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# RULING PARTY PATRONAGE, BROKERAGE, AND CONTESTATIONS AT URBAN MARKETS IN HARARE

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## ABSTRACT

This study contributes to debates on varieties of clientelism through an analysis of brokerage and ruling party patronage at urban markets in Harare, Zimbabwe. Urban markets are sites of contestation between the opposition-dominated city council and actors aligned with the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union—Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). Based on qualitative case study research at two designated markets, the article demonstrates how ruling party brokers are central to organizing patronage and political mobilization, thus sustaining authoritarian politics. While ruling party patronage is a deliberate strategy to control urban spaces, the article demonstrates how it is being negotiated. Factionalism within ZANU-PF shifted the power of brokers, and the lockdown enforced in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic in 2020 caused a rupture, offering the city council and opposition-aligned youth the opportunity to (re)claim control over vending spaces. This article contributes to debates on clientelism in authoritarian regime settings, by showing the imbrication of coercion and patronage in the role of the broker and demonstrating how patronage is organized vertically through brokerage. This study extends the study of clientelism beyond electoral politics, since brokers are not always politicians, but nonetheless are part of the systems of ruling party patronage.

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### Introduction

URBAN INFORMAL ECONOMIES CONSTITUTE AN IMPORTANT FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL RESOURCE: they can be used for rent-seeking activities, and informal workers may constitute important vote banks.<sup>1</sup> While clientelism may take the form of diverse and diffuse ‘big men’ networks in some settings, ruling party patronage in authoritarian and dominant party states can be a deliberate regime strategy for extending the dominance of the ruling party. This applies to Zimbabwe, where the Zimbabwe African National Union—Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) uses party patronage among other strategies to undermine the opposition-dominated city councils.<sup>2</sup>

Existing scholarship on clientelism has emphasized the top-down distribution of resources to maintain the stability of ruling elites and coalitions, while the negotiation and contestation of clientelist institutions by lower-level actors is often overlooked.<sup>3</sup> There is a limited understanding of how party patronage is organized vertically down to local levels and how factionalism might influence these dynamics.<sup>4</sup> Political ethnography can elicit the role of political brokers in organizing patronage and political mobilization at local level and their material and immaterial forms of power.<sup>5</sup> This study aims to contribute to debates on patronage politics in authoritarian regimes and adds to empirical knowledge on urban patronage economies in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe’s multiple economic and political crises have had a devastating impact on the economy. The economy stabilized under the Unity Government (2009–2013), declined after 2013 and further deteriorated after the 2017 coup, with inflation and weakening purchasing power.<sup>6</sup>

1. Karen Transberg Hansen, ‘Changing youth dynamics in Lusaka’s informal economy in the context of economic liberalization’, *African Studies Quarterly* 11, 2–3 (2010), pp. 13–27; Tom Goodfellow, ‘Political informality: Deals, trust networks, and the negotiation of value in the urban realm’, *Journal of Development Studies* 56, 2 (2020), pp. 278–294; Tom Goodfellow and Kristof Titeca, ‘Presidential intervention and the changing “politics of survival” in Kampala’s informal economy’, *Cities* 29, 4 (2012), pp. 264–270.

2. Jocelyn Alexander and JoAnn McGregor, ‘Introduction: Politics, patronage and violence in Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 39, 4 (2013), pp. 749–763; JoAnn McGregor, ‘Surveillance and the city: Patronage, power-sharing and the politics of urban control in Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 39, 4 (2013), pp. 783–805; Davison Muchadenyika, ‘Land for housing: A political resource—Reflections from Zimbabwe’s urban areas’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 41, 6 (2015), pp. 1219–1238.

3. Tom Goodfellow, ‘Seeing political settlements through the city: A framework for comparative analysis of urban transformation’, *Development & Change* 49, 1 (2017), pp. 199–222; Tom Goodfellow and David Jackson, ‘Control the capital: cities and political dominance’ (ESID Working Paper 135, 2020, University of Manchester).

4. Anne-Mette Kjaer and Mesharch Katusiimeh, ‘Nomination violence in Uganda’s National Resistance Movement’, *African Affairs* 120, 479 (2021), pp. 177–198.

5. Richard Vokes, ‘Primaries, patronage, and political personalities in South-western Uganda’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 10, 4 (2016), pp. 660–676; Sam Wilkins, ‘Who pays for *pakalast*? The NRM’s peripheral patronage in rural Uganda’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 10, 4 (2016), pp. 619–638.

6. Kirk Helliker and Tendai Murisa, ‘Zimbabwe: continuities and changes’, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 38, 1 (2020), pp. 5–17; Alois Mlambo, ‘From an industrial

As a consequence, the informal economy has expanded and become of major importance to the urban population.<sup>7</sup>

This study investigated dynamics in ruling party patronage in the informal economy from 2013 onwards, in particular the implications of factionalism within ZANU-PF and throughout the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic in 2020. With factionalism, we mean the groupings within political parties that compete for power and leadership, which in Zimbabwe has affected ZANU-PF as well as the opposition.<sup>8</sup> Based on qualitative case study research at two designated markets in Harare between July 2019 and March 2021, we use the concept of ‘brokerage’ to analyse the workings of ruling party patronage. This article offers a microlevel analysis of the contestation between ruling party brokers belonging to different ZANU-PF factions, the city council and opposition actors. We demonstrate how brokers, in our case market leaders linked to ZANU-PF, are central to ruling party patronage. However, while party patronage is a deliberate and top-down strategy for controlling urban economic resources, we show that the city council and opposition-aligned vendors remain important players. The ‘total’ lockdown enforced in March 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic represented a ‘critical juncture’ and is used as epistemological lens to analyse shifts in power dynamics. The lockdown, which initially lasted 21 days and was extended several times, compelled people to stay at home, banned inter and intra-city movement, and suspended air travel, and all non-essential shops and informal urban markets were closed.<sup>9</sup> Police and military turned away anyone without mobility clearance letters at checkpoints on all routes into the main city centres. We contend that factionalism and ‘lockdown politics’ coalesced,

powerhouse to a nation of vendors: Over two decades of economic decline and deindustrialization in Zimbabwe, 1990–2015’, *Journal of Developing Societies* 33, 1 (2017), pp. 99–125; Tinashe Nyamunda, “‘Open for business” but bankrupt: Currencies, the “new dispensation” and the Zimbabwean economy’, *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 5, 2 (2021), pp. 204–217.

7. Shiela Chikolo, Paul Hebinck, and Bill Kinsey, ‘Mbare Musika is ours: An analysis of a fresh produce market in Zimbabwe’, *African Affairs* 119, 476 (2020), pp. 311–337; Simbarashe Gukurume, ‘Livelihood resilience in a hyperinflationary environment: experiences of people engaging in money-burning (*kubhena mari*) transactions in Harare, Zimbabwe’, *Social Dynamics* 41, 2 (2015), pp. 219–234; Amin Kamete, “‘Planning versus youth”: Stamping out spatial unruliness in Harare’, *Geoforum* 39 (2008), pp. 1721–1733; Amin Kamete, ‘Defending illicit livelihoods: Youth resistance in Harare’s contested spaces’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34, 1 (2010), pp. 55–75.

8. Blessing-Miles Tendi, ‘The motivations and dynamics of Zimbabwe’s 2017 military coup’, *African Affairs* 119, 1 (2020), pp. 39–67.

9. Newsday ‘Zimbabwe imposes 21-day lockdown to combat coronavirus’, 27 March 2020, <<https://www.newsday.co.zw/2020/03/zimbabwe-imposes-21-day-lockdown-to-combat-coronavirus/>> (21 May 2022).

The Herald, ‘Covid-19: Zim in total lockdown’, 28 March 2020, <<https://www.herald.co.zw/covid-19-zim-in-total-lockdown-president-issues-stay-at-home-order/>> (21 May 2022); Richard Kiaka, Shiela Chikulo, Sasha Slootheer, and Paul Hebinck, “‘The street is ours”. A comparative analysis of street trading, Covid-19 and new street geographies in Harare, Zimbabwe and Kisumu, Kenya’, *Food Security* 13 (2021), pp. 1263–1281.

opening an opportunity to contest the hegemony of ZANU-PF-backed brokers.

