidently is an underpinning to a national integrity system”. An apathetic public, he argues “ignorant of its rights and acquiescent in the face of administrative abuse, provides an ideal breeding ground for complacency and corruption”. As already argued, to ensure broadened representation of the bigger section of the public, the APRM processes and structures at national level have a provision for representation of different stakeholders across the board .

Zimbabwe has not yet volunteered to undergo a peer review but should it choose to do so in future, it will represent a unique opportunity for civil society to contribute in the shaping of the destination of their country. The process is well designed to reform governance because it presents an opportunity of interaction between all stakeholders. It should be noted that Zimbabwean civil society would have to safeguard against constraints that are usually faced by non-state actors in this initiative.

Kayee (2003) in Moyo (2000) exposes the following obstacles to civil society participation:

- There is inadequate information on civil society participation, which raises the concern as to whether government should define the role of civil society or the latter should shape their involvement based on the principles and guidelines of the APRM process.
- There are concerns on how civil society representation occurred and in most cases governments have been accused of choosing less critical ones.

- Where civil society was granted full access to review process, e.g. Ghana, there has been concern regarding the level of representation of the rural communities

There are, however, some scholars who argue that it is correct to have low key participation of civil society because in South Africa and Kenya, there were fears the CSOs in the peer review process ended up being co-opted by the government and thus silencing critical voices. Moyo (2006:17) indicates that, “The question arises as to what kind of partnership is envisaged by CSOs with government in the review process? Does partnership with government presuppose co-option?” Critics like Kayee (2003) have argued that this has been worsened by the poor communication and information flow from the APRM Secretariat. He then identifies four areas that can be exploited by civil society. According to Kayee (2003, in Moyo, 2006), the following areas can be exploited:

- During the first drafting of the national plan for self-assessment, civil society can offer their expertise.
- Civil society and political groupings could gather existing information and material and commission new studies, where applicable, in order to be able to make informed and constructive formal submissions to the APRM panel on issues they regard as being critical governance challenges.
- There is a need for a number of groups and individuals to lobby for a hearing during the country visit phase of the process.
- There is a need for the media to cover the whole process and report accurately as well as give informed analysis and keep the public informed on the important governance issues that may otherwise be ignored.

Moyo(2006) in his arguments for civil society participation in the APRM, highlights the following challenges facing the APRM:

- The need to promote participation of all persons, particularly the minority and vulnerable groups.

- The need for institutionalisation of popular participation so that the process promotes people-centred development.
- Ensuring consistency and co-ordination of national plans and procedures with international standards and obligations.
- The need to promote equality, transparency and accountability.
- Ensuring that the review process is outcome-oriented and focuses on the development of realistic national implementation strategy and plan.
- Ensuring sustained national interest in the review process and how the benefit of the process can be promoted in order for countries to remain engaged

Given the above opportunities, Zimbabwean CSOs have a duty of fitting into these to influence the peer review should the country volunteer to go through one. It must be noted that this will ensure that there is transparency in the whole process. Indeed, it fulfils the widely acclaimed principle by King (2004;25) that "democracy is an ideal of popular sovereignty, according to which legitimacy is ultimately assessed in terms of judgements of those governed". Indeed, says King (2004)

> Democratic legitimacy public deliberation is vital because the authoritative decisions imposed by governments demand justification to those burdened by authority and justification must appeal to evidence and arguments acceptable to reasonable citizens.

Zimbabweans, therefore, have an opportunity to influence good governance in the country through popularisation of public participation in the important African Union Policy initiatives like APRM.

4.6.4 Pan African Parliament

According to the AU strategic plan, the Pan African Parliament (PAP) offers another vital avenue for civil society participation in governance of Africa .PAP was established in March 2004 through Articles 5 and 7 of the Constitutive Act and the protocol to the Treaty Establishing the AEC and relating to the PAP. Article 7 of its founding charter speaks of the establishment of the Pan African

Parliament informed by the vision to provide a common platform for African peoples and their grassroots organisations to be more involved in discussion and decision-making on the problems and challenges facing the continent. It further mentions the promotion of democratic principles and popular participation as well as consolidation of democratic institutions and culture for sustainable democratic governance .Further to that, there is an indication that the establishment of PAP will ensure “effectively the full participation of the African peoples in the economic and integration of the continent”.

According to Mutasa (2006:17):

> PAP provides a basis for the integration of regional policy initiatives into national legislation that in effect gives the parliamentarians a critical role in the overall policy implementation. The PAP, like ECOSOCC, is expected to play a crucial role in protecting human rights, consolidating democratic institutions and popularising and promoting good governance.

He further argues that the parliament is expected to offer hope for a new era of transparency and accountability in African politics as opposition parties will be given official space in continental politics with opportunities to create alliance to exert pressure on autocratic governments.

In its objectives as outlined in Article 3 of the protocol PAP aims to

Facilitate the effective implementation of the policies and objectives of the OAU/AEC and ultimately of the African Union.

- To promote principles of human rights and democracy in Africa.
- Encourage good governance, transparency and accountability in member states.
- To familiarise the people of Africa with the objectives and policies aimed at integrating the African continent within the framework of the establishment of the Union.
- To promote peace, security and stability.
- To contribute to a more prosperous future for the people of Africa by promoting collective self-reliance and economic recovery.
- To facilitate co-operation and development in Africa.

- To strengthen continental solidarity and build a sense of common destiny among the people of Africa.
- To facilitate co-operation among Regional Economic Communities and their parliament forums.

However, critics like Moyo (2006) argue that although the protocol of PAP refers to the participation of African peoples, there is no mention of the term “civil society” in the whole document and, further to that, there is no indication of how civil society will participate. He further argues that since Article 3 says the parliament will have consultative and advisory powers, it only gives it the function and status similar to that of ECOSOCC. This inevitably limits the space for participation of Zimbabwean civil society. The PAP, however, speaks of establishment of committees to assist in the discharge of its duties. These could provide the opportunity for participation of Zimbabwean civil society. According to the Zimbabwean ECOSOCC chapter (2006) unpublished Report ,the committees are

- The Committee on Monetary and Financial Affairs
- The Committee on Rural Economy, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment
- e Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration Matters
- The Committee on Co-operation, International Relations and Conflict Resolutions
- The Committee on Transport, Industry, Communications, Energy, Science and Technology
- The Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs
- The Committee on Education, Culture, Tourism and Human Resources
- The Committee on Gender, Family, Youth and People with Disabilities
- The Committee on Justice and Human Rights
- The Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline

Civil society organisations from Zimbabwe can play a big role in these committees by influencing the crafting of policy in a manner that will suit the interest of their constituency. It is the burden of this research to unravel the avenues, opportunities and constraints for Zimbabwean civil society

participation in such policy organs of the PAP and other policy formulation organs of the AU.

The committees are said to have started establishing links with like-minded organisations or parliaments in the world in line with Article 18 of the protocol which stipulates that:

> The Pan African Parliament shall work in close co-operation with the parliaments of the Regional Economic Communities and the National parliament or other deliberative organs of member of states. To this effect, the Pan African Parliament may, in accordance with its Rules of Procedure, convene annual consultative fora with parliaments of the Regional Economic Communities and the National Parliament or other deliberative organs to discuss matters of common interest.

Moyo (2006), in his analysis of this protocol, argues, "Why not do the same with civil society organisations?" He says it is thus not surprising that the entire Annual Report of PAP (2004-5) mentions civil society only once. To him the emerging fact is that the focus of PAP seems to be more inclined towards creating linkages with other parliamentary organisations across the world, with very little with the peoples of Africa.

There are other spaces provided for participation of civil society in the protocol, e.g. that "proceedings of the parliament shall be open to the public" (Article 4). Moyo (2006) argues that access is very important but affordability is also another question to be addressed. What mechanisms are in place to ensure that even those from remotest areas of Africa can access the Pan African Parliament?

In order to address these issues and ensure that a broad-based section of the African people are represented in the PAP policy formulation, its Strategic Plan (2006-2010) the AU asserts the following:

> The PAP represents the interests of various citizens, groups and social movements. For the role of representation to be effective, PAP will be required to collect and debate people's needs, concerns and anxieties and fears as well as to address them in the spirit and leadership of an institution

> that seeks to promote co-operation, understanding and solidarity among the people of Africa. Moreover, the effective ownership of the AU objectives, policies and programmes squarely rests on how best citizens' voices will be listened to and heeded. This in turn will depend on the quality of information flows, parliament and creating the capacity of the PAP to respond imaginatively to the voices of the people of Africa.

