



***Women and Social Capital in  
Zimbabwe: A Statistical  
Analysis***

**Report produced by the Research and Advocacy  
Unit (RAU)**

**December 2017**

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## Executive summary

Social capital has become an increasingly investigated variable in understanding citizen participation, or lack of it, in public life and politics. Whilst there are reservations about the explanatory power of the concept, there are also demonstrations that social capital is a factor that influences communities, lowers crime, and may increase political participation. Although demographic variables do not seem to influence the growth of social capital, at least one study indicates that there are some gender differences (Onyx & Bullen. 2000).

There are few studies of social capital in African countries, which is interesting given the strong and central role that women play in communities, and especially rural communities. One study has examined the relationship between social capital and political violence (Bhavnani & Backer. 2007), but the relationship between social capital and active citizenship more generally remains virgin territory. A recent Zimbabwean study, which included social capital as one variable in examining active citizenship, found differences between urban and rural residency in two measures of social capital, *intimate* and *institutional trust* (RAU. 2015). However, this study did not examine social capital in the broader sense, including belonging to community groups or attending community meetings, for example.

The present study examined social capital in women using the data from the last three rounds of the Afrobarometer surveys on Zimbabwe: Round 5 (2012), Round 6 (2014), and Round 7 (2017). A measure of social capital was constructed using six questions common to all three rounds, and tested this against seven measures of public interest and participation, as well as four demographic variables (age, residence, employment and education). The measures of public interest and participation were also constructed from questions common to all three rounds: *access to information*, *freedoms*, *political participation*, *agency*, *support for democracy*, and *political trust*. A seventh measure, *lived poverty*, was included to check for possible confounding on the *residence* variable: it cannot be assumed that poverty in Zimbabwe is wholly a feature of the rural areas in the current economic climate.

The data was analysed in SPSS (20) looking at correlations, factor analysis, and tests of means (t-test).

Social capital in women is associated with *Freedoms*, *Political participation*,; *Agency*, *Support for Democracy*, and *Political trust*. Social capital in women is associated with believing that have the basic freedoms of speech and association; actively participate in elections by voting or working for a party or candidate; will contact MPs, local councillors or government officials; are supporters of democracy; and trust most public officials, from the president to the courts.

Factor analysis produced four main factors, termed tentatively “*Middle class*”, “*Active citizens*”, “*Politically engaged*”, and “*Employed*”. The category of people described in the first factor, “*Middle class*”, seems very similar to a factor in a previous study, which was termed “*disconnected democrats*”. The second factor, *Social capital*, loads on “*Active citizens*”, together with *Political Trust*, *Freedoms*, and *Support for Democracy*. The third factor, “*politically engaged*”, suggests a group of citizens that are actively engaged in both electoral politics, *political participation*, as well as being involved in more continuous political activity through contacting duty bearers, *Agency*.

Testing a number of hypotheses to try to establish causal relationships revealed a significant relationship between persons with “*high social capital*” and all the measures of interest and participation, excepting *access to information*. When these relationships were further tested

using residence as the dependent variable, rural residence proved to be the variable underpinning the possession of “*high social capital*”.

The findings support the more general picture about social capital: the association between social capital and interest and participation is positive. The most interesting finding is that *Social Capital*, as we have defined it, is a property of the rural areas and rural women. This replicates other studies on active citizenship. It is good to bear in mind, however, that the components of Social Capital here may well reflect aspects of rural life that are not necessarily voluntary. *Attending a community meeting, belonging to a community group, and not being careful what you say in public* could also be associated with some of the compulsory aspects of rural life, and may also be associated with political party affiliation or participation in coerced political activity. It is worth noting that not all urban women will live in low Social Capital environments, neither will all rural women live in high Social Capital environments.

Overall, it seems safe to conclude that Social Capital leads to greater participation, but there must be reservations about the finding that this will be necessarily greater in rural rather than urban women.

It also seems the case that there are too easy assumptions about the possibilities for engaging urban women in the collective life of the country. On these findings, urban women seem to have less agency than their rural counterparts, and hence any attempt to foster their agency will need to understand more carefully their inhibitions and the barriers.