The article makes three contributions to scholarship of clientelism. First, we demonstrate the imbrication of patronage and violent coercion that characterize patronage in an authoritarian context. We argue that ruling party brokers negotiate economic activity within patronage networks while adopting state-like functions by engaging in political mobilization, coercion and surveillance, thus reproducing authoritarian politics. Secondly, we contribute to understandings of the vertical organization of party patronage and role of brokerage, arguing that brokers operate and negotiate ‘from the middle’ as they receive and redistribute resources, whereas the vendors—as client populations—have limited agency ‘from below’.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the study extends an understanding of ruling party patronage beyond African electoral politics, as brokers are not politicians but are nonetheless part of the same patronage system, which helps to address the limited knowledge on the interaction between clientelist politics with other forms of political mobilization.<sup>11</sup>

In the following section, we explain approaches to understanding clientelism and ruling party patronage, arguing how a political ethnography of ‘brokerage’ can complement top-down perspectives of clientelist institutions. We then contextualize the study for Zimbabwe, showing how ZANU-PF uses patronage to control opposition-dominated cities. After presenting the research design and qualitative methodology, we analyse how factionalism shaped the patronage economy in central Harare from 2013. We then analyse the dynamics between ZANU-PF factions, city council and youth aligned with the Movement for Democratic Change-Alliance youth at two markets. The final empirical section analyses the shift in the contestation between these actors during the lockdown in 2020.

### *Ruling party patronage and brokerage*

Here we shall argue that a focus on brokerage contributes to an understanding of the vertical organization of patronage in authoritarian settings, whereas existing scholarship has emphasized top-down conceptualizations of clientelist politics. For the ‘neopatrimonialism school’, neopatrimonialism refers to the coexistence and blending of formal state institutions with informal clientelist systems, and this is considered a major barrier,

10. JoAnn McGregor and Kudzai Chatiza, ‘Partisan citizenship and its discontents: precarious possession and political agency on Harare City’s expanding margins’, *Citizenship Studies* 24, 1 (2020), pp. 17–39.

11. Pritish Behuria, Lars Buur, and Hazel Gray, ‘Studying political settlements in Africa’, *African Affairs* 116, 464 (2015), pp. 508–525; Elena Gadjanova, ‘Electoral clientelism as status affirmation in Africa: evidence from Ghana’, *Journal of Modern African Studies* 55, 4 (2017), pp. 593–621.

if not the cause, of economic underdevelopment in Africa as these personalistic, ruler-centred clientelist networks are used to accumulate and distribute rents.<sup>12</sup> Later, scholarship on ‘developmental patrimonialism’ focused on the conditions under which neopatrimonialism can promote development and growth, such as when clientelism is centralized and controlled by elites that focus on long-term goals.<sup>13</sup> Neopatrimonialism has been critiqued for viewing clientelism as the continuation of ‘traditional’ and pre-colonial structures of kinship and authority, failing to recognize that contemporary patronage practices are a feature of the development of liberal capitalist economies worldwide.<sup>14</sup>

A different but equally top-down approach to understanding clientelism is presented in studies of political settlements, which claim that the neopatrimonial school ignores the variation in clientelism across African countries and does not explore the interaction between formal and informal institutions and how clientelist politics interact with other forms of political mobilization.<sup>15</sup> According to the political settlement framework, associated with Mushtaq Khan’s writings in particular, variation in the distribution of power can shape existing forms of clientelism.<sup>16</sup> To maintain stability, a ruling elite needs to balance and accommodate factions and groups that are important for the ruling coalition (the range of actors providing support to the ruling elite, which may exist outside of political party structures), for instance by informal ‘side payments’.<sup>17</sup> Clientelist networks of rent distribution need to be developed horizontally as well as vertically to subnational/local-level groups that are important for the ruling coalition.<sup>18</sup> While generally macro-level studies, subnational-level studies have investi-

12. Daniel Bach, ‘Patrimonialism and neopatrimonialism: Comparative trajectories and readings,’ *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 49, 3 (2011), pp. 275–94; Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as political instrument* (James Currey, Oxford, 1999).

13. David Booth and Frederick Golooba-Mutebi, ‘Developmental patrimonialism? The case of Rwanda,’ *African Affairs* 111, 444 (2012), pp. 379–403; Tim Kelsall, ‘Neopatrimonialism, rent-seeking and development: Going with the grain?’ *New Political Economy* 17, 5 (2012), pp. 677–682.

14. Alexander Beresford, ‘Power, patronage and gatekeeper politics in South Africa,’ *African Affairs* 114, 455 (2015), pp. 226–248; Thandika Mkandawire, ‘Neopatrimonialism and the political economy of economic performance in Africa,’ *World Politics* 67, 3 (2015), pp. 563–612.

15. Behuria et al., ‘Studying political settlements’, p. 521; Hazel Gray and Lindsay Whitfield, ‘Reframing African political economy: Clientelism, rents and accumulation as drivers of capitalist transformation’ (LSE International Development Working Paper Series 159, 2014, London), pp. 14–159.

16. Mushtaq Khan, ‘Markets, states and democracy: Patron-client networks and the case for democracy in developing countries’, *Democratization* 12, 5 (2005), pp. 704–724; Mushtaq Khan, ‘Political settlements and the governance of growth-enhancing institutions’, Research Paper Series on Governance for Growth (SOAS, University of London, London, 2010); Behuria et al., ‘Studying political settlements’, p. 511.

17. Mushtaq Khan, ‘Power, pacts, and political settlements: A reply to Tim Kelsall’, *African Affairs* 117, 469 (2018), pp. 670–694; Anne-Mette Kjaer, ‘Political settlements and productive sector policies: Understanding sector differences in Uganda’, *World Development* 68 (2015), pp. 230–241.

18. Khan, ‘Power, pacts and political settlements’, pp. 686–7.

gated the distribution of resources within certain sectoral policies.<sup>19</sup> Tom Goodfellow uses a political settlement framework to show how ruling elites in Uganda subvert planning regulations as land is offered to factions within the ruling coalition or is claimed by strong rival factions.<sup>20</sup> In Rwanda, however, rival elites are relatively weak and factions within the ruling elite are accommodated in other ways, facilitating the enforcement of regulations in Kigali. Few studies explore the implications of factionalism within the ruling party for patronage, but existing evidence suggests that these can lead to violent contestations.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike more diffuse and personalized ‘big men networks’ that evolve around individual patrons/politicians, ruling party patronage is about the relationship between constituencies and the party ‘as a system’.<sup>22</sup> Definitions of clientelism often refer to reciprocity and ‘mutual exchange of benefits’.<sup>23</sup> Yet in authoritarian settings, forms of party-clientelist distribution often have coercive dimensions.<sup>24</sup> For Zimbabwe, various studies show how ruling party patronage is deliberately organized to control people and undermine the opposition-controlled city councils and support base and thus constitutes a strategy for regime dominance.<sup>25</sup> It is argued that party-clientelism can even be considered a form of statecraft used to cultivate dependence on ZANU-PF.<sup>26</sup>

Due to the top-down perspectives of these approaches, there remains a weak understanding of ‘how’ vertical relationships of patronage are organized. We aim to achieve this understanding through a focus on the role of brokerage. In the literature on hybrid or mediated governance, brokers

19. Abdul-Gafaru Abdulai and Sam Hickey, ‘The politics of development under competitive clientelism: Insights from Ghana’s education sector’, *African Affairs* 115, 458 (2016), pp. 44–72; Sylvia Croese, ‘State-led housing delivery as an instrument of developmental patrimonialism: The case of post-war Angola’, *African Affairs* 116, 462 (2017), pp. 80–100; Marja Hirvi and Lindsay Whitfield, ‘Public-Service provision in clientelist political settlements: Lessons from Ghana’s urban water sector’, *Development Policy Review* 33, 2 (2015), pp. 135–158.

20. Goodfellow, ‘Seeing political settlements’.

21. Kjaer and Katusiimeh, ‘Nomination violence’; George M. Bob-Milliar, ‘Party factions and power blocs in Ghana: A case study of power politics in the National Democratic Congress party’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 50, 4 (2012), pp. 573–601.