This is in line with the spirit deliberative democracy which desires strengthening of public sphere through citizens' participation.

The PAP's desire for people-centred participation in policy-making is buttressed by its declaration in the Strategic Plan when it declares:

> PAP seeks to build a people's parliament that is responsive to the need of all people of Africa. PAP must ensure that there is full participation of the African people in parliamentary activities. These include PAP visits, regional seminars and workshops which will sensitise citizens about the principles, policies and developmental programmes as well as the discussion on the importance of regional co-operation and integration. Moreover, PAP outreach activities must facilitate the exchange of views with stakeholders on the progress made, obstacles encountered and to participate in recommending the way forward. By doing so, PAP, Regional Parliaments, National Parliaments and civil society organisations must deepen their understanding of the principles of subsidiary, harmonisation of policies and the availability of mechanisms for promoting regional co-operation and integration.

It is therefore the burden of this research to unravel how that given these spaces for civil society participation in PAP, how far has the Zimbabwean CSOs managed to utilise this space in order to influence the policy formulation at the continental body. The parliaments, according to Ginwala (2003):

> must see themselves as both the custodians and promoters of democratic values and assume responsibilities for consolidating democracy. They provide the interface between the executive and civil society for interaction with executive on an ongoing basis. Equally and on the same basis they must interact with civil society and be informed by it.

It is in this spirit that this research seeks to identify opportunities and constraints for Zimbabwean civil society organisations in the policy making organs of the African Union

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter focused on literature that informs the current study. The literature is important in modern governance to ensure meaningful and active participation of citizens in policy formulation. The African Union is, however, shown as an institution that has limited spaces for participation of African peoples in its policy initiatives. This, by extension, shows that there are barriers to influencing AU policy decisions by Zimbabwean CSOs due to the limited spaces.

Chapter 5: Interpretation and Analysis of Data

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an in-depth interpretation and analysis of data derived from a qualitative enquiry conducted on twenty senior managers of twenty civil society organisations operating in the area of promoting democracy and good governance in Zimbabwe. The results show a very interesting and informative discovery on the operations of Zimbabwean CSOs and inter-governmental institutions of the African Union. This chapter thus makes an interpretive analysis of the same with a view to deriving conclusions that will avail the opportunities and constraints for Zimbabwean civil society the in their quest to participate in the shaping of the AU policy programmes. The interpretation below is derived from responses to the questions fielded from the questionnaire attached in this report as Appendix 1.

5.2 Background

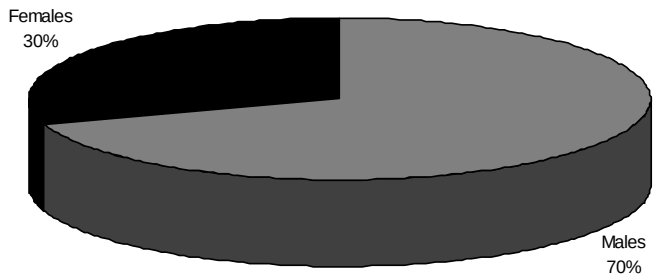
The enquiry first sought to determine some personal information about the respondents. This was viewed as important in that one's personal background, history and, sometimes, gender affects their outlook and interpretation of certain situations. This is also true of the level of education attained by the respondents. Usually the higher the level of education attained, the easier one views and interprets situations to do with continental and global issues. This, however, is not to place a blanket dismissal of the less educated on their understanding, of lack of it, of global issues. It is only to state the obvious.

As already alluded to in the background statement, interviews were conducted on 20 senior personnel of 20 CSOs dealing with issues of democracy and good governance. Of the 20 personnel, 14 were male while six were female. This represented 70% and 30% males and females respectively. While this gender discrepancy may be viewed as common in Zimbabwean everyday reality of gender issues, it cannot go without mentioning that it represents the

reality of a patriarchal society. Over the years, especially in rural Zimbabwe, there has been a systematic discrimination of the girl child in education development. While this trend has changed of late, it had a ravaging effect on the number of females who made it to tertiary level. This, by extension, inevitably continues to affect the number of women in senior management due to skills shortage amongst them.

The ages of the respondents were between 31 and 50.The majority, some 65% were in the category of 31-40 while only 35% were in the age range 41-50.All of them had however attained some tertiary level of education reinforcing an important issue that Zimbabwe has invested heavily in the education sector. While it is common in most African countries in Africa to have senior manager having lesser qualifications, it is rare to have this happening in Zimbabwe due to abundance of well educated and skilled labour. It goes without saying that the Zimbabwean investments in the education sector are one of the best in Africa. The age range of the respondents, coupled with their high levels of education and high positions at work made a very good reservoir to provide well informed and useful.

Figure 5.1: Gender Representation



5.3 Organisational Information

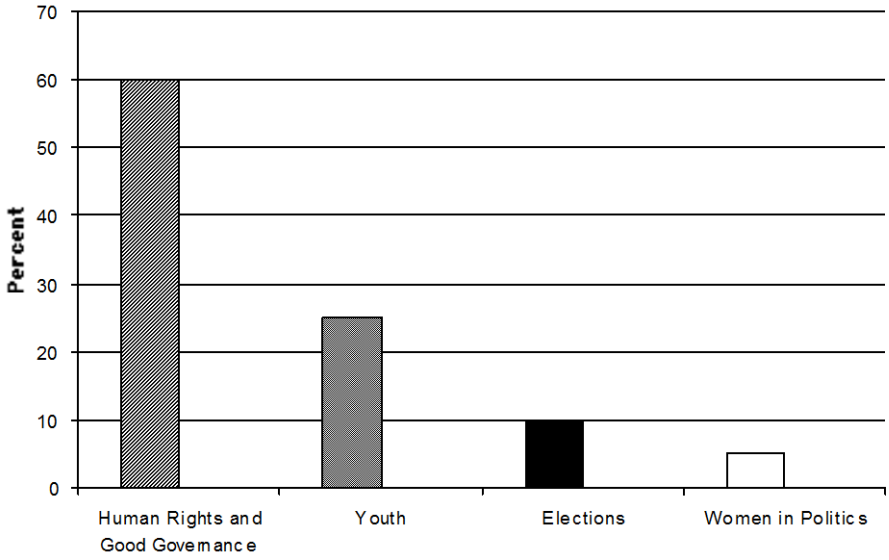
The enquiry also solicited organisational information. This was important for the exercise because organisational strength and development is important in determining its level of interaction and influence on policy developments. Organisations that are well-developed and have a skilled human resource tend to have more influence on policy issues at national and global level. The information sought also helped to understand and categorise the organisations by line of programming, geographic area of operation as well as the number of years in operation.

5.3.1 Programme Activities

Of the 20 organisations subjected to the enquiry, 60% were mainly involved in human rights and good governance issues, 25% in youth participation in governance, 10% in election issues, while 5% specifically dealt with issues of women participation in politics. Those that deal with issues of human rights and good governance are involved in providing space for citizens to make informed discussions on the governance of the country. The spaces they provide are important given the background of draconian legislation in the country. These organisations also lobby for promotion of human rights issues in an environment where the government is known for violation of the human rights. Those that deal with youths participation in governance are geared towards providing space for the youths to have a meaningful influence on the way the country is governed .They do this through youth leadership programmes and lobby campaigns to ensure that the youths have a serious say in the governance of the country. These organisations also encourage and assist young political activists who want to get into political office by raising resources and campaign materials. The ones involved in elections are a watch dog on the implementation of the electoral laws, they have also been very influential in the lobby for change of electoral laws from the previous one that were unfair to the current ones that are accommodative. They are also involved in the monitoring of elections. The ones dealing with women

participation in elections are out to ensure that spaces are created for women to also have a contest for public political positions. This selection indicates a deliberate bias by the researcher to deal specifically with organisations whose brand foci is democratisation and opening avenues for citizens' participation in governance. These are organisations that are aimed at opening the public space in line with the concept of deliberative democracy.

