

Arnstein's ladder of participation and citizen participation in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

The last three decades in Zimbabwe have left a long-lasting impression on the political landscape and a test for democracy. The period has proved that the dynamic nature of Zimbabwean politics has made good governance and a healthy democracy elusive. At the same time, citizen participation and freedoms such as those of assembly, association and the right to participate in the governance of the country has equally been threatened. Existing legislation has not helped the situation either. Through existing legislation (and enacting other repressive pieces of legislation) the Zimbabwean government has continued to brazenly violate civil liberties, erode political space and limiting political activity, resulting in diminishing citizen participatory spaces and deteriorating democracy. This paper discusses the Zimbabwean political environment on the context of the extent to which participatory democracy has been dispensed to the generality of the populace. In addition,