22. Hannah Dawson, ‘Patronage from below: Political unrest in an informal settlement in South Africa’, *African Affairs* 113, 453 (2014), pp. 518–39; Petr Kopecký and Peter Mair, ‘Party patronage as organizational resource’, in Petr Kopecký, Peter Mair, and Maria Spirova (eds), *Party patronage and party government in European democracies* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2012), pp. 3–16.

23. Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson (eds), *Patrons, clients and policies: Patterns of democratic accountability and political competition* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2007).

24. Michael Albertus, Sofia Fenner, and Dan Slater (eds), *Coercive distribution* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2018).

25. Alexander and McGregor, ‘Introduction’; McGregor, ‘Surveillance and the city’.

26. Norma Kriger, ‘ZANU PF politics under Zimbabwe’s “power-sharing” government’, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 30, 1 (2012), pp. 11–26; McGregor and Chatiza ‘Frontiers of urban control’.



are identified as critical for political elites to channel resources and to implement state-like functions that are outsourced to them, like security provision and maintaining order.<sup>27</sup> Petr Kopecký and Peter Mair emphasize that, unlike patrons, brokers do not own the resources.<sup>28</sup> Yet they can perform ‘patron-like functions’.<sup>29</sup> Existing studies have often argued that brokers emerge in the ‘absence’ of functioning state institutions. However, in authoritarian and dominant party states they are central to the party-state machinery and larger system of ruling party patronage.<sup>30</sup> It is noted that brokers may regulate flows in both directions and make demands on patrons on behalf of client populations, but can also reinforce existing power structures and asymmetries.<sup>31</sup> Apart from organizing patronage redistribution, brokers can channel information, engage in political mobilization, and use and mobilize violence.<sup>32</sup> For Rodrigo Zarazaga, brokers are ‘multitasking’ grassroots operatives, helping their political patrons to win elections ‘and’ to govern.<sup>33</sup> For example, Alexander Beresford’s notion of ‘gatekeeper politics’ acknowledges the power of brokers in South Africa’s Africa National Congress (ANC) and their capacity to grant or deny access to resources within party networks.<sup>34</sup> Because winning the local candidacy for the ruling party yields significant power, brokers working for rival ANC candidates manipulated grievances to discredit certain leaders and fuelled protests during elections.<sup>35</sup> A notion of brokerage can be central to an understanding of how power is negotiated on the ground. While

27. Anders Themnér and Mats Utas, ‘Governance through brokerage: informal governance in post-civil war societies’, *Civil Wars* 18, 3 (2016), pp. 255–280; Tobias Hagmann and Didier Péclard, *Negotiating statehood: Dynamics of power and domination in Africa* (Wiley Blackwell, Malden, MA, 2010).

28. Kopecký and Mair, ‘Party patronage’, p. 5.

29. Christoph Vogel and Josephat Musamba, ‘Brokers of crisis: The everyday uncertainty of Eastern Congo’s mineral négociants’, *Journal of Modern African Studies* 55, 4 (2017), pp. 567–592.

30. Claire Bénit-Gbaffou, ‘Up close and personal – how does local democracy help the poor access the state? Stories of accountability and clientelism in Johannesburg’, *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 46 (2011), pp. 453–64; Dawson, ‘Patronage from below’.

31. Vanessa van den Boogaard, Wilson Prichard, and Samuel Jibao, ‘Norms, networks, power and control: Understanding informal payments and brokerage in cross-border trade in Sierra Leone’, *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 36, 1 (2021), pp. 77–97; Grace Carswell and Geert de Neve, ‘Paperwork, patronage, and citizenship: the materiality of everyday interactions with bureaucracy in Tamil Nadu, India’, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 26 (2020), pp. 495–514; Anders Themnér, ‘Former mid-level commanders in big man networks’. In: Mats Utas (ed), *African conflicts and informal power: Big men and networks* (Zed Books, London, 2012), pp. 205–23; Anders Themnér, ‘Former military networks and the micro-politics of violence and statebuilding in Liberia’, *Journal of Comparative Politics* 47, 3, (2015), pp. 334–53; Themnér and Utas, ‘Governance through brokerage’.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Rodrigo Zarazaga, ‘Brokers beyond clientelism: A new perspective through the Argentine case’, *Latin American Politics and Society* 56, 3 (2014), pp. 23–45.

34. Alexander Beresford, ‘Power, patronage and gatekeeper politics in South Africa’, *African Affairs* 114, 455 (2015), pp. 226–248.

35. Dawson, ‘Patronage from below’.

client populations negotiate patronage ‘from below’,<sup>36</sup> brokers are differently positioned in patronage relationships. We shall argue that brokers negotiate ‘from the middle’.

*Factionalism, patronage and urban informality in Zimbabwe*

In various African countries, the party in power at the national level is different from the actors controlling the national capital and other major cities, which are often in the hands of the opposition. Referred to as ‘vertically divided authority’, this creates an incentive for ruling parties to undermine local governments and seek control over urban populations.<sup>37</sup> This is the case in Zimbabwe, where the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC),<sup>38</sup> started dominating city councils following successive electoral victories after 2000. Ruling party patronage developed as a major strategy to undermine the MDC-dominated city councils, alongside violence and coercion, the partisan appointment of officials and ‘special councillors’, and the manipulation of legal frameworks that enabled direct interference by the Ministry of Local Government (MNLG).<sup>39</sup>

Factionalism within ZANU-PF has influenced ruling party patronage. Factionalist struggles over ZANU-PF’s leadership and Mugabe’s succession emerged in the late 1990s, with the two main factions being led by Mnangagwa and retired Army General Solomon Mujuru. Mujuru ended up supporting his wife Joice Mujuru to ascend to leadership.<sup>40</sup> Mujuru’s faction drew its support from local party structure.<sup>41</sup> Mnangagwa derived his support from sections of the military while actively seeking control over local party structures.<sup>42</sup> In the 2008 elections, Mujuru and her husband were accused of plotting Mugabe’s assassination.<sup>43</sup> Tension remained until General Mujuru controversially died in a fire in 2011. Mugabe sought to consolidate his power by dismantling the District Coordinating Councils

36. McGregor and Chatiza, ‘Partisan citizenship’.

37. Danielle Resnick, ‘Urban governance and service delivery in African cities: The role of politics and policies’, *Development Policy Review* 32, S1 (2014), pp. s3–s17; Danielle Resnick, ‘The politics of crackdowns on Africa’s informal vendors’, *Comparative Politics* 52, 1 (2019), pp. 21–52.

38. The MDC split due to divisions in 2005 into MDC-Tsvangirai (MDC-T) and MDC-Ncube (MDC-N). In 2017, the MDC parties and several opposition parties formed the coalition MDC-A.

39. Muchadenyika, ‘Land for housing’; Davison Muchadenyika and John Williams, ‘Central-local state contestations and urban management in Zimbabwe’, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 38, 1 (2020), pp. 89–102; McGregor, ‘Surveillance and the city’; Muchadenyika, ‘Land for housing’.

40. Blessing-Miles Tendi, ‘State intelligence and the politics of Zimbabwe’s Presidential succession’, *African Affairs* 115, 459 (2016), pp. 203–224.

41. Adrienne Lebas, ‘Briefing on current Zimbabwe socio-political relations’, Centre of Strategic Intelligence Research, March 2016, p. 7.