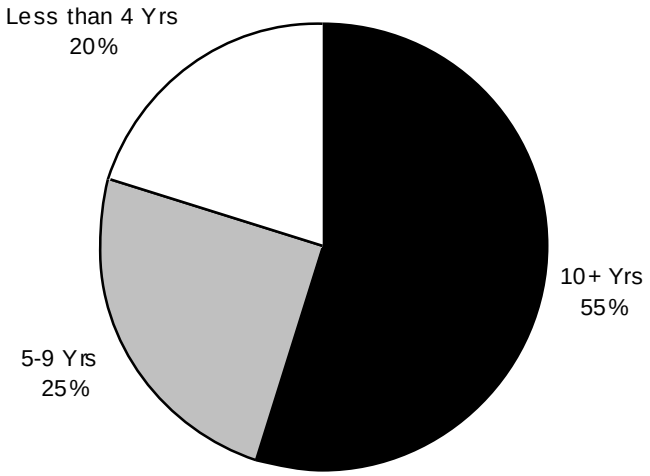
Figure 5.2: Programme Activities



5.3.2 Number of Years in Operation

The organisations scrutinised have been in existence for some time. More than half (55%) have been in existence for above 10 years. A quarter of these have been in existence for over five years while the rest have been there for less than four years. This is well represented in Figure 5.3 below. These organisations represent an important sample because they are mature and well established and as such expected to have vibrant programs that go beyond their communities. These institutions are well and best placed to interact and influence polices not only at national or continental level but also at national level. This is premised on the assumption that the longer the organisation is in existence the more it perfects its programming and administrative ability to deal with issues that go beyond their normal communities of operation.

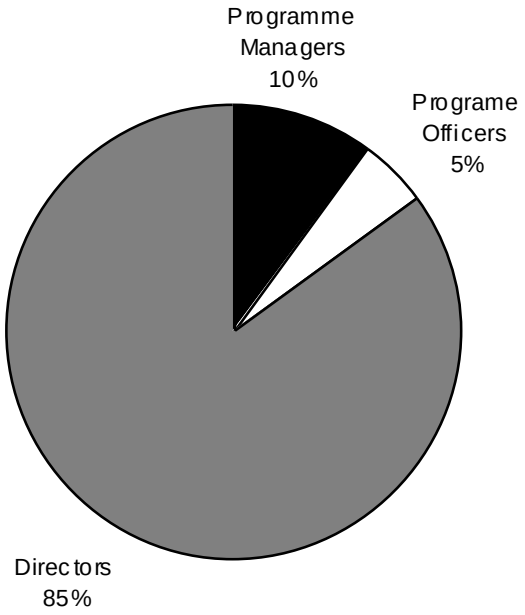
Figure 5.3: Years in Operation



5.3.3 Position in Organisation

The interviews were conducted on well-placed and influential figures of the selected organisations. This was important as the respondents had to be articulate and well-informed on the operations and systems of the organisation. This approach ensured that the information obtained was a good basis for the interpretation of the organisation's position on the issues under enquiry. Of the 20 interviewed, 85% were Directors, 10% Programme Managers while only 5% were Programme Officers. It was the desire of the researcher to have a 100% return rate from the most senior people in the organisations, but this was not to be the case as, in some of the organisations, the, most senior personnel were not available at that particular time. Figure 5.4 below represents the allocation of positions of respondents by posts. What is also very important about these respondents is that they have been at these organisations for a long time. For example, of the 20 interviewed, 13 (65%) had been with the organisations for over five years while others have been there for over three years.

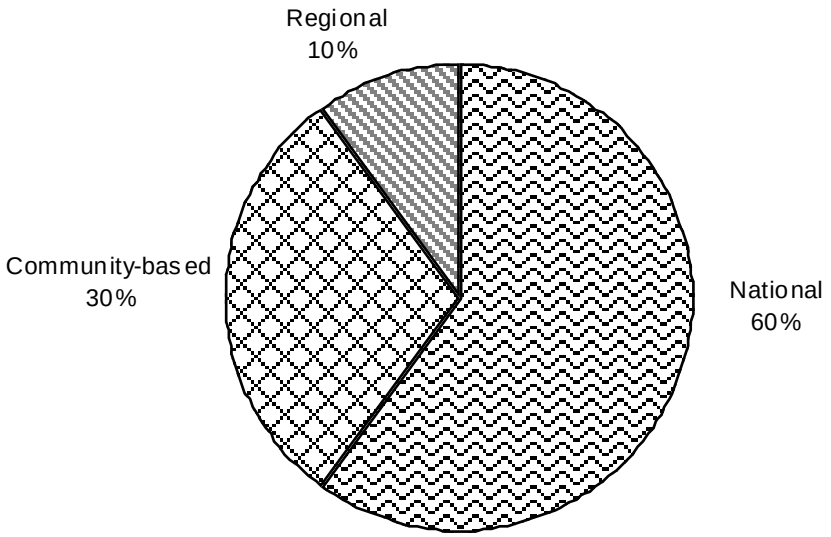
Figure 5.4: Position in Organisation



5.3.4 Geographic area of operation

As shown in Figure 5.5, the organisations interviewed had a vast geographic area of operation. For instance, 60% operated nationally, 30% communally while only 10% were regionally based. This is an important programming geographic spread in that the views obtained will be a representation a huge a population of diversity.

Figure 5.5: Geographical Area of Operation



5.4 Institutional spaces for participation

Of the 20 organisations interviewed, 75% indicated that there were some institutional mechanisms for participation of Zimbabwean CSOs in the AU policy initiatives while 25% (five) said they were not aware of any (see Figure 5.6). Of the 75% who said they knew about the existence, 55% indicated that they knew NEPAD as an institutional structure provided for the participation of CSOs in the programme initiatives of the continent. This can be attributed to the fact that a Zimbabwe NEPAD Chapter has been established and has held

some meetings to try and co-ordinate the CSOs' participation in the AU policy initiatives. To that end, a number of Zimbabwean CSOs have a least heard of the existence as well as functions of NEPAD, even though very few of them have actively been involved. Very few knew of the existence of ECOSOCC as the space provided for CSOs' participation, a very disturbing phenomenon in that it is the official platform for CSOs to interface with the inter-governmental initiatives .Further to this, a Zimbabwean chapter of ECOSOC was launched in 2006, yet so few organisations know it as an official channel for CSOs' participation in the AU policy agenda. Another 20% knew of APRM as providing the necessary space for CSOs participation. This is understandable given the fact that Zimbabwe has not volunteered to undergo a peer review. This figure is, however, encouraging in that it shows interest in the APRM process and, as such, should Zimbabwe volunteer to under go one, we are likely to see some active and useful involvement of civil society. Another disturbing phenomenon was that only five percent knew of the PAP as an avenue for CSOs expansion of their influence on the AU policy direction. Parliaments, whether national or continental, must work closely with citizens. They are supposed to discuss issues that include input from citizens, but the PAP is a problematic one in that it seems to be divorced from the populace, hence the ignorance by many CSOs about its existence.