## Background

The term “social capital” has received near-exponential attention in recent decades. Although originally elaborated by Coleman (1990), the major association has been with the work of Robert Putnam (Putnam.1995). The concept has deeply engaged political scientists and others (Fukayama. 2001), but has not been without its critics (van Deth. 2001; Durlauf. 2000).

For the supporters of the concept, social capital is *structural* (referring to networks of social relationship), *cultural* (referring to social norms and values), and even *psychological* (referring to properties such as trust and self-efficacy). The presence of a high degree of social capital is argued to be one of the strong underpinnings of democracy. As Fukayama (2001) puts this:

*Social capital is important to the efficient functioning of modern economies, and is the sine qua non of stable liberal democracy. It constitutes the cultural component of modern societies, which in other respects have been organized since the Enlightenment on the basis of formal institutions, the rule of law and rationality<sup>1</sup>.*

Social capital thus is argued to be the bedrock of functioning democracy, and the presence of varieties of civic and social associations is assumed to contribute to more active citizenship. In the West at least, and following Putnam, there is increasing concern about the declining participation of citizens in elections, together with concern that citizens are also less interested in participating in social and civic networks and associations. Here, there are assumptions of an interactive relationship between social capital and active citizenship. It also seems evident that social capital is what is implicit in the idea of civil society as *associational life*.

Putnam distinguished two different forms of social capital; *bridging* social capital, which builds links between groups, and *bonding* social capital, which solidifies links between groups. Of course, as Durlauf (2000) points out, these are not necessarily separated in either time or place, and often operate concurrently. It is useful to see that there may be different processes operating as social capital, but it is also not useful to suggest that they cannot operate concurrently. Furthermore, again as Durlauf points out, there is a very serious problem with assumptions about causality: does social capital create active citizens, or is social capital *created by* active citizens. A recent Zimbabwean study showed a strong association between active citizenship and support for democracy (RAU. 2016), but this was correlational not causal.

Additionally, there are problems with the assumed relationship of other concepts such as *trust* and *reciprocity*. These are assumed to be critical concomitants of social capital: obviously, it is impossible to conceive of social networks that are not based in trust and reciprocal treatment of the members of the association or network, but what are the contributions of trust and reciprocity.

In an empirical analysis of social capital and its relationship to political participation, van Deth (2001), provides modest evidence for the concept. Initially distinguishing between two different forms of social capital – *individual attributes* found in networks and *collective goods* available to all citizens – he goes to draw four major conclusions from his empirical investigation:

- Trust is not relevant for the explanation of political engagement. Very few studies show a positive relationship between trust and political engagement, and these show very modest effects;

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<sup>1</sup> Fukayama, F (2001), p.7.

- Membership in voluntary associations is positively related to political engagement;
- Conventional modes of political participation are strongly related to membership in voluntary associations, and, the less conventional the mode of political engagement, the smaller the relationship to membership of voluntary associations;<sup>2</sup>
- There is little evidence for causal relations between membership of voluntary associations and political participation, with most evidence being only correlational.

There is still much to be done to fully understand social capital and its relationship to active citizenship, but this has not dampened enthusiasm for the concept which has nonetheless received increasing attention. It is not merely in the domain of political or *vertical* participation that social capital is seen as important, and much work has also focused on the community, or *horizontal* participation. This was an important point made by Putnam (1993) earlier on. Where vertical relationships dominate (as in Zimbabwe, for instance), civic initiative is discouraged and social capital is undermined. Horizontal relationships, assumed to require trust and reciprocity, will generate social capital, and can be seen, for example, in communities where crime is low and little formal policing is required. Thus, community becomes a critical feature of social capital. Additionally, politics is not merely a concern with representation and state institutions, but operates wherever and whenever human beings act in common enterprise (Leftwich.2009).