42. Lebas, ‘Briefing on current Zimbabwe’.

43. Tendi, ‘State intelligence’, pp. 206–207, p. 219.



in 2012. This was followed by the purging of Joice Mujuru and many of her supporters in December 2014.<sup>44</sup> Although Mugabe's decision to dismantle District Coordinating Councils in 2012 was allegedly intended to undermine both Mujuru and Mnangagwa,<sup>45</sup> he replaced Mujuru with Mnangagwa as his vice president and he increasingly represented war struggle actors in the military.<sup>46</sup> While Mujuru's faction lost influence, the Lacoste faction faced a new challenge from an informal grouping of younger politicians referred to as 'Generation 40' (G40) backed by Grace Mugabe, whom President Mugabe had started promoting to become his successor. Although this grouping did not self-identify as a collective and lacked a common platform, most alleged G40 politicians were united in their opposition to the Mnangagwa faction and 'old' (military) leaders.<sup>47</sup> The Lacoste faction, but also the media, sought to discredit G40 as a faction of 'liberation war deserters' as generals felt increasingly threatened by Mugabe.<sup>48</sup> Aided by his military allies, Mnangagwa succeeded through the coup in November 2017, after which many alleged G40 supporters were purged from the party.<sup>49</sup> Marjoke Oosterom shows how factionalism influenced local economies and in this article we shall analyse its implications for urban markets.<sup>50</sup>

Factionalism has influenced ruling party patronage in relation to urban land. Harare's informal settlements constitute important vote banks.<sup>51</sup> During the Government of National Unity (GNU) (2009–2013) both ZANU-PF and MDC-T tried to gain control over informal settlements, but the MDC-T lacked real power to achieve this.<sup>52</sup> After the 2013 elections, different ZANU-PF factions were competing for patronage relationships. The Minister of the MNLG, Saviour Kasukuwere, associated with G40, enabled patronage in land deals through the Ministry and its different offices and institutions, including state-registered housing cooperatives.<sup>53</sup>

44. *Ibid.*

45. LeBas, 'Briefing on current Zimbabwe', p. 7.

46. Tendi, 'Motivations and dynamics', p. 56.

47. Tendi, 'Motivation and dynamics', p. 51; Pindula, 'G40 exists only as idea – says Moyo', 30 November 2019 <<https://news.pindula.co.zw/2019/11/30/g40-exists-only-as-an-idea-jonathan-moyo/>> (2 February 2022).

48. Tendi, 'Motivations and dynamics'.

49. Tendi, 'State intelligence'.

50. Marjoke Oosterom, 'Youth and social navigation in Zimbabwe's informal economy: "Don't end up on the wrong side"', *African Affairs* 118, 472 (2019), pp. 485–508.

51. Kamete, 'Cold-hearted, negligent and spineless?'; JoAnn McGregor and Kudzai Chatiza, 'Frontiers of urban control: Lawlessness on the city edge and forms of clientelist statecraft in Zimbabwe', *Antipode* 51, 5 (2019), pp. 1554–1580; McGregor and Chatiza, 'Frontiers of urban governance'; McGregor and Chatiza, 'Partisan citizenship'; Muchadenyika, 'Land for Housing'; Davison Muchadenyika and John Williams, 'Politics and the practice of planning: The case of Zimbabwean cities', *Cities* 63 (2017), pp. 33–40.

52. McGregor and Chatiza, 'Partisan citizenship', p. 22; McGregor and Chatiza, 'Frontiers of urban control', p. 1556; Muchadenyika, 'Land for Housing'.

53. JoAnn McGregor and Kudzai Chatiza, 'Geographies of urban dominance: The politics of Harare's periphery' (ESID Working Paper 162, 2020, University of Manchester), p. 11; McGregor and Chatiza 'Frontiers of urban control'; Muchadenyika, 'Land for housing', p. 1227.

The second form of patronage, aligned with rival factions, ran through party cells and committees, councillors, war veterans, and party youth present in the settlements. Referred to as ‘land barons’, they can become powerful brokers who allocate land and levy fees on behalf of higher-up ruling party actors, whilst residents have tactically negotiated patronage from ‘below’.<sup>54</sup>

Like in informal settlements, existing studies suggest the influence of ruling party patronage in street vending as well as designated markets.<sup>55</sup> ZANU-PF-aligned ‘space barons’ rent out numerous tables to vendors, charging them high fees on top of city council levies, which end up in ruling party coffers.<sup>56</sup> In the past, the Chipangano gang, a youth militia linked to ZANU-PF controlled markets and flat rentals in Mbare (Harare), thus cutting off revenue stream to the city council.<sup>57</sup> Chipangano controlled stall allocation even under the Unity Government and was allowed to operate from a city council district office and was backed by the police and Central Intelligence Organisation.<sup>58</sup> However, the group lost influence because it sided with the losing Mujuru faction, as we elaborate below.

Existing studies have thus indicated how ruling party patronage is one of the strategies for ZANU-PF to control urban spaces and that factionalism has produced *competing* patronage networks.<sup>59</sup> However, we show how networks are dynamic: ruling party patronage is contested and negotiated through brokers, the city council, and opposition-aligned agents.

### *Research design and methodology*

The present article is based on a case study research of two designated, second-hand clothes markets in Harare known as Coca Cola and Mupedzanhamo. Mupedzanhamo is located in the heart of Mbare, a high-density and impoverished area which is nonetheless economically vibrant. Mbare has a reputation for cartels of informal brokers involved in markets,

54. McGregor and Chatiza, ‘Partisan citizenship’, p. 24.

55. Amin Kamete, ‘Governing enclaves of informality: Unscrambling the logic of the camp in urban Zimbabwe’, *Geoforum* 81 (2017), pp. 76–86; Kriger, ‘ZANU PF politics’; McGregor, ‘Surveillance in the city’; Tariro Mutingwizo, ‘Chipangano governance: Enablers and effects of violent extraction in Zimbabwe’, *Africa Peace and Conflict Journal* 7, 1 (2014), pp. 29–40.

56. Amin Kamete, ‘Governing enclaves of informality’.

57. Godfrey Maringira and Simbarashe Gukurume, ‘Youth patronage: Violence, intimidation and political mobilization in Zimbabwe’, African Peacebuilding Network paper No. 28 (2020); Godfrey Maringira and Simbarashe Gukurume ‘Youth political mobilization: Violence, intimidation, and patronage in Zimbabwe’, *Political Psychology*, (2021); Mutingwizo ‘Chipangano governance’.

58. McGregor, ‘Surveillance in the city’.

59. Kriger, ‘ZANU PF politics’.

bus terminals, and taxi ranks.<sup>60</sup> Coca Cola market opened in 2017 and is located at the junction of Seke Road and Dieppe Avenue near the Coca Cola factory. The city council started the construction of a market structure for registered vendors in 2020. This was planned alongside a future bus terminus, part of its plans for addressing informality.<sup>61</sup>

This article is based on qualitative data collected between July 2019 and March 2021, as part of a larger project on young vendors. We conducted key informant interviews with market committee leaders and guards of the storage rooms and with city council officials. Only one influential committee member was female, at Mupedzanhamo, where she rented out many tables. With few influential women in the market committee, decisions were often made with no or little input from female vendors. We conducted semi-structured interviews with 30 male and 30 female vendors. Several male vendors became key informants as they maintained close contact with committee leaders, while women tended to be reluctant to do so. Researchers also spent days at the market for ethnographic observations. Due to suspicions about state surveillance, rapport building was essential; hence, researchers spent time with individuals informally and often met respondents several times.

When the lockdown started in March 2020, it soon became apparent that it would be a ‘critical juncture’, a historically significant, short period of time during which there is a relative opening in structures, producing shifts in the distribution of power.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, Mupedzanhamo’s power structures were reconfigured by ‘lockdown politics’ as shall be discussed. During the lockdown we phoned a small number of key informants among the vendors at both markets every few weeks, using a semi-structured topic guide to collect data on power shifts of brokers. The selection was a convenience sample: we needed participants with whom we had a good rapport. Since particularly the men interacted closely with market leaders, this offered good insights of contestations between the leaders and other actors, while implications of these for female vendors received less attention. We monitored government-owned and independent media to triangulate data. We resumed fieldwork in August 2020.

60. Abraham Matamanda, ‘Battling the informal settlement challenge through sustainable city framework: experiences and lessons from Harare, Zimbabwe’, *Development Southern Africa* 37, 2 (2020), pp. 217–231, p. 219; McGregor, ‘Surveillance in the city’; ZPP ‘Inside Mbare’s opaque economy: Privatisation of the public infrastructure, thriving of terror gangs and breeding ground for political violence’, (Report, Zimbabwe Peace Project, Harare, 2017).

61. *The Herald*, ‘Boost for Seke Road vending market as Govt releases \$15m to city council’, 30 January 2020, <<https://www.herald.co.zw/boost-for-seke-road-vending-market-as-govt-releases-15m-to-city-council>> (30 January 2020).