Figure 5.6 : Awareness of Institutional Spaces for CSOs Participation

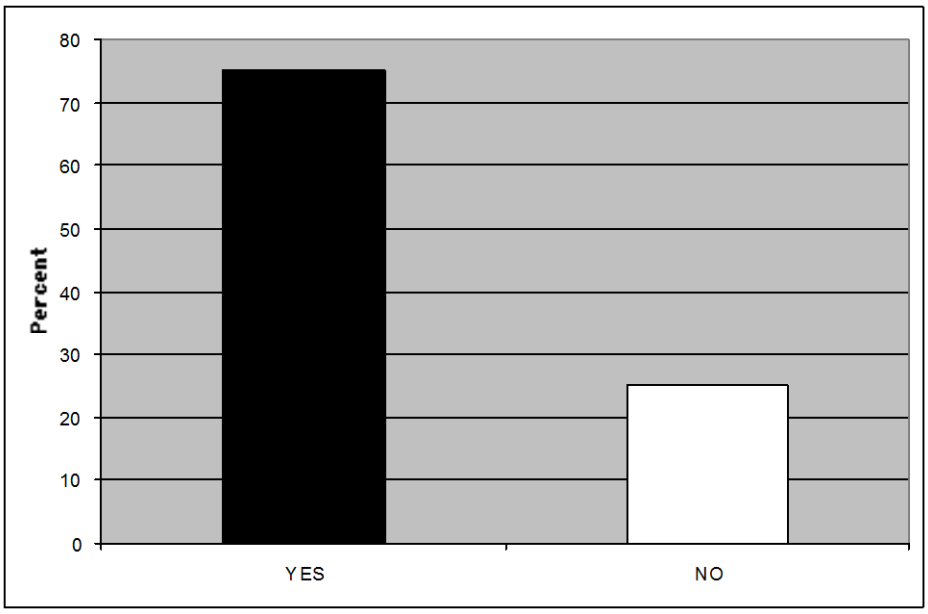
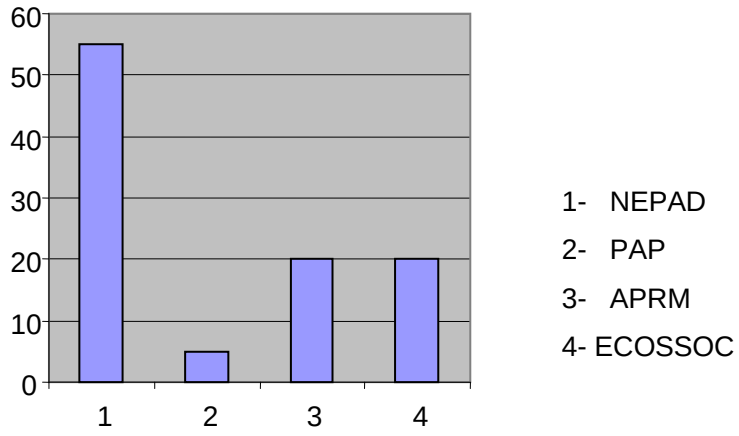


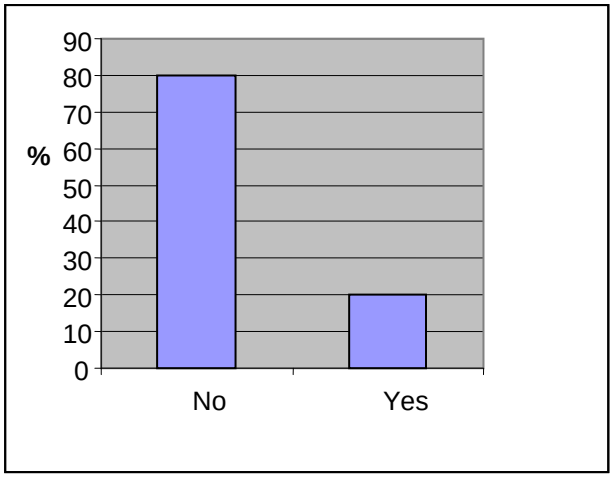
Figure 5.7: Spaces for Participation



5.4.1 Framework for collective engagement

Most of the respondents indicated that there is no co-ordinated national CSOs movement for effective engagement in the African Union policy agenda. This can be attributed to individual approach to programming by most CSOs in the country. A number of CSOs have a “do-it-alone syndrome" and this affects any form of possible co-operation when it comes to international affairs. The other reason for this is the weak link by the Zimbabwean ECOSSOC chapter, which, besides being some form of an elitist club of CSOs, is also virtually derelict and dysfunctional. It is also significant to note that some of the CSOs attend the functions of the AU as nothing but tourists attending pre-summit demonstrations rather than contributing to the policy outlook of the AU. The 20% who indicated knowledge of the co-ordinated national network were not even able to explain how it functions. If anything, they were referring to a "grouping" that goes as an unorganised "gang” to demonstrate during the heads of government summits”. The failure by the Zimbabwean chapter of ECOSOCC to rein together the national CSOs into a single effective voice of has inevitably affected the influence of Zimbabwean CSOs in the African state of affairs. Figure 5.8 below represents percentage points of people who indicated knowledge of a co-ordinated network against those who did not.

Figure 5.8: Framework for collective engagement



5.4.2 Engagement between the AU organs and CSOs

70% (14) of the 20 respondents indicated that there is no interaction between them and the AU while six said there was. However, upon further enquiry, it emerged that the group that said there is interaction between them and the AU, mainly referred to the AU-CSOs pre-summit conferences. This interaction is, however, not effective as it is only at protest level and does not constitute a serious engagement that directs policy. This, again, is a cause for concern as it shows glaring weaknesses of ECOSOCC as an organ that provides space for CSOs interface with the AU .The creation of the Zimbabwean chapter of ECOSOCC was supposed to be the link in promoting the participation of CSOs in the governance of the continent but the Zimbabwean situation tells a different tale as the chapter does little, if any, to link the CSOs to the AU policy programmes.

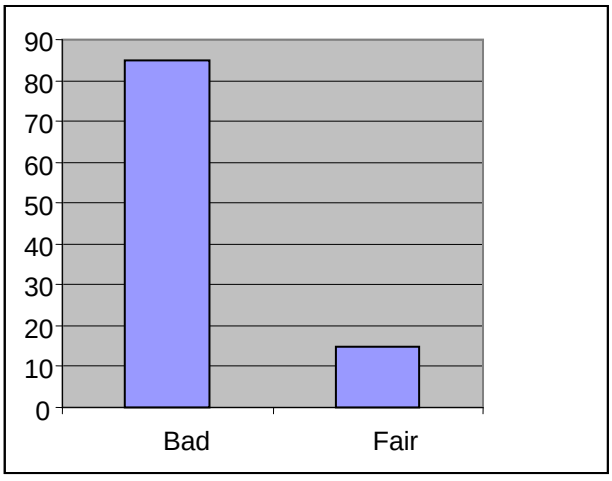
The six (30%) that made indications about interaction said the relationship was limiting because their role was of an advisory nature and did not really shape the policy developments of the African Union. This is fairly understandable because the interaction they make is only through the AU CSOs pre-summit conferences and has little, at all, to do with the vital organs of the AU. The respondents had a bit of information about ECOSOCC because they had attended the Zimbabwe launch, but they did not know much

about how to interface through its structures. It also emerged that they had no knowledge of such structures like the PRC and the Commission, among others. To that end, they said this interaction is very limiting for policy development because it is outside the arena of influential organs. In their admission, they said their interaction with AU had very little influence on the policy development dynamics of the African Union.

5.4.3 Government and CSOs relationship

Seventeen of the twenty respondents (85%) indicated that the relationship between the CSOs and the government of Zimbabwe was bad as the two institutions viewed each other with suspicion (see Figure 5.9). The government, it was said, views the CSOs movement as an extension of the opposition political front working in cohort with the opposition Movement For Democratic Change (MDC) to effect what they term “illegal regime change”. The government of Zimbabwe, under siege from the domestic and international communities due to its unpopular and undemocratic policies, has turned its fingers on anyone opposed to its views.

Figure 5.9: CSOs government relations



CSOs, who are at the forefront for demanding space for citizens participation in governance, have become targets of government’s vitriol. In some instances, the state has accused the CSOs of being the recipients of foreign funding that is then channelled to the MDC. Zimbabwean legislation governing

the operation of political parties prohibits foreign funding of political parties. On the other hand, CSOs view the government as being undemocratic, closing all spaces and avenues for citizens' participation in policy-decisions that affect their lives. They argue that all they are fighting for is to facilitate active and meaningful participation of citizens in the way they are governed.

Each of the two groups holds their views so strongly that it makes it almost too impossible for them to work meaningfully as development partners. Some (15%), however, indicated that, as far as they knew the relations between the government and CSOs were fair, as they claimed knowledge of some collaborative work between the two during some emergencies .They singled out the CSOs and government collaboration in dealing with national disasters, like the cholera pandemic and cyclone Elaine, which hit the country in 2003. However this kind of forced collaboration, induced by emergencies, cannot be used as a measure of sustainable co-operation.

5.4.4 AU policy stages needing CSO attention

The enquiry further sought to understand which of the policy stages were the most vital and, as such, seeking the greatest attention from the CSOs. The stages that were selected were the policy development stage, policy implementation and policy evaluation stages. A sizeable number (85%) of the respondents indicated that they viewed all stages as very important, 10% said the policy implementation stage was the most vital, while 5% indicated that it was the policy evaluation stage.

