Chapter 1
Introduction to the Urban Geography Scape of Zimbabwe

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Abstract Zimbabwe is a dynamic country that has undergone several socio-economic and political changes over the last four decades. The urban areas have been significantly transformed as a result of these changes which is the focus of this book that focuses on the urban geography of Zimbabwe. Specifically, the post-independence context is considered where the various issues pertaining to the evolution, development and planning of the cities are explored. The chapter thus introduces and provides a background of the post-independence socio-economic and political context of urban Zimbabwe. This background context is given in relation to the post-colonial theory which is the lens through which the book has been developed. The paradigms and perspectives of urban geography for Zimbabwe are spelt out followed by the structure of the book which provides a roadmap of the book.

Keywords Postcolonial · Paradigm · Perspective · Urban geography

1.1 Context and Background

Since 2009, more than half of the world's population now resides in urban areas and the twenty-first century has come to be referred to as the urban age (UN 2009). It is estimated that by 2050, the percentage of the global population residing in urban areas will have risen to 68%, and 90% of the additional urban citizens will be accommodated in cities and towns in Africa and Asia as these two regions have the highest rates of urbanisation (Githara et al. 2020; UN-Habitat 2015). Currently, only 43%

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of the African population reside in urban areas but the rapid rate of urbanisation in the continent, which is only second to Asia, will lead to urban spaces accommodating 61.6% of the continent's population by 2050. This increasing concentration of people in cities and towns has brought new dimensions and perspectives for urban scholarship focusing on different aspects of cities.

Zimbabwe is not an exception to the global trend, as the country has been urbanising rapidly over the past years. With an annual urbanisation rate of 4.3% per annum, Zimbabwe, like most of the countries in the Global South, is experiencing rapid urbanisation (Government of Zimbabwe 2015). Sixteen per cent of the country's population is accommodated in Harare, the capital and dominant city that represents a multitude of urban challenges that transcend the spatial, social, economic, environmental and political spectrum (City of Harare 2012; Matamanda and Chirisa 2014; Mbara et al. 2014; Mbiba 2017). Rapid urban growth continues in the other cities and towns (see Table 1.1).

The urbanisation process in the country is largely a result of push factors such as famine and drought, failure of harvests, poverty and landlessness, rather than the pull factors of economic opportunities described in the National Habitat Agenda III Report of 2015 (Government of Zimbabwe 2015; Matamanda 2020a). Therefore, the prospects of better employment, higher standards of living, better educational opportunities, diversity and improved health facilities in urban areas remain a utopian dream as cities and towns in Zimbabwe are overwhelmed by the demands of the fast-growing population.

Beyond the demographics, urban areas are increasingly becoming complex spaces that need to be explored beyond the urban age thesis, as suggested by proponents such as Brenner and Schmid (2014). The scholarship and fixation on the urban

Table 1.1 Population figures for selected towns and cities in Zimbabwe

Town/City	1982 Census	1992 Census	2002 Census	2012 Census	2017
Harare	656,011	1,189,103	1,444,534	1,485,231	1,592,368
Bulawayo	413,814	621,742	676,787	653,337[a]	700,466
Chitungwiza	172,556	274,912	321,782	356,840	382,581
Mutare	69,621	131,367	170,106	187,621	201,155
Gweru	78,918	128,037	141,260	157,865	169,253
Kwekwe	47,607	75,425	93,072	100,900	108,178
Kadoma	44,613	67,750	76,173	92,469	99,139
Masvingo	30,523	51,743	69,993	87,886	94,226
Chinhoyi	24,322	43,054	56,794	77,929	83,550
Marondera	19,971	39,384	52,283	61,998	66,470

Source Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2013, 2018)

[a]Local authorities in Bulawayo argued that the population of the city is much more than the census figure and they estimated the population of Bulawayo to be at least 1.1 million (Dube 2015; Mlotshwa 2012). This figure is based on the Council's own study, which they termed the Consolidated Bulawayo Municipal Housing and Population Statistics (Dube 2015)

age intensify as example from the increased attention on urban geography among scholars from different disciplines, which include sociology, urban planning, geography, public health, economics and engineering, all showing the importance of urban areas (Cardoso et al. 2019; Gleeson 2012; Mishra et al. 2020; Robinson 2016; Roy 2009; Science 2016). These studies indicate the complexity of cities as spaces that are intricately entwined and whose form and function are fluid and cannot be easily generalised. The diversity encompassed in urban geography that calls for a holistic approach in understanding cities is evident from the definition by Schneider-Sliwa (2015: 800):

> Urban geography deals with the analysis of the complex dimensions of urban social, economic, cultural, and political processes, patterns, and structures and urban planning processes to build up or retain local comparative advantages, while retaining cities as livable urban places and securing their sound social and environmental development for future generations.