62. Behuria et al., p. 512.

*Shifting dynamics in the Central Business District's patronage economy*

In this section, we draw on our fieldwork to demonstrate how the ruling party patronage is vertically organized from higher-level politicians down to market and street-based brokers and how factionalism influenced the patronage economy in central Harare.

Many vendors at Mupedzanhamo remember 'Bholinja', the man in charge of the market committee up to 2013. He was an ally of Tendai Savanhu (ZANU-PF MP for Mbare and Politburo member) and 'the face of Chipangano' at the market.<sup>63</sup> During Bholinja's tenure, the market closed during events like Independence Day, Heroes' commemorations, and the ZANU-PF annual congress. Vendors were coerced to contribute money for ZANU-PF activities and participate in rallies and events. The committee leaders kept registration lists to monitor attendance. Bholinja and Chipangano coerced vendors to chant slogans and renounce the MDC-T, often using intimidation and violence.<sup>64</sup>

During the Unity Government (2009–2013), the composition of the committee reflected the power-sharing arrangement, incorporating some MDC-T members under Bholinja's chairmanship.<sup>65</sup> Table 1 shows the overview of market-level brokers and their higher-level backing.

Pineal Denga, then Mbare MP (MDC-T) helped to secure stalls for MDC vendors at Mupedzanhamo. The committee enjoyed access to key politicians higher up the hierarchy like Tendai Savanhu and Chris Mutsvangwa, and senior officials in the ZANU-PF controlled the MNLG. Savanhu maintained close ties to Jim Kunaka, Chipangano leader and ZANU-PF Provincial youth chairperson. Market committee members recalled that in the case of any disagreement with the city council, they could phone their contacts who would 'give a directive' to the police and city council, 'resolving' the matter in their favour.<sup>66</sup> Some Chipangano members were part of the committee, boosting the control of ZANU-PF members. The group prohibited vendors to wear or sell red clothes (the MDC colour) and read independent newspapers.<sup>67</sup>

However, the ZANU-PF committee and its political backing began to fragment due to competition between ZANU-PF senior politicians Amos Midzi (supported by Mujuru, aided by Savanhu and Chipangano) and Hubert Nyanhongo (supported by Mnangagwa).<sup>68</sup> Market-level brokers mobilized support for candidates belonging to these rival networks in ZANU-PF primary elections, for instance by collecting money for their

63. Conversation notes, Mbare, January 2021.

64. Norma Kriger, 'ZANU PF politics'; Interview, male vendor, Mbare, 28 June 2019.

65. Interview, male vendor, Mbare, 15 June 2019.

66. Interview, market committee member, Mbare, 12 August 2019.

67. Interview, male vendor, Mbare, 10 August 2019.

68. Kriger, 'ZANU PF politics'.

*Table 1* Market-based and higher-level actors at Mupedzanhamo.

<i>Years</i>	<i>Mupedzanhamo</i>		
	<i>Market-based brokers</i>	<i>Higher-level backing</i>	<i>Factionalism</i>
2002–2008	Chair: Victor Chipangano gang gaining traction Dambaza is overthrown by Bholinja (aided by Chipangano), who finishes this term	Senior politicians: Amos Midzi; Tendai Savanhu Edward Mungwari Chataika; Hubert Nyanhongo	Midzi, Savanhu align with Mujuru faction. Nyanhongo is backed by Mnangagwa, competes with Midzi Dambaza accused of siding with MDC
2007/8–2013	Chair: Bholinja Chipangano gang (Jim Kunaka, provincial Youth League; Alexio Mudzengerere; John Murukai). Female brokers: Madam Trish (ZANU-PF Women’s League) Madam Gladys, Madam. Lewiser	All of those above, and they sponsor Chipangano. Savanhu (ZANU-PF MP) Chris Mutsvangwa MP Pineal Denga backs MDC vendors 2012: John Murukai (Chipangano) dies	All (apart from MP Denga) are aligned with Mujuru faction
2013–2017	Chair: Victor returns	Chris Mutsvangwa (chair of the Zimbabwe National War Veterans Association from 2014) 2015: Midzi dies 2016: Chataika dies	2013: Jim Kunaka (Chipangano) loses Harare Provincial youth leader post. 2014: purge of Mujuru, Savanhu, 2015: Midzi suspended Demise of Chipangano. Savanhu shifts to G40 after re-admission to ZANU-PF. 2017: Mudzengerere (Chipangano) switches to G40; starts at Coca Cola market
2018–2019	Chair: Victor	MP Martin Matinyanya (ZANU-PF)	
2020–2021	Market closed during lockdown. MDC-T-aligned Youth controlling street vending. Several male and three female committee members pay MDC youth to operate	MDC-T councillor and MP	

campaigns, thus perpetuating factionalism. Conflict emerged between the ZANU-PF District Coordinating Committee (DCC) and Savanhu in 2012.<sup>69</sup> When ZANU-PF dissolved DCCs in 2012,<sup>70</sup> this was a blow for the market committee that had functioned as an extension of the Harare Zone 6 DCC.<sup>71</sup> This was further exacerbated by the death of Chipangano leaders (Table 1). Further, Jim Kunaka lost his position as Harare Provincial youth leader in the 2013 primary elections. Together with Joice Mujuru and her allies, he was expelled from ZANU-PF in December 2014, when Savanhu was dismissed from the central committee and Politburo.<sup>72</sup> Chipangano lost sponsors when Amos Midzi was suspended from ZANU-PF in 2015 for siding with Mujuru and he was found dead one week later,<sup>73</sup> and ZANU-PF central committee member, Edward Chataika, died.<sup>74</sup>

After the 2013 elections, MDC members were purged from the committee and MDC-aligned vendors were forced to leave the market, despite their formal registration with the city council.<sup>75</sup> Bholinja's power waned as a result of Chipangano dissolution, and he lost his position.<sup>76</sup> Seen as Mujuru supporters, Bholinja and Savanhu's vendors were threatened with eviction from the market.<sup>77</sup> Meanwhile, space barons who claimed to be affiliated to G40 tried to control street vending in the Central Business District (CBD). Claiming to be leaders of 'vendor associations', they occupied major streets and charging large groups of vendors high rentals for stalls. Grace Mugabe occasionally expressed support for illegal street vendors.<sup>78</sup>

69. McGregor, 'Surveillance and the city', p. 779.

70. RAU, 'The mortal remains: Succession and the ZANU-PF body politic' (Report for the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Research and Advocacy Unit, Harare, 2014).

71. Interview, committee member, 9 November 2019.

72. 'Ex-Chipangano leader Kunaka apologizes', *Newsday*, 16 October 2015, <<https://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/10/ex-chipangano-leader-jim-kunaka-apologises/>> (20 December 2020). Tendai Savanhu was expelled from ZANU-PF in August 2020 for allegedly working with organizers of the July 31 anti-Mnangagwa demonstrations. Savanhu died in February 2021, reportedly of Covid-19.

73. 'Former Minister Amos Midzi found dead', *Nehanda Radio*, 9 June 2015, <<https://nehandaradio.com/2015/06/09/former-minister-amos-midzi-found-dead/>> (20 December 2020).

74. Amlambo, 'Chipangano kingpin declared hero, buried a provincial shrine', *Newsday*, 5 April 2016, <<https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/04/chipangano-kingpin-declared-hero-buried-provincial-shrine/>> (20 December 2020).

75. Interview, male vendor, Mbare, 18 December 2020; 'Violence on the increase', *The Zimbabwean*, 30 May 2012, <<https://www.thezimbabwean.co/2012/05/violence-on-the-increase-chra/>> (13 March 2021).

76. Richard Chidza, 'Could this be the end of Chipangano', *the Standard*, 14 June 2015, <<https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2015/06/14/could-this-be-the-end-of-chipangano/>> (10 March 2021).

77. Dismissed Minister's vendors face eviction, 30 December 2014, <<https://www.zimbabweonlinenews.com/%EF%BB%BFdismissed-ministers-vendors-face- eviction/>> (20 December 2020).

78. Enock Ndawana, 'Sacrificing urban governance at the altar of political expediency: Illegal street vending in Harare', *African Security Review* 27, 3–4 (2018), pp. 253–277.