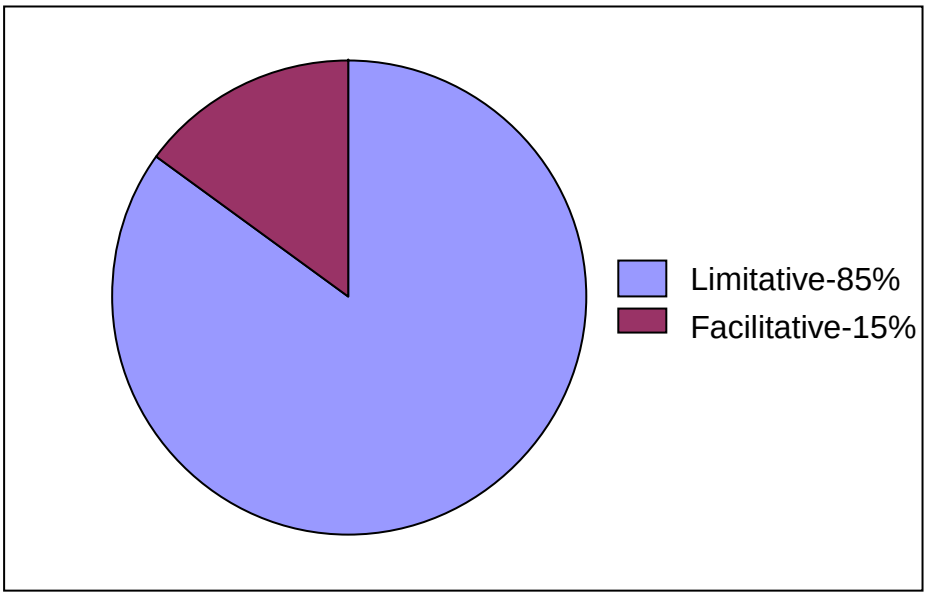
The 85% who identified the policy development stage as the most vital, argued that it was important to influence policies from the time they are developed. This way, they argued, it is possible to influence the whole content of the policies. They further argued that the stage on policy formulation provides a framework for the operationalisation of the policies and, as such, it is important to have serious influence on this stage. Having worked on the same, they argued that it was important to have influence on the implementation of polices. This is vital because a grand policy plan can be developed, only to be destroyed due to poor implementation. The

implementation of polices, they argue, is very important be cause it is the period when the people's aspirations as represented in the policy framework are translated to practical action. It is also vital to ensure that there is active participation of citizens in the policy monitoring and evaluation stage because it is at the stage that measurements are done on the actual success of the policy initiative. However, there was 10% who felt it was the policy implementation that was the single most important stage, while some 5% felt the evaluation stage was the single most crucial stage. The outcome of this enquiry where some 85% ably identified all stages as crucial is important for the Zimbabwean CSOs in that it should teach them that to influence polices at the AU, there is need to be active at all stages of the process. It is, however, important to note that despite 85% ably identifying all stages as vital; they were unable to identify specific spaces for CSOs participation in each of the stages.

5.5 Nature of relationships

As shown in Figure 5.10, 85% indicated that they viewed this relationship as limitative for effective engagement in the AU policy organs. Three (15%) of the respondents said it was facilitative because where there was collaboration with the government, it was easy to have the views transmitted to the influential organs of the AU. The group that viewed the relationship as limitative (85%) argued that the fact that the AU is established as an inter-state organ makes it problematic for Zimbabwean CSOs to have effective influence on its policy organs. The AU works through the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of various states and CSOs are expected to channel their views through their respective ministries. In countries like Zimbabwe, where there is a cat-and-mouse relationship, this is difficult to attain as there is no platform between the government and the CSOs collaboration. The net result is that the relationship vastly limits the Zimbabwean CSOs' contribution to the AU policy affairs.

Figure 5.10: Nature of Relations: Limitative or facilitative



5.5.1 Mechanisms for strengthening relations

Thirteen (65%) of the 20 CSOs interviewed indicated that the allegations that a number of CSOs were aligned to the opposition was true and there is a need for the CSOs to remain neutral .They said CSOs have to understand that they are there to assist government and not replace it and, as such, they should not work too closely to forces that are working to replace it. Five (25%) respondents indicated that the Government and CSOs must start some collaborative work in a number of areas to boost relations .They said this work has to be well-planned and not just during emergencies. Two (10%) respondents indicated the need for a series of meetings between CSOs and Foreign Affairs Ministries to decide on collective approaches to contributions to the AU policy programmes. See Figure 5.11.

These responses are important in that they ably identify that collaboration between the government and CSOs is vital for development of an engagement framework that will facilitate the latter's influence of the AU policy initiatives (see Figure 5.12). What came out in this enquiry is that there is a need for CSOs to strengthen their role as the watchdogs of the citizens and not align

themselves with opposition political parties. They have to be neutral in their conduct of business as this will allow for good collaboration with government. This way, they can make their representations into the continental bodies through the official and acceptable organs.

Figure 5.11: How to improve relations

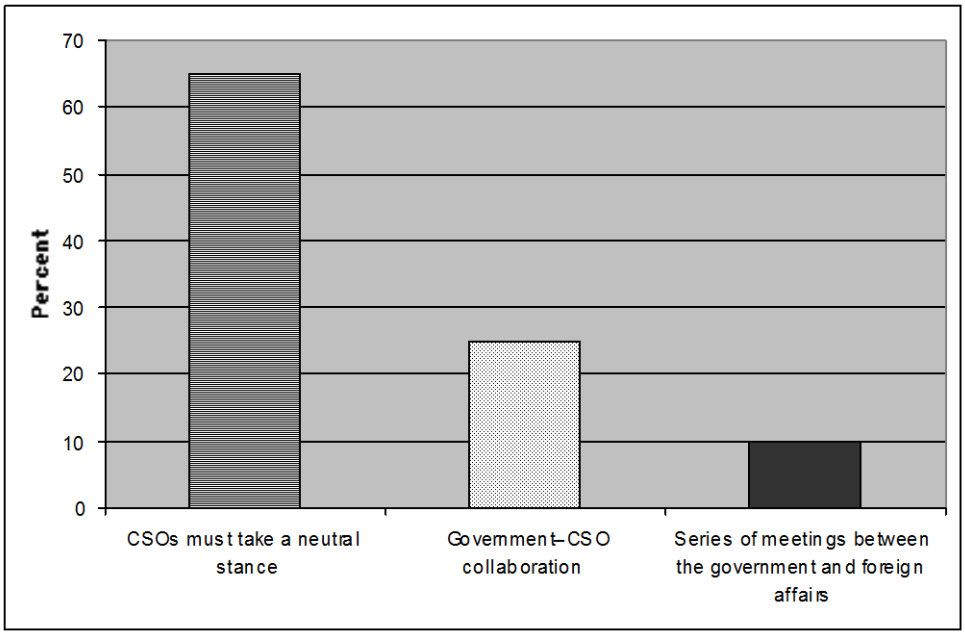
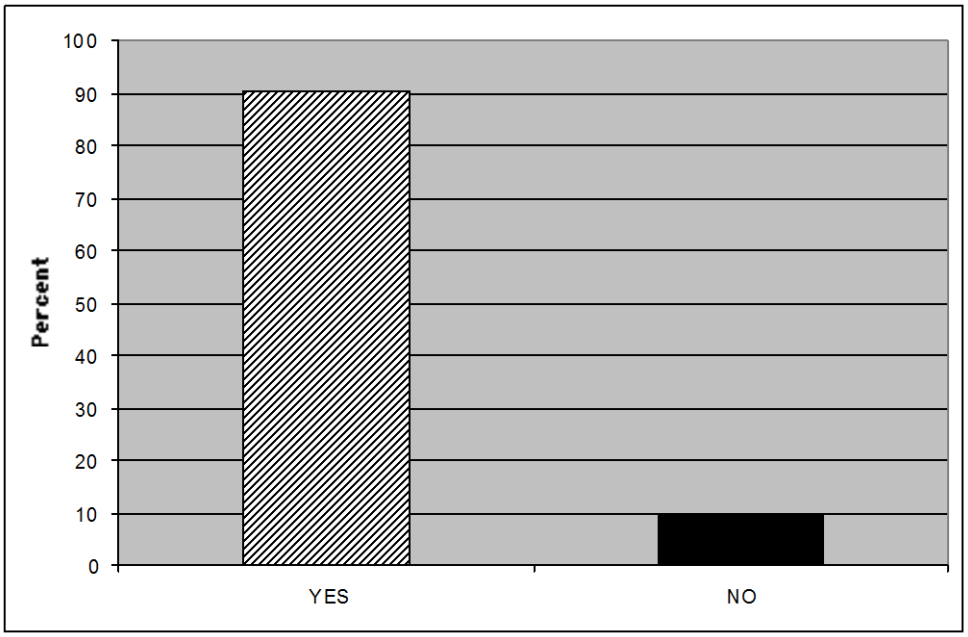