An empirical examination of social capital in five Australian communities provides additional food for thought (Onyx & Bullen.2000). Based on a questionnaire investigation, with 1,211 subjects, factor analysis revealed eight independent factors – *community, agency, trust, workplace, neighbor, tolerance, friends, and value of life*. Each factor was associated with specific behaviours. For example, *agency* was associated with *took initiative at work, helped workmate, free to speak out, seeks mediation for dispute, and can find information*. Interestingly, social capital in this study was not associated with demographic variables: age, gender, work, salary or qualification levels did not correlate with the eight factors. But, there were several findings in respect of demographics:

- Women were less likely to feel safe in their local communities than men;
- People with more children were likely to participate more in the local community than those with fewer children;
- The longer one had lived in a community, the more likely there would be stronger neighborhood connections.

So, at least according to Onyx and Bullen, social capital seems to connote a communitarian variable and suggests *collective goods available to all citizens*, van Deth's second meaning for social capital (van Deth.2001).

There is one detailed African study on social capital, examining the relationship between social capital and political violence (Bhavnani & Backer. 2007), which did include Zimbabwe among the 16 countries studied. In summary, the study showed strong relations between various factors hypothesized to be associated with social capital: *associational membership, civic engagement, trust, social cohesion and equality*. The study found that membership in professional and business associations was significantly more likely to be

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<sup>2</sup> Here see also Finkel (1987), and the finding that unconventional participation (aggression) is negatively related to political efficacy and support for regimes.

associated with political violence than was membership in religious groups. Zimbabwean citizens were shown overall to be mostly (85%) of the view that violence was never justified.<sup>3</sup> Zimbabwe was actually one of the countries with the highest frequencies of repudiating violence, but repudiating violence does not necessarily also mean that Zimbabweans are active citizens in other ways.

For Zimbabwe then, how might this all work? Conceptual clarity is obviously crucial in trying to do research on active citizenship and social capital, and, as this brief review hopefully shows, it may depend on who is doing the looking and what he or she is looking for. For political scientists, both concepts are obviously related to political participation and to the relations between active citizenship, social capital, political participation, and democracy (or not). For those interested in development, these terms may be less useful, as Durlauf suggests. Perhaps it has to do with the distinction between civil-political rights and socio-economic rights, but even this may be an arbitrary division, and maybe top-down (vertical relations, or the state and the citizen) and bottom-up (horizontal relations, or the citizen and the community) might be more helpful.

In the context of Zimbabwe, and given the marginalization of the Zimbabwean citizen and a predatory state (Mandaza. 2016; Bratton. 2014; Bratton & Masunungure. 2011), examining these issues bottom-up, or horizontally, makes the most sense, particularly if the concern is with the more marginalized members of Zimbabwe, women and the youth. For sure the expressed concerns of Zimbabweans are very fundamental; socio-economic rights and the delivery of public goods and services. They also express very clearly the enormous difficulties in dealing with their civil and political rights, where they have little voice and even less participation.

Additionally, whilst political violence is obviously a very important factor affecting civic activity, and may be the major explanatory variable in determining why Zimbabweans are apparently so “risk averse” (Masunungure et al. 2017), there may be other factors that influence political and civic participation. Political violence has been greatly reduced since the 2008 elections, but it remains the case that Zimbabweans remain risk averse, and women now slightly more risk averse than men (RAU & MPOI. 2018). For women, it may easily be hypothesized that patriarchy (and poverty) also exercises a powerful inhibitory influence upon them. Thus, it is worth exploring whether the

### ***Women and Social Capital***

It is evident that women have wholly different sets of obligations and duties to men in most societies, and, in Zimbabwe, these are also different between rural and urban women. Whilst a very dominant patriarchy affects women differentially, it is evident that the effect of this patriarchy will be generally greater on rural women. It is also the case that women develop much more cohesive social networks and associations than men, especially around religious affiliation.<sup>4</sup> These networks and associations are crucial for women sustaining both their work and their family obligations, as well as assisting women in many other ways, such as the prevention of HIV (Gregson et al. 2011). However, in examining social capital and women, it is the wider engagement that is of interest, the extent do women in Zimbabwe participate in civic and political affairs. There can be no doubt that women dominate the multiplicity of associational groups within communities dealing with the myriad of challenges facing rural and urban poor, and certainly women comprise the vast majority in

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<sup>3</sup> Bhavnani & Backer (2007), Table 5, *Attitudes to Violence*, p20.