Some associations used names like ‘Queen of Grace’ and ‘Grassroots Empowerment’ to suggest allegiance to Grace Mugabe and ZANU-PF, some leaders openly stated that she was their protector, and some asserted that claiming vending spaces was ‘youth empowerment’ as encouraged by the President.<sup>79</sup>

However, in October 2017, the Mugabe government issued an order for a large-scale eviction of vendors from the CBD.<sup>80</sup> Some scholars claimed that the timing of the campaign needs to be understood against the background of numerous protests that had occurred since 2013, which involved vocal vendor associations like Zimbabwe Informal Sector Organisation, Vendors Initiative for Social and Economic Transformation, and National Vendors Union of Zimbabwe.<sup>81</sup> The evictions were meant to pre-empt protests as vendors were a potential mobilizing force.<sup>82</sup> As vocal, confrontational civil society associations, such actors were not tolerated at large markets like Mupedzanhamo and Coca Cola, where ZANU-PF aligned brokers dominated market authority, as we shall explain.

President Mnangagwa is known for seeing informality as deterring investment and undermining the growth of the formal private sector.<sup>83</sup> Evictions of unregistered street vendors from CBD continued after the coup, while designated markets like Mupedzanhamo were unaffected. Towards the elections, vendor associations actively appealed to Mnangagwa for his support,<sup>84</sup> but evictions kept happening.<sup>85</sup> Key informants believed that these operations were a ‘punishment’ for urban support to the opposition and G40. All Harare wards were won by MDC Alliance (MDC-A) apart from Mbare Ward 4, where Mupedzanhamo is located. In the following sections, we demonstrate the imbrication of coercion and patronage in the role of

79. Amlambo, ‘Grace Mugabe drawn into vendors’ saga’, 5 June 2015, <<https://www.newsday.co.zw/2015/06/grace-mugabe-drawn-into-vendors-saga/>> (11 March 2018); Interview, male vendor, Harare, 20 June 2020.

80. ‘Mugabe orders Harare clean-up’, News24, 9 October 2017, <<https://news24.com/news24/africa/zimbabwe/mugabe-orders-harare-clean-up-20171009>> (11 March 2018).

81. Helliker and Murisa, ‘Zimbabwe: continuities and changes’, p. 7.

82. Key informant interview, Harare, 13 November 2020; Abraham Matamanda, Innocent Chirisa, Munyaradzi Dzvimbo, and Queen Chinozvina, ‘The political economy of Zimbabwean urban informality since 2000 – A contemporary governance dilemma’, *Development Southern Africa* 37, 4 (2020), pp. 694–707.

83. Fungi Kwaramba ‘Conditions for opening informal economy set as President spells out “new normal”’, *The Herald*, 13 June 2020 <<https://www.herald.co.zw/conditions-for-opening-informal-economy-set-as-president-spells-out-new-normal/>> (13 June 2020); Interview with market committee member, Mbare, 2 December 2020.

84. Tatenda Chitagu, ‘Street vendors could make or break Zimbabwe’s presidential hopefuls’, *Times Live*, 27 July 2018, <<https://www.timeslive.co.za/politics/2018-07-27-street-vendors-could-make-or-break-zimbabwes-presidential-hopefuls/>> (28 July 2018).

85. Robert Tapfumenyi, ‘Vendors demand clear informal sector policy’, *New Zimbabwe*, 1 July 2019, <<https://www.newzimbabwe.com/vendors-demand-clear-informal-sector-policy/>> (1 August 2019).

party brokers at Mupedzanhamo, as well as factional dynamics, between 2013 and 2019.

*Mupedzanhamo: control and coercion*

In our first encounter with the market committee in 2019, one committee member said: ‘Let me be very clear to you, I am ZANU-PF, and this is a ZANU-PF market’. A key informant confirmed: ‘It is impossible to be in the market committee if you are not ZANU-PF, ..., you need to have a clean ZANU-PF record to be considered.’ A majority of the vendors interviewed noted that: ‘This market belongs to the ruling party’ or ‘chinhu chedu isu ma ZANU-PF’ (this is our thing/market as ZANU-PF supporters).<sup>86</sup>

However, while clearly ZANU-PF aligned, the committee had become reluctant to align openly to ZANU-PF factions under Bholinja’s successor, Victor. Many vendors asserted that Victor deliberately chose not to be outspoken about factionalism to ‘protect business’.<sup>87</sup> However, other members of the market committee maintained ties with G40, as one of them explained: ‘To be honest *tinongotamba irikurira nokuti ndopatino-raramira*’ (We dance to the song that is playing at the time because this is where our livelihood is anchored).<sup>88</sup> The committee secured its powerful position through Tendai Savanhu (ZANU-PF MP for Mbare), who had shifted from Mujuru to G40 (Table 1). In 2017 various committee members were mobilizing vendors to attend Grace Mugabe’s rallies.

After Victor took over the chairmanship, the committee stopped keeping attendance registers for ZANU-PF and national events. Although the market would close during these days, vendors who ‘rented’ stalls could stay at home or sell informally on the streets without facing repercussions. Stall ‘owners’ were expected to regularly attend party events and risked being suspended from the market if they did not.<sup>89</sup> They also had to mobilize political support for ZANU-PF during elections. Vendors are expected to join a cell and be a card-carrying ZANU-PF member. Other informal rules included a ban on MDC-A party regalia, which is perceived as undermining ZANU-PF authority and openly discussing opposition politics. Rules were enforced by the committee and its ‘foot soldiers’; youth who would collect the fees and remove vendors from the market if they were in debt. One of the vendors asserted that: ‘Committee yedu inotonga nechitororo ukasaita zvanoda unoswera wadzingwa’ (our committee governs with an iron fist and if you do what they do not like, they expel you there and then).<sup>90</sup> Some former Chipangano members are still present in Mbare and certain

86. Interview, Mbare, 10 August 2019; Field Observation Notes, Mbare September 2020.

87. Interviews, Mbare, November–December 2019.

88. Interview, Mbare, 5 August 2019.

89. Interview, male vendor, Mbare, 10 July 2019.

90. Informal conversation, 17 July 2019.

committee members capitalize on the memories of violence and fear when charging high rentals and requiring contributions to renovations and funerals of committee members. A female committee member, Trish, secured her brokering position for her role in the ZANU-PF Women's League and employed 'lower' brokers who monitor vendors at her tables. She and three other women who had previously been part of the committee had 'hijacked' a public toilet and charge a fee for daily use and monthly payment of US dollars (USD) 2 per table. They were reported to be influential, using their ZANU-PF connections to command respect from male brokers and ordinary vendors.

With Chipangano and the Mujuru faction disempowered in 2014, violent coercion declined somewhat. After the November 2017 coup, coercion declined further while the power of market brokers weakened. The city council had regained Carter House from Chipangano and had some control over levying fees.<sup>91</sup> The Mupedzanhamo committee had a representative function to negotiate with city council over market facilities. However, tensions remained over high rentals for stalls in USD, charged by the committee/space barons in addition to council levies. Council officials continued to encounter resistance when collecting levies from the market, and complained that it was still losing millions of USD to ZANU-PF aligned space barons.<sup>92</sup> One recalled having received threatening phone calls over plans to audit tables.

Most vendors complied with rules for political conduct at the market to avoid repercussions for their trade and many attended national events under duress. Outside of the market setting, many males expressed themselves critically about the committee, while women vendors were observed to be more subdued and fearful. Only after the committee lost power during the lockdown (below) did some women dare to express themselves critically. At this point, even some 'footmen' of the committee were no longer loyal to their leaders and acknowledged that they had performed loyalty to pursue economic benefits.

Thus, protected by senior ZANU-PF actors, market-based brokers organize patronage 'from the middle': they both receive and distribute patronage resources, while engaging in the political mobilization and coercion of vendors. They negotiate patronage when manoeuvring senior ZANU-PF agents aligned with rival factions, yet also perpetuate factionalist politics when mobilizing vendors in support of rival candidates.

91. *The Herald*, 'Harare reclaims buildings in Mbare', 1 February 2019, <<https://www.herald.co.zw/harare-reclaims-buildings-in-mbare>> (20 April 2021).