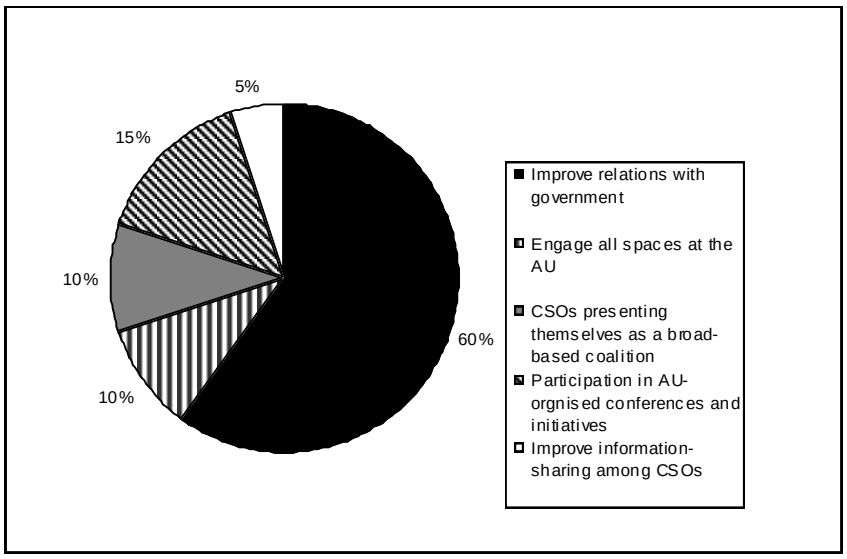
Figure 5.12: Collaborative approach



5.5.2 How CSOs can strengthen AU policies

Twelve (60%) of the respondents submitted that there is a need for improving relations with government so as to influence the national foreign policy, while also contributing to inputs on regional and international bodies. They indicated that the establishment of the AU as an inter-state organ makes it inevitable for the CSOs to improve relations with the government, if they are to make a meaningful impact in their attempts to influence polices at AU. Two (10%) of the respondents indicated that meaningful contribution can only be achieved if CSOs engage at other critical organs of the AU, e.g. the Commission, and not only at the level of the provided spaces like ECOSOCC. They said ECOSOCC was not properly coordinated to effectively assist in policy formulation. Another 10% said this can be achieved if the institutions become part of a broad-based coalition that can speak with one voice. This approach can assist the organisations to be taken more seriously, unlike when they operate individually. Three (15%) of the respondents indicated that this was attainable if they actively participated in the AU-initiated conferences and initiatives like NEPAD, APRM and ECOSOCC, among others. Only one (10%) of the respondents mentioned that this can be done through improving information-sharing with organisations that have potential to contribute but do not have the necessary resources and exposure, is necessary for attainment of this goal. Figure 5.13 below represents percentages of how respondents think CSOs can meaningfully contribute to the AU on international affairs.

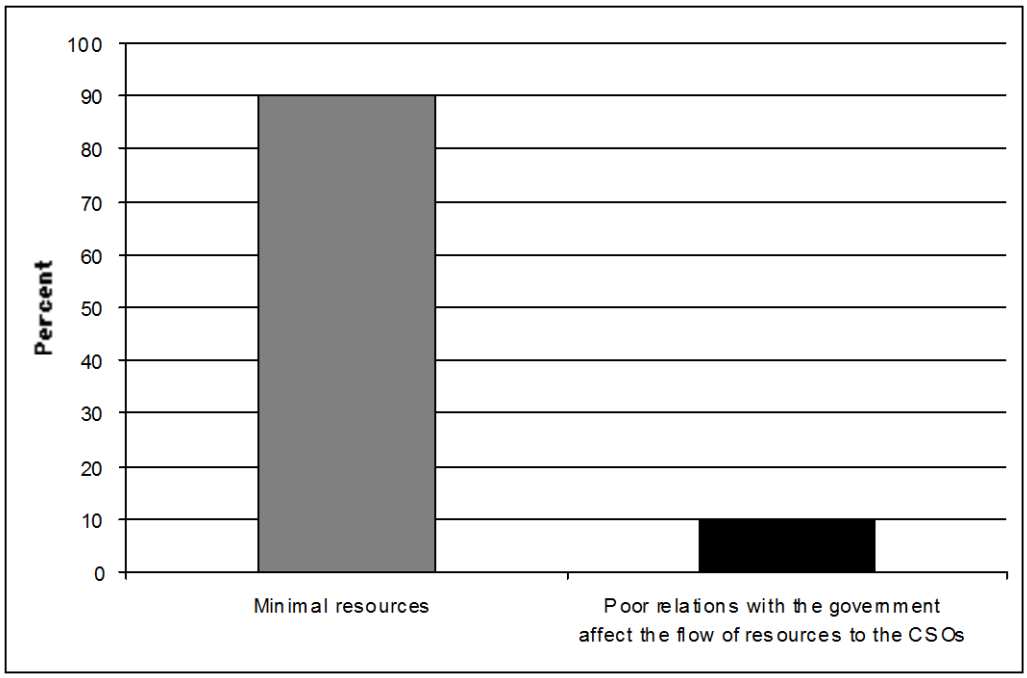
Figure 5.13: Ways of contribution to AU



5.5.3 Adequate resources

Eighteen (90%) of the respondents indicated that there were minimal resources, mainly because of the unstable economic environment. Most indicated that while they got funding from external partners, the obtaining environment vastly affected their operations. They indicated that banking regulations forced them to forcibly convert their donor funds to Zimbabwean dollars at uncompetitive rates. In some instances, they claimed, the government forcibly liquidated funds in their foreign currency accounts without consultations. This inevitably affected their operations as planning for programming became a nightmare. Two (10%) of the respondents said poor relations between government and CSOs also affect the inflow of resources for CSOs because in other countries, where relations are good, the government actually assists the CSOs with some resources to engage in the AU policy organs.

Figure 5.14: Resource Base

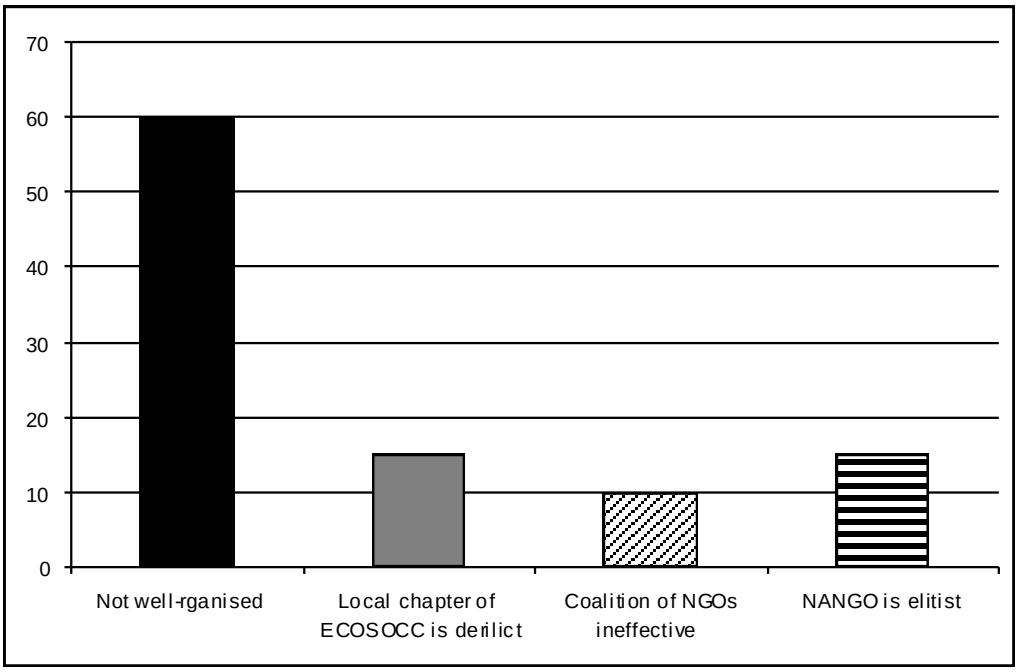


5.5.4 Structures for effective networking

Asked on how to improve the structures for effective networking 12 (60%) of the respondents said there is no well-organised CSOs structure, while three