<sup>4</sup> In the Afrobarometer Round Seven (2017 survey on Zimbabwe, 46% of women were *active members* or *leaders* of religious groups as opposed to 35% of men. Similarly, in Round Six (2014), the comparative figures were women (49%) and men (30%).

the rural labour force, but to what extent does women's influence extend beyond this, and how do they see this.

It is also the case that urban women, and especially middle class women, eschew participation in socio-political life, except perhaps going to church and belonging to a church organisation (RAU. 2017; RAU. 2016 (a); RAU. 2016 (b)). This is an important relationship, however, for this association provides an inhibition against political violence (Bhavnani & Backer. 2007).

A previous examination of active citizenship and social capital in Zimbabwe, using the Round 5 (2012) data, but not disaggregated by gender, social capital was measured using only indicators of trust, *intimate trust* and *institutional trust* (RAU. 2015). Both measures of trust were strongly correlated with rural but not urban residence and with affiliation to ZANU-PF. The wider range of variables that are assumed to operate within social capital, such as membership of voluntary organisations or engagements with community agencies, for example, were not included in this study. Furthermore, social capital was not examined as an independent variable.

This was the focus of this research: to examine social capital in women and the ways in which this might affect their political participation.

## Methods

For this study, we used the data from three rounds of the Afrobarometer surveys Round 5 (2012), Round 6 (2014), and Round 7 (2017). After cleaning, the three databases were combined into one overall data-base in Excel and then analysed in SPSS (version 20).

### *Constructing a measure of Social Capital*

The first problem to be solved was to construct a measure of social capital. Using indicators from other studies (Onyx & Bullen.2000; Vyncke et al. 2012), a list of six questions used in Rounds 5 (2012), Round 6 (2014), and Round 7 (2017):

#### **Round 5:**

1. How often felt unsafe walking in neighbourhood
2. Attend a community meeting
3. Join others to raise an issue
4. Member of voluntary association or community group
5. How often careful what you say
6. Trust neighbours<sup>5</sup>

#### **Round 6:**

1. How often felt unsafe walking in neighbourhood
2. Attend a community meeting
3. Member of voluntary association or community group
4. Join others to raise an issue
5. How often careful what you say
6. Like, dislike or not care as neighbours: people of different ethnicity

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<sup>5</sup> The equivalent questions from Rounds 6 and 7 was not asked in Round 5, so we chose the closest question to these.

## Round 7:

1. How often felt unsafe walking in neighbourhood
2. Attend a community meeting
3. Join others to raise an issue
4. Member of voluntary association or community group
5. How often careful what you say
6. Like, dislike or not care as neighbours: people of different ethnicity

These questions, and all the questions for the other measures, were turned into binary variables, and all scored in the positive direction. For example, the question on being careful what you say was scored positive if the response was in the direction of NOT being careful. This gave an overall score for the presence of social capital of six (6).<sup>6</sup>

### *Constructing measures of participation*

The other indices were derived as follows:

- **Lived Poverty** (5) – *how often have gone without the following: food, water, medical care, fuel for cooking, cash income;*<sup>7</sup>
- **Access to information** (4) – *how often do you use the following: radio, television, newspaper, internet;*
- **Freedoms** (2) – *freedom to say what you think, freedom to join any political organization;*
- **Political Participation** (3) – *voted in last election, attended a campaign meeting or rally, and worked for a candidate or party;*
- **Agency** (3) – *contacted local government councillor, Member of Parliament (MP), or official of a government agency;*
- **Support for Democracy**(2) – *support for democracy and extent of democracy;*
- **Political Trust** (8) – *trust the following: president, parliament/national assembly, national electoral commission, local government council, ruling party, police, army, and courts of law.*<sup>8</sup>

### *Hypotheses*

Given our overall research question – *do women in high social capital environments engage actively in the general political life of Zimbabwe* – it was appropriate to generate some testable hypotheses. These are described as follows:

- **Access to Information (Info)** – Social Capital (**SocCap**) should be associated with greater interest in information;
- **Freedom** – Social Capital should be associated with greater perception of freedoms;

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<sup>6</sup> This had acceptable reliability: Cronbach's Alpha – Social Capital (0.91).

<sup>7</sup> Lived Poverty was included in order to check whether possible differences between rural and urban respondents might be confounded by poverty since Zimbabweans have suffered severe effects from the economic decline in the past decade or so.

<sup>8</sup> These all have strong reliability (Cronbach's Alpha): Access to Information (0.95); Freedoms (0.99); Political Participation (0.82); Agency (0.77); Support for Democracy (0.93); Political Trust (0.99).

- **Political participation (PolPartic)** – Social Capital should lead to greater political participation;
- **Agency** – Social Capital should result in greater Agency;
- **Support for Democracy (Democracy)** – Social Capital should be associated with greater support for democracy;
- **Political trust (PolTrust)** – Social Capital should lead to greater political trust.

## Results

**Table 1: Correlations between measures<sup>9</sup>**

Firstly, what are the associations between *Social Capital* and the other measures of socio-political participation?

Variable	Correlated variables
<b>Rural</b>	Age (1.00); Social Capital (0.206); Freedoms (0.097); Political participation (0.091); Support for Democracy (0.046); Political trust (0.18)
<b>Age</b>	Social capital (0.79); Freedoms (0.071); Political participation (0.064); Support for democracy (0.70); Political trust (0.068)
<b>Social Capital</b>	Freedoms 90.167); Political participation (0.044); Agency (0.191); Support for Democracy (0.239); Political trust (0.275)
<b>Access to information</b>	Close to political party 90.281); Tertiary education (0.38)
<b>Freedoms</b>	Agency (0.036); Support for democracy 90.147); Political trust (0.258)
<b>Political participation</b>	Agency (0.70); Support for Democracy (0.46); Close to political party (0.55)
<b>Agency</b>	Support for democracy (0.45); Political trust (0.97)
<b>Support for Democracy</b>	Political trust (1.00); Close to political party (1.00); Employed (0.999)
<b>Political trust</b>	Close to political party (1.00); Employed (0.999)
<b>Close to political party</b>	Employed (0.999)
<b>Employed</b>	Tertiary education (0.83)

As can be seen in Table 1, *Social capital* is significantly correlated with the following: *Freedoms*; *Political participation*; *Agency*; *Support for democracy*; and *Political Trust*. Urban residence is negatively correlated. As was indicated above (van Deth, 2001), trust and political participation are weakly related, which was replicated here with a weak (non-significant) relationship between *political trust* and *political participation*. It is also important to note that *Social Capital* was strongly associated with *political participation*, but on closer inspection this was with *attending campaign meetings* or *working for a candidate* rather than *voting in the last election*.<sup>10</sup> This is interesting because the general finding has been that

<sup>9</sup> Pearson's *r*.

<sup>10</sup> **Voting in last election** (0.006; *ns*); **Attending a campaign rally or meeting** (0.097; *p*=0.01); **Working for a candidate** (0.108; *p*=0.001).

Zimbabwean citizens will vote but not participate in other aspects of elections. There are extremely strong associations between some of the other measures as well. *Political Trust* is strongly correlated with *Freedoms* and *Democracy*, as are *Freedoms* and *Democracy* highly correlated.

Since there were some extremely strong associations, it seemed worthwhile examining whether there was an underlying structure.

### **Factor Analysis**

A Principal Components Factor Analysis was carried out with the eight main variables (*Lived Poverty, Access to Information, Freedoms, Political Participation, agency, Support for Democracy, close to political party* and *Political Trust*), and five marker variables (*year, age, residence, employment, and education*), using SPSS (Version 20). Correlations and their significance were calculated, and a total of 18 factors extracted on initial solution. Seven main components were identified with eigenvalues of 1 or more, and with a total cumulative variance of 70.81%. These seven components were not correlated on a bivariate analysis, suggesting that the components were orthogonal, and hence an orthogonal rotation using the VARIMAX rotation was carried out. This then gave the four orthogonal factors, with the cumulative variance of 54.95%.

**Table 2: Principal Components Analysis (PCA) on main variables**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Loadings</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Middle class</b>	Access to Information (0.810); Urban (0.795); Tertiary education (0.625); Close to party (0.612).	21.45%
<b>Active citizens</b>	Political Trust (0.679); Freedoms (0.663); Support for Democracy (0.635); Social Capital (0.552)	14.13%
<b>Politically engaged</b>	Political Participation (0.815); Agency (0.499)	9.96%
<b>Employed</b>	Employed( 0.841); Freedoms (0.244)	9.42%

The first factor, notionally termed “middle class”, loaded on three variables that would usually be associated with middle class, but had the additional variable, *close to political party*, as part of the component (RAU.2015). This is interesting because factor analysis in a previous study did not have this loading, and this group, was wholly unaffiliated to any political party. The second factor, termed “active citizenship”, was similar to that of the previous study, but is more nuanced and includes the variable of interest, Social Capital. The third factor, “political participation”, loads unremarkably on *political participation* and *agency*. Thus, those that participate in direct political activity, such as *voting, attending a campaign meeting, or working for a party*, are also those that will engage officials such as *MPs, local councillors* and *government officials*. Finally, the fourth factor, employed (in full-time employment), are those that feel that can exercise (weakly) their basic freedoms of *saying what they feel* and *joining any political organisation that they feel*.

The very interesting finding is that social capital does not imply much agency: this group espouses support for democracy, feels that it has freedoms, and has strong political trust. However, the key feature that social capital should create is political engagement, but, as we have defined this, social capital in Zimbabwean women is wholly related to local activity – belonging to a community organisation, attending community meetings, etc. It does not appear that social capital facilitates participation in wider community, social of political

life. This corroborates other work that suggests that women in general are disengaged from politics *qua* politics.

To further examine this, we then tested these largely correlational findings by testing the hypotheses detailed earlier.

### **Testing Social Capital**

The first set of hypotheses revolved around the theory that social capital should engender greater participation. Using a cut-off on the social capital score based on the mean and the standard deviation, with the highest possible score being six (6), we hypothesized that a high social capital score would be greater than four (4).

**Table 3: Effects of Hi and Lo Social Capital on participation**

	<b>Hi Social Capital (≥4) N=726 (24%)</b>	<b>Lo Social Capital (&gt;4) N=2279 (76%)</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig (2-tailed)</b>
Access to Information	.93	1.06	3003	<b>-2.435</b>	0.015
Freedoms	1.13	.86	3003	<b>7.165</b>	0.000
Political Participation	2.01	1.88	3003	<b>1.531</b>	ns
Agency	.18	.04	3003	<b>9.303</b>	0.000
Support for Democracy	1.83	1.34	3003	<b>10.023</b>	0.000
Political Trust	3.25	1.94	3003	<b>12.311</b>	0.000

As seen in Table 3, apart from *access to information*, high social capital resulted in a range of significant differences. Those with high social capital were more likely to claim *freedoms*, *political participation*, *agency*, *support for democracy*, and *political trust*. This appeared to moderate the findings of the factor analysis, but there remained the finding in the first factor: that “middle class” was not related to social capital. Thus, we re-ran the analysis using residence, rural or urban, as the dependent variable, and included social capital as one of the independent variables.

This new analysis is shown in Table 4. Rural women show significantly higher scores on every measure, including social capital, apart from access to information. Thus, it can be concluded that rural women have higher social capital than urban women, but are also much more participatory in socio-political life.