92. *The Herald*, 'Space barons cost city millions', 6 May 2019, <<https://www.herald.co.zw/space-barons-cost-city-council-millions/>> (3 May 2021).

*Table 2* Coca Cola market-based brokers and allegiances.

<i>Years</i>	<i>Coca Cola market-based brokers</i>	<i>Allegiance</i>
2017	Coca Cola established	
2017	Alexio Mudzengerere (previously Chipangano) of 'Grassroots Empowerment', with lower-level, on-site broker. Gavin, leading Tongogara group. Smaller groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- George, leading Chitepo group.</li> <li>- Mbare 7 (some formerly Chipangano members)</li> <li>- Madam Gloria</li> </ul>	After 2014 Mudzengerere shifted from Mujuru to G40, operating in CBD. Gavin is Lacoste aligned and has connections in ZANU-PF Youth League. Madam Gloria (ZANU-PF Women's League)
2018	Competition mainly between Mudzengerere and Gavin	
2019	ZANU-PF seniors mandate 'election' of market committee, Gavin wins chairmanship	
2020	Construction modern market starts Tongogara co-opts Manager of Grassroots Empowerment during lockdown	

*Coca Cola: contestation*

While the city council was unable to gain ground at Mupedzanhamo, it had more control over Coca Cola market, a new market initiated by the council during relocations and evictions of vendors from CBD in 2017. While the city council had hoped to start with a clean sheet at Coca Cola, factionalist struggles were transported from the city centre. We shall demonstrate how factionalism fragmented authority at Coca Cola, which meant that vendors experienced less coercion than at Mupedzanhamo.

In 2017, a few hundred vendors arrived at Coca Cola market. Several ZANU-PF brokers (space barons) came with their 'associations' (Table 2).

A large tent at Coca Cola housed vendors of 'Grassroots Empowerment' association, led by Alexio Mudzengerere, who was allegedly earning thousands of USD a month in CBD. Vendors associated Mudzengerere with Chipangano. A different association, formed of groups that had operated at Rezende and Fourth Street and Copa Cabana, regrouped under one broker, whose immediate aides had direct links to a ZANU-PF Youth League member loyal to President Mnangagwa. The group's lead-broker, Gavin, used a nickname referring to a Crocodile and the group was named after a liberation hero that, at least to the vendors we interviewed, signalled a connection to Mnangagwa's Lacoste faction and Operation Restore Legacy.

Another group led by a young ZANU-PF activist named George arrived with his Chitepo group named after another liberation hero, a tactic used by lower-level party agents to achieve loyalty and claim leadership. The city council had erected tents for 'their' registered vendors. A group referred to as the 'Mbare youth' composed of former Chipangano members claimed a small number of stalls. Madam Gloria, connected to the Women's League, claimed several tables to rent out. Some of the storage-room guards had moved their tents from CBD to Coca Cola. They were all part of ZANU-PF cells, with posters of Mnangagwa pinned on the walls.

Soon after, the competition over space between different brokers grew tense. Tensions culminated in a physical fight between Mudzengerere's group and other groups early in 2018. The city council police intervened and eventually called in the Joint Operation Commission to organize space allocation. Mudzengerere, who had lost his political backing for siding with G40, saw that his share of market tables greatly reduced. Then in July 2019, ZANU-PF's Patrick Chinamasa, Chris Mutsvangwa, and other party officials made a brief appearance at a nearby shopping centre, instructing the groups to work together and elect one market committee. According to the vendors interviewed, the election was a 'show' to establish Gavin as chairperson. Mudzengerere's first man, his stall manager at Coca Cola, was excluded from the committee after losing the election.

The city council had a visible presence at Coca Cola throughout 2019, with officials collecting fees from all vendors and attending to queries from a temporary office on the fringe of the market, while the large market was constructed. On two occasions Mudzengerere and party youth had come with buses to take vendors to events. However, due to the fragmented nature of authority at Coca Cola, vendors experienced less pressure to obey than at Mupedzanhamo. Resistance to brokers was more salient and some openly challenged the mobilization to attend the anti-sanction marches in 2019.<sup>93</sup> The anti-sanctions marches were organized by ZANU-PF as a form of protest against sanctions imposed by the USA and European Union for its poor human rights record. In ZANU-PF rhetoric, the sanctions have caused the economic crisis, thus masking its own failures and mismanagement. Vendors were mobilized in large numbers to attend the anti-sanctions marches and their impact on ordinary people's lives. By December 2019 we still encountered vendors who were unaware of the new Coca Cola market committee. The lockdown in 2020 offered an opportunity for Gavin's group to further control by co-opting the main rival broker, the Manager of Grassroots Empowerment, and a 'marriage of convenience' was formed.

93. Interview, Mbare, 31 July 2019.

*Market politics during the 2020 pandemic*

On 26 March 2020, the government of Zimbabwe announced a full lockdown to curb the spread of Covid-19. Designated markets had to close.<sup>94</sup> The strict lockdown would last until mid-July 2020.<sup>95</sup> Here we will argue that ‘lockdown politics’ coalesced with factionalism, offering opposition-aligned actors the opportunity to contest hitherto powerful brokers at Mupedzanhamo, whereas brokers at Coca Cola consolidated their mediator role between the city council and vendors.

On the 18 April 2020, demolitions of illegal stalls started in Mbare. The demolitions were ordered by MINLG Secretary Churu, using the lockdown as an opportunity to clear illegal structures. Then Mayor Herbert Gomba first denounced the evictions, but he later published a series of tweets about council efforts to construct proper markets and attempts to eliminate space barons, who were taking 19 million dollars per year of revenues.<sup>96</sup> He named alleged space barons and promised:

‘By the time covid-19 ends we will be glad and ready to accommodate our vendors in the designated places being prepared by council thereby freeing them from the yoke of the oppressing space barons.’<sup>97</sup>

On 23 April 2020, the mayor and the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Harare Metropolitan (MINSPAD), issued a joint statement: a Special Allocation Committee that would involve members of the Provincial Joint Operations Command would now oversee stall allocation at the new designated spaces to ‘avoid partisanship’.<sup>98</sup>

The council started renovating facilities at Mupedzanhamo. Afraid the council would conduct an audit of tables, the committee started manoeuvring: they actively participated in the upgrading activities to monitor council activities closely and mobilized the vendors for cleaning activities.<sup>99</sup> They also sought audience with their councillor Martin Matinyanya (ZANU-PF), who promised stall ownership would not be affected. The market committee helped the city council to demarcate tables. At this point, MDC-A-aligned youth came to demand back the market tables they had lost in 2013, when the GNU ended. The tensions escalated into a fight between committee members and ZANU-PF youth and MDC-A youth.<sup>100</sup> One committee member fired two gunshots to disperse the people, after

94. Kiaka et al. ‘The street is ours’.

95. *The Herald*, ‘Mupedzanhamo market to reopen’, 6 July 2020, <<https://www.herald.co.zw/mupedzanhamo-market-to-reopen/>> (6 July 2020).

96. Herbert Gomba’s tweet at @gombaherbert on 19 April 2020.

97. Herbert Gomba’s tweet at @gombaherbert on 25 April 2020.

98. MINSPAD and City of Harare, ‘Joint statement’, 22 April 2020, <<https://twitter.com/cohsunshinecity/status/1253373466327343106?lang=en>> (23 April 2020).

99. Interview with market committee member, Mbare, 15 July 2020.

100. Blessing Masakadza, ‘ZANU-PF member in gunshot storm’, *Daily News*, 18 July 2020, <<https://www.dailynews.co.zw/amp/zanu-pf-member-in-gunshots-storm/>> (18 July 2020).



which security forces moved in.<sup>101</sup> MDC-A-aligned vendors showed their council registration to the police. The government ordered that the market remain closed until the matter of space barons and table allocation was resolved.<sup>102</sup> In line with its modernist vision of markets and the council's urban renewal vision of making Harare a world-class city by 2030, the market should only be reopened after it was upgraded to an orderly and formalized small business hub.<sup>103</sup>

In the meantime, street vending had sprouted on the streets of Mbare. Vendors displayed multiple tactics to continue business and defy lockdown measures, selling immediately outside Mupedzanhamo market and the yards of flats. Initially, they engaged in running battles with police and soldiers, but they then established a bribing routine as part of the negotiating of restrictions, with security forces collecting the 'fees' in the afternoons.<sup>104</sup> When the MDC-A members with registered tables realized that Mupedzanhamo market was not reopening soon, they started claiming open spaces outside the market. In our conversations with vendors, it emerged that most of these MDC-A youth were residents of Mbare and organized in local party networks. The MDC-A youth overpowered their ZANU-PF counterparts, initially by stopping ZANU-PF youth from charging exorbitant fees that ranged from USD 5–10 per day and ordering all vendors to pay USD 1 per day. This move endeared the MDC-A youth to many vendors operating on the streets, and MDC-A youth gained control over more spaces. One of the vendors told us that the MDC-A youth were well organized and related well to vendors. MDC-A youth gained influence, sometimes using intimidation and controlling large spaces on the streets and strategic sections.<sup>105</sup>

The shift from designated market to (illegal) street vending, breaking lockdown rules, prompted new brokerage tactics to navigate the police. Thus, the MDC-A youth developed as the new brokers in the streets and reportedly shared some revenue with the police and some city council officials for protection. The local police did not intervene when MDC-A youth used violence against ZANU-PF youth. ZANU-PF youth then started controlling other parts of the streets, sometimes collecting fees on behalf of the police and soldiers. Some of them, whom we knew to be active in ZANU-PF, were paying the MDC-A youth to operate at strategic spaces.

101. *iHarare*, 'Gunshots fired at Mupedzanhamo flea market', 15 July 2020, <<https://iharare.com/gunshots-fired-at-mupedzanhamo-flea-market/>> (15 July 2020).

102. Interview, Harare city council official, Harare, 18 January 2021.

103. *The Herald*. 'Mupedzanhamo to remain closed', 13 October 2020, <<https://www.herald.co.zw/mupedzanhamo-to-remain-closed/>> (21 May 2022).

104. See Kiaka et al. 'The street is ours' for similar findings.

105. Conversation notes, Mbare, January 2021; Blessing Chidakwa, 'Vendors lose forex to fake stall allocators', *The Herald*, 15 May 2020, <<https://www.herald.co.zw/vendors-lose-forex-to-fake-stall-allocators/>> (15 May 2020).

In October, Harare Provincial Development Coordinator, Tafadzwa Muguti, reiterated that all businesses need to be formalized and that Mupedzanhamo was to remain closed until the city council had a plan to deal with space barons.<sup>106</sup> Mupedzanhamo had not reopened at the time field research ended in March 2021. Committee members had gradually started moving into different ventures. Some of them were seemingly now siding with the MDC youth brokers, and some paid money to the MDC youth to access vending spaces outside the market. When asked about the committee in January 2021, vendors indicated it had become ‘insignificant’ as it had lost its political backing and could not negotiate the reopening of the market.<sup>107</sup> Vendors now dared to be critical of the committee. They complained that they had not earned much because of the high informal fees. Even ZANU-PF-aligned vendors expressed their disaffection:

‘People were fed up with the committee leadership, because of their cruelty and corruption; and they took people’s tables; and even if there are issues and grievances, they only favour their own men and women.’<sup>108</sup>

Hence, many supported the MDC youth who drove ZANU-PF youth out during the lockdown.

At Coca Cola market, the council approached the committee to organize the cleaning of the market for planned reopening in July, thus legitimizing its representative role while its leaders had hitherto not been recognized by all. Committee members started meeting officials at council offices to negotiate facilities. The two main rival brokers, the committee’s chairperson and the Manager of Grassroots Empowerment, started to collaborate more closely. They were often seen together when collecting contributions (10 USD each, for the construction of a fence and hand sanitizers and thermometers), registering names, and reorganizing tables to secure their share of revenue and ensure that ‘their’ vendors would eventually have spaces in the new market. Coca Cola reopened in July 2020. The committee negotiated with city council to allow space allocation in the future market done by groups rather than individuals, while the city council planned to register only individuals, to eliminate space barons.<sup>109</sup> However, the committee’s strategy of collaborating with council worked to their advantage as they maintained some control. While the committee informally collected fees on

106. *Sunday Mail*, ‘Muguti: “My job is to restore Harare’s glory”’, 1 November 2020, <<https://www.sundaymail.co.zw/my-job-is-to-restore-harares-glory>> (12 March 2021); *The Herald*, ‘Mupedzanhamo to remain closed’, 13 October 2020, <<https://www.herald.co.zw/mupedzanhamo-to-remain-closed/>> (13 October 2020).

107. Field Observation notes 20 January 2021.

108. ‘Vanhu havachadi hutungamiriri hwanga huripo because hutsinye nehuwori vaitora ma tables evanhu and even mukaita nyaya inoda kutongwa havatongi zviri fair vanofevha vavo nevakadzi’, Field Observation notes January 2021.

109. Interview, committee member, Coca Cola, 18 July 2020.

top of the council levies, the city council does receive revenue.<sup>110</sup> The city council's senior officials are determined to eliminate space barons at both markets but viewed the brokers at Coca Cola as relatively less threatening, resulting in a negotiated form of party patronage that involves council officials.

### *Conclusion*

In dominant party states, party brokers operate for the ruling party as a system by organizing patronage on the ground and through political mobilization, which differentiates this form of patronage from diffuse patron–client networks.<sup>111</sup> Our article contributes to this debate, firstly, by showing the imbrication of patronage, political mobilization and surveillance, and (threat of) violence in the role of the party brokers. This extends discussions of the role of brokerage as mere distributors of patronage resources and advances debates on the interaction between clientelist politics and other forms of political mobilization,<sup>112</sup> while foregrounding the use of coercion in authoritarian, dominant party states. Ruling party brokers, therefore, play an important role in reproducing authoritarian politics on the ground.

Secondly, the article has contributed to debates on the vertical organization of ruling party patronage by arguing that brokers operate 'from the middle' as they both receive and redistribute patronage resources. This extends scholarship that emphasizes 'top-down' perspectives on clientelism, whereas other studies have explored agency 'from below' on the part of vendors and client populations.<sup>113</sup> As Alexander Beresford contends, brokers gain significant power because they can grant and deny access to resources within party networks.<sup>114</sup> Adding to this, we show how they shape the room for political agency among vendors by enforcing rules for political conduct through coercion.

Thirdly, we demonstrated that brokerage can evolve over time in response to dynamics among the ruling elites and in a wider context. While not politicians themselves, brokers rely on higher-level ZANU-PF politicians and officials. They need to negotiate, manoeuvre, and/or align with higher-level actors to secure their position when needed, thus promoting

110. Committee members suggested multiple times that the officials receive bribes.

111. Behuria et al. 'Studying political settlements'; Bénéit-Gbaffou, 'Up close and personal'; Dawson, 'Patronage from below'.

112. Albertus et al., *Coercive distribution*; Behuria et al., 'Studying political settlements', p. 521; Gray and Whitfield, 'Reframing African political economy'; Zarazaga, 'Brokers beyond clientelism'.

113. Goodfellow, 'Seeing political settlements'; Kiaka et al. 'The street is ours'; McGregor and Chatiza, 'Partisan citizenship'.

114. Beresford, 'Power, patronage and gatekeeper politics'; Boogaard et al. 'Norms, networks, power'.

factionalist politics on the ground when liaising with rival actors. Previous studies have shown how intra-party rivalries can fuel violence locally,<sup>115</sup> and our analysis over time showed that violence increased when brokers faced competition for control over their patronage resource: market stalls. Mupedzanhamo-based brokers first increased surveillance and use of violence when challenged by the MDC, and factionalism subsequently created competition among brokers operating for rival networks. At Coca Cola, tensions mounted when brokers aligned with G40 and Lacoste tried to control spaces. The lockdown caused a rupture, which the city council and opposition-aligned vendors used to reclaim control over Mupedzanhamo. Once powerful ZANU-PF-aligned brokers lost power for siding with losing ZANU-PF factions/groupings and exited the patronage network, whereas opposition-aligned actors emerged as new brokers. The vertical interactions between actors in (rival) patronage networks will be an important area of research into urban politics and the variation in dynamics across different urban spaces.

115. Dawson, 'Patronage from below'.