(15%) said the national chapter of ECOSOCC is derelict and was not helpful in promoting networking by the CSOs. The same was said by two (10%) respondents who said the national coalition of NGOs is seriously ineffective and heavily compromised to assist in proper co-ordination of CSOs. Three (15%) of the respondents said the National Association of Non-governmental Organisations (NANGO) network can be best described as elitist as it seems to ignore the interests of community-based institutions. This properly explains the challenges of the CSOs to influence policies at AU because the problems presented by the militancy of the government against CSOs require a well co-ordinated approach if they are to make any impact in policy-making.

Figure 5.15: Structures for effective networking

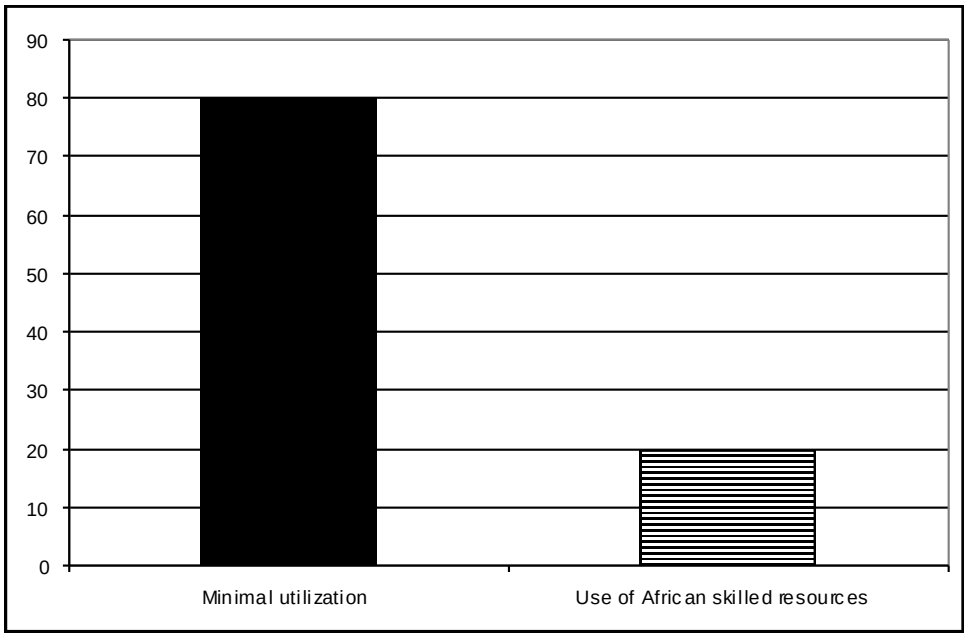


5.5.5 Human resources

Sixteen (80%) of the respondents indicated that there is minimal utilisation of the human resources (HR) in influencing the AU policy framework because there is little involvement of the same in the think-tank. Four (20%) said they see the utilisation of the skilled labour force through their use in the AU commissions. To that end, recommendations were made for the CSOs and

AU to tap the African human resource into various think-tank organs of the AU programmes. This should also involve the African skilled labour force in the Diaspora in different initiatives and programmes of the AU. There is also a need to engage the skilled African manpower as consultants in AU programmes.

Figure 5.16 : Skilled human resource utilisation



5.5.6 The major constraints

Fourteen of the respondents said the structuring of the AU architecture, in which it acts as an inter-state organisation, restricts the CSOs contributions on its policy initiatives. Two indicated that the bad blood between Zimbabwean CSOs and the government affects, in a big way, and destroys the possibility of CSOs to effectively influence the Foreign Affairs Ministry's contributions to international affairs. One respondent said the AU organs do not publish their activities and spaces effectively to allow for active participation by CSOs. Three of the respondents submitted that the lack of a consolidated strong national network to lobby and approach African Union Affairs with one voice affects the effectiveness of the CSOs to influence policies a the AU.

The overwhelming confirmation is that the establishment of the AU as an inter-state organ grossly restricts the participation of CSOs in policy-making. This forces the CSOs to find alternative routes. The existence of strained relations between the government and CSOs is not helping the situation either. It is, thus, urgent for a compromise in relations if they are to effectively contribute in AU policy-making. It is also important that given the clear blockade, the alternative routes for engagement should include, but not limited to, the ECOSOCC and the Commission. There is also a need for CSOs to ensure that they develop themselves into a well co-ordinated powerful bloc to lobby for space.

5.5.7 The major opportunities

Seventeen submitted that the creation of ECOSOCC as a body to specifically deal with CSOs issues presents an opportunity for Zimbabwean CSOs. Three indicated that the recent attempts by the PAP to create a CSOs-AU interface facility is also a major opportunity for Zimbabwean CSOs. The establishment of an all-inclusive government in Zimbabwe presents a grand opportunity for mending of relations between the CSOs and the government. Availability of other organs for engagement in the AU structures was also singled out as a major opportunity for CSOs.

The above responses clearly indicate that there are strong opportunities for Zimbabwean CSOs to improve their chances of influencing the policy outlook of the AU. This can be done through organs like ECOSOCC and PAP. There is, however, a need for strengthening of the local chapter of ECOSOCC if it is to be effective. The chapter also has to vigorously publicise its activities and reach out to community-based organisations as well. The chapter is currently viewed as an elitist club. Another opportunity provided for the CSOs is the establishment of an all-inclusive government which has seen big strides being made towards democratisation. The new government is willing to engage with the citizens and the CSOs must seize the opportunity to establish a new friendly relationship with the government. This is the single most important opportunity in that the CSOs will finally be able to work with the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs in providing some policy contributions for the AU .These are likely to get more attention that those coming through the weaker structures.

5.6 Conclusion

The chapter dealt at length with interpretation and analysis of responses from a number of selected CSOs dealing with issues of governance. As already discussed in the chapter, the study revealed glaring weaknesses in the way the African Union IGI are designed when it comes to facilitation of Zimbabwean CSOs' participation in the AU policy initiatives. The study also revealed important findings on how negative Zimbabwean CSOs and government relations have impacted on the ability of the CSOs to effectively influence the AU policy agenda. It reaches important conclusions that lack of democratic governance in Zimbabwe greatly affects the way the CSOs can influence policy at continental level.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings, recommendations and conclusions that are derived from the outcomes of the analysis and interpretation of primary and secondary data derived from the qualitative research. The researcher set out to make an enquiry on the issues affecting the meaningful participation of Zimbabwean CSOs in influencing the AU policy initiatives. This was meant to a make determination on how the CSOs can make alternative strategies for engagement given the blockage arising from the creation of the AU as an inter state organ. The research was done using a qualitative method and saw twenty civil society organisations managers being interviewed using a questionnaire. The interviews were done face to face by the researcher .The research also used important statutes from the AU for strengthening of the research. The data collected showed that there is a need for the CSOs to bridge the gap and work with government if they are to be effective in influencing the AU policy outlook. In the absence of this, the data shows that the CSOs must direct their engagement through spaces provided like ECOSOCC but these spaces also have to be strengthened and they are currently weak.

6.2 Key Findings

The analysis of data provided from research presents some important insights that are very useful in the understanding of the operations of the African Union. According to conclusions reached in a similar study commissioned by the Southern Africa Trust in 2006, the following conclusion was reached

> Although participating, stakeholder involvement, empowerment and ownership are concepts that have gained popularity in Africa, especially when it relates to the relationship between the governed and governors, there is a danger that they become catchwords. Deliberate efforts have to be made to achieve a common understanding of the vision, philosophy and

strategies of Africa and its development priorities. Mutual trust is also critical if the AU-people partnership is to be genuine .There is need to strengthen information and communication channels between AU headquarters and the CSOs.