**Table 4: Comparison of Rural and Urban women and Social Capital**

	<b>Urban N=1065 (35.5%)</b>	<b>Rural N=1938 (64.5%)</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig (2-tailed)</b>
Social Capital	2.60	2.71	3001	<b>-11.530</b>	0.000
Access to Information	1.98	0.50	3001	<b>37.891</b>	0.000
Freedoms	0.81	.99	3001	<b>-5.360</b>	0.000
Political Participation	1.67	2.05	3001	<b>-5.029</b>	0.000
Agency	0.04	.09	3001	<b>-3.820</b>	0.000
Support for Democracy	1.38	1.50	3001	<b>-2.510</b>	0.012
Political Trust	1.63	2.60	3001	<b>-10.035</b>	0.000

## Conclusions

The findings support the more general picture about social capital outlined in the brief overview: the association between social capital and interest and participation is positive. The most interesting finding is that *Social Capital*, as we have defined this, is a property of the rural areas and rural women. This replicates other studies on active citizenship. Interestingly, urban women are associated with *access to information*, and no other measure of participation. This too replicates other recent research (RAU. 2016 (a); RAU.2016 (b)). It is good to bear in mind, however, that the components of Social Capital here may well reflect aspects of rural life that are not necessarily voluntary. *Attending a community meeting*, *belonging to a community group*, and *not being careful what you say in public* could also be associated with some of the compulsory aspects of rural life, and may also be associated with political party affiliation. For example, attendance at community meetings called by traditional leaders may not be wholly voluntary, nor at meetings called by ZANU-PF. Furthermore, liking neighbours of a different ethnicity may also be different in the relatively more homogenous rural setting.

Nonetheless, the rural and urban differences are marked, and need more careful investigation. They may also indicate differences that should be taken into account when planning interventions for women.

It is worth noting that not all urban women will live in low Social Capital environments, neither will all rural women live in high Social Capital environments. Thus, it is important to partial out the contribution that Social Capital itself makes to participation. As seen in Table 2 (above), the higher the Social Capital the greater the political participation, agency, the support for democracy and political trust. This supports the general theory, and not merely in an associational manner. The hypotheses are all confirmed, save that high Social Capital does not lead to a greater interest in information. This last may not be entirely accurate however, as a socio-economic factor may be a confounding variable: access to information is both a feature of economics and access generally. Poorer women, and rural women, will certainly have less access to both newspaper and the internet, and possibly even television.

Overall, it seems safe to conclude that Social Capital leads to greater participation, but there must be reservations about the finding that this will be necessarily greater in rural rather than urban women.

It also seems the case that there are too easy assumptions about the possibilities for engaging urban women in the collective life of the country. On these findings, urban women seem to have less agency than their rural counterparts, and hence any attempt to foster their agency will need to understand more carefully their inhibitions and the barriers. It may well be, as has been found for middle class women (RAU.2016 (a); RAU. 2016 (b)), that this will require different strategies, and strategies that take into account the very different lives of urban women.

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## Appendix 1.

### Correlations

	Rural	Age	Social capital	Poverty	Access to info	freedoms	Political participation	Agency	Democracy	Political trust	Close to political party	Employment	Tertiary education
Rural	1	.100*	.206**	.019	-.569**	.097**	.091**	.070**	.046	.180**	-.356**	-.108*	-.358**
Age		1	.079**	-.061**	-.116**	.071**	.064**	.065**	-.016	.068**	-.028	-.107**	-.099**
Social capital			1	.181**	-.048**	.167**	.044*	.191**	.239**	.275**	-.039*	-.115**	-.126**
Lived poverty				1	.139**	.023	-.085**	-.015	.078**	.056**	-.072**	-.105**	.066**
Access to info					1	-.087**	.010	-.006	.012	-.183**	.281**	.015	.380**
Freedoms						1	.029	.036*	.147**	.258**	.031	.010	.023
Political participation							1	.070**	.046*	.028	.055**	.012	-.159**
Agency								1	.045*	.097**	-.012	.002	-.046*
Democracy									1	1.000**	1.000**	.999**	-.027
Political trust										1	1.000**	.999**	-.186**
Close to political party											1	.999**	.193**
Employment												1	.083**
Tertiary													1

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).