From the foregoing definition, it is evident that urban geography is broad and complex and extends across different disciplines, thus calling for a holistic approach to gain more insights and analysis of the dynamic urban issues. It is for this reason that Brenner and Schmid (2014) warned scholars against generalising on the notion of the urban age by simply focusing on numbers alone as an indicator for determining the urbanity of an area. Rather, urban spaces are unique spaces that need to be explored systematically by dissecting them and looking at each particular grain in detail (Nel 2009). This is true, considering the variations in geographical contexts of cities, the nature they evolve, their governance and their occupancy that, in most instances, have unique socio-economic demands. Moreover, in the age of globalisation where some proponents have brought to attention the concept of planetary urbanism which considers the wider geographical context of cities and towns (Lesutis 2020; Myers 2020; Vanolo 2019), it thus becomes interesting to explore how the urban geography of cities in the Global South has been transformed and evolved over the past decades. This understanding of urban areas is an ideological issue that is viewed through a particular lens, considering that urban systems are complex and dynamic. Hence, urban paradigms and perspectives are best articulated and explored at a local level.

1.2 Paradigms and Perspectives of Urban Geography in Zimbabwe

In its basic terms, a paradigm refers to a model or pattern for something. A paradigm depicts the way individuals or communities view the world, thus forming a framework from which to understand the human experience (DeCarlo 2018). This framework also enables an understanding of how individuals or communities view the world, how they have come to construct the world and understand it and most importantly becomes a norm among them. According to Kuhn (1962), to think of anything else outside this ‘worldview’ is considered to be insane and illogical. Hence, a paradigm

is consistently free of significant contradictions which enables the individuals or community to plan, organise and classify information and phenomena. From an urban geography perspective, the notion of paradigms also applies and is critical in understanding how the postcolonial urban context is now being organised, understood by the citizens and authorities as well as their expectations and experiences in these spaces. Human knowledge and experience of the world around them are embedded in the paradigm which influences how certain individuals, in particular contexts, become conditioned to the physical, social, economic and political environment that they inhabit.

The critical issue would be the understanding of the term 'urban' from a Zimbabwean perspective. Generally, areas are classified as being urban based on population size. The demographic component has been largely used to define and classify urban areas, for example, the minimum population for an urban area is 2,000 people (UNICEF 2012). However, there are global variations on this minimum population as evident from the Zimbabwean context where urban areas are those spaces with at least 2,500 people who are clustered and engaging in non-agricultural activities (Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development 2017). From this definition, it is noted that urban areas are also functional spaces where the dominant land uses are in the service and tertiary sectors, and therefore other land uses that are agricultural-related tend to be sanctioned on the premise that they compromise the urban nature of cities and towns. Moreover, 'urban' is also synonymous with the built environment and the presence of improved basic amenities and services (Pacione 2009). This confirms the modernist approach that many governments try to mimic by designing cities and towns such that they become 'world-class' with state-of-the-art infrastructure and services (De Satgé and Watson 2018; Van Noorloos and Kloosterboer 2018; Watson 2014).

Thus, in Zimbabwe, urban areas are characterised as dense settlements with at least 2,500 people engaging in non-agricultural activities. These urban settlements are premised on the modernist ideology such that activities and land uses should conform to the statutory plans (Chigudu 2020) otherwise they are deemed to be informal. Moreover, 'informality' is perceived to be an urban ill that ought to be swept under the carpet lest it embarrasses the officials if seen by outsiders (Kamete 2017; Matammanda 2020b), while force can be used to ensure that citizens conform to the prescribed form of the city (Kamete 2020; Moyo 2018; Rogerson 2016). Overall, urban areas in Zimbabwe are recognised as being metropolitan regions, cities, municipalities, towns and small urban centres. There are currently only two metropolitan regions in the country: the Harare Metropolitan Province and Bulawayo Metropolitan Province.

It has been observed that the urban paradigm and perspective for Zimbabwe have changed significantly from the colonial era and what is in existence now. On the surface, the colonial city was an enclave of the Europeans who had designed such cities as their own havens, while a few Africans were allowed in the city, only living as second-class citizens (Chigudu and Chirisa 2020; Muzorewa 2020). This was made possible through the segregation laws that limited the Africans' right to the city (Cirolia and Berrisford 2017). Yet, at independence in 1980, there were significant

changes in the geopolitical factors that impacted on the urban geography. Therefore, a range of factors that need to be explored, considering that, when Zimbabwe attained her independence from the British colonial rule in 1980, the urban areas, despite being spatially and racially segregated, were functional. However, many factors have caused changes over the past four decades (Mbiba 2017). At independence in 1980, many socio-economic and political changes took place, which transformed the urban geography of Zimbabwe.

First, the 'right to the city' that came with independence ushered in a new era that saw an influx of Africans into the previously restricted (for whites only) urban areas. The aspirations of a better life mainly pulled the majority of these migrants into urban areas, while some came to join their husbands in