The conclusions derived from this research also point to a need for a strengthening of engagement mechanisms between Zimbabwean CSOs and IGI of the AU if meaningful citizen participation is to be achieved. The major findings derived from this study are outlined in the following paragraphs.

Most of employees in the Zimbabwean civil society movement are well-educated with degree qualifications. The majority (70%) are males. They are within the middle-age and have good understanding of international affairs. Their high level of education, together with their age, impacted positively on the research as they were able to understand and interpret the research questions without much problem. This contributed to a 100% questionnaire return rate .This impressive high return rate came with exceptionally high and informative quality of responses. The conclusion derived from this is that skilled personnel are very productive and useful in conceptualisation of issues, an ingredient that is important for organisational growth.

The study revealed that some Zimbabwean CSOs have some knowledge and ideas about the existence of institutional mechanisms for CSOs' participation in the AU architecture. However, what they term "mechanisms" are non-productive pre-AU conferences summits which merely engage in demonstrations and have no impact or influence on the AU policy direction. What emerges is that there is minimal popularisation of spaces for active citizens' engagement with the AU structures.

It emerges form the study that ECOSOCC, which is the official statutory body for CSOs' participation in the AU policy structures, is just a "latent giant waiting to be discovered". It turned out from the study the Zimbabwean chapter of ECOSOCC, which is supposed to link the CSOs–AU interface is not only obsolete, but also completely derelict and dysfunctional. This inevitably affects the active participation of Zimbabwean CSOs in the African Union affairs.

Some CSOs were aware of the existence of AU inter-governmental initiatives like the PAP, APRM and NEPAD, but these initiatives seemed too far away from their reach there seems to be some structural difficulties which alienates Zimbabwean citizens from these initiatives. The conclusion reached here is that the African Union IGIs are some kind of elitist bodies that have a disconnection with the masses of Zimbabwe. For example, the PAP, which must, through national representatives, facilitate citizens' promotion in its programmes, has no structure for citizens' engagement. These kinds of relationships were found to be very limiting for effective collective continental policing.

The study further reveals that there is a strong desire by CSOs to participate in all the policy processes of the African Union. This represents a paradigm shift from the traditional norms where CSOs were interested in policy formulation only. This desire has, however, not been complemented by any solid practical engagement, as there are limited spaces and avenues in the African Union.

The study unravelled reasons for the strained relationship between the CSOs and the government of Zimbabwe. It was discovered that this strained relationship has a negative impact on the CSOs' ability to contribute to the AU policy outlook. The AU, being an inter-state organisation, engages with governments and has limited space for non-state actors. The CSOs are, therefore, supposed to engage through the government but in Zimbabwe, this is difficult because the government and CSOs are sworn enemies. The study ably identifies that the root cause for this animosity is lack of political trust between the two institutions. The government has a strong belief that the CSOs have deviated from their traditional role and have become an appendage of the opposition political parties. The CSOs have been lumped together with what the government terms "agents of regime change" and puppets of the West bent on destabilising and uprooting a democratically elected government. It emerged from the study that the government feels strongly about this conspiracy theory and, as such, would not co-operate with

CSOs .This kind of relationship, it emerged is a major stumbling block for Zimbabwean CSOs to effectively influence the policy direction of the AU .

The study revealed that while there are some spaces that are provided for Zimbabwean CSOs' participation in the AU, it was not possible to have meaningful impact unless the CSOs use the government as the conduit of these views. To that end, the study concluded that the CSOs have to come out clean from the allegations of being an opposition political front and stand out as a neutral body that promotes developmental issues in their constituencies. Where they engage in issues to promote good governance, it has to be genuine campaign, not ones that are aimed at promoting opposition political movements. The work concluded that there must be a collaborative framework for co-operation between the CSOs and the government when it comes to approaching the African Union affairs. If this collaboration is achieved, the CSOs can make effective use of spaces provided for by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs department. This way, they can engage at the level of the Commission, PRC and the Assembly. This approach will contribute meaningfully to strengthening of Zimbabwean CSOs' participation and contribution to the AU policy outlook.

It emerged from the study that, among a cocktail of constraints for Zimbabwean CSOs' participation in the AU, the following are the key and major ones:

- The construction of the AU as an inter-state organisation limits the participation of Zimbabwean non-state actors in the AU policy framework.
- The bad relation between the Zimbabwean CSOs and the government heavily handicaps the CSOs from contributing to the AU through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The constitution of the AU as an advisory body is problematic in that it limits the influence the Zimbabwean CSOs can influence the AU policy developments.
- The lack of a strong consolidated network to lobby as a collective on engagement mechanisms is also a major hindrance to Zimbabwean CSOs' endeavour to influence the AU policy outlook.

- The ineffective utilisation of abundant Zimbabwean skilled human resource to work as think-tank on policy issues.

The study shows that despite the constraints, a number of opportunities exist for Zimbabwean CSOs to influence the AU policy initiatives. Key among them is the recent creation of an all-inclusive government between ZANU PF and the two MDC formations. This government is likely to level the political landscape and offer an opportunity for mending of relations between the government and the CSOs. This will then assist CSOs influence Zimbabwean government policy inputs to the AU.

6.3 Recommendations

In view of the conclusions drawn from this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

- The notion of deliberative democracy and inclusion of citizens in governance is an important tenet of African development and must be a strong base in the way the AU engages with citizens from different countries.

- There is a need to strengthen and facilitate the activities of the ECOSOCC chapter in Zimbabwe. This chapter will have to publicise its existence and keep an updated database of its membership. It will have to improve the communication systems and co-ordination with the member organisations.

- The National Association of Non-governmental organisations must immediately seek a meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the new coalition government. This meeting should immediately create a collaborative framework for normalisation of relations between the CSOs and the Government.

- Zimbabwean CSOs should familiarise themselves with other organs of the AU, .e.g. the PRC, Executive Council and the Commission and ensure that they establish partnerships at that level.

- The Zimbabwean CSOs should utilise its abundant human resource to create a think-tank to generate new views on African Union issues.

- There is need for Zimbabwean CSOs, through their national coalition, to mobilise resources and create a central pool to ensure that the organisations that want to participate in the AU policy initiatives are well-supported.

6.4 Conclusions

This work sought to locate spaces for participation of Zimbabwean CSOs in the broad framework of the AU policy agenda. The work is crucial, given the strained relations that characterise the Zimbabwean government and the CSOs.

The relationships ,as already defined in some quarters here, is characterised by intense suspicions as each part views the other as working counter to its interests. This work is important particularly as it sought to determine how the African Union has gone in terms of promoting the doctrine of deliberative democracy.

The study was premised on one important factor, that deliberative democracy is an important doctrine in modern governance systems as it seeks to open avenues and spaces for participation of all citizens in governance.

Deliberative democracy recognises that governance is not just about the elected representatives called government but it consists a multiple layers of various players with different interests to the state. The work sought to emphatically state that this is not only applicable to the national governments but also other public bodies like the AU.

It is important to note that, while the study ascertained the availability of some spaces for Zimbabwean citizens participation in African Affairs, it was discovered that these spaces were not wide open for any meaningful engagement. The structures and these spaces can be best defined as derelict and, as such, unable to assist in promoting inclusion of Zimbabwean citizens in the African Union policy agenda.

Given the derelict nature of these organs, the other possible entry point for influencing the AU agenda is through the government of Zimbabwe, but this is difficult as the government has closed out any meaningful interaction with the CSOs. This has inevitably worked against Zimbabwean CSOs' contribution to the policy direction of the continental body.

Further to that, Zimbabwean citizens have been denied an opportunity to contribute in the way they want to be governed at a continental level. The work, however, reveals that all is not lost as there are opportunities to mend

relations between the government and CSOs by the new inclusive government. It will also be vital to improve the *modus operandi* of the IGIs of the AU to make them more functional. This way, Zimbabwean CSOs can be able to amplify their voices on how they want to be governed at continental level.

It is suggested that future researchers can study on how the SADC civil society organisations can create synergies and structures to effectively influence ways in which SADC can collectively influence the African Union policy-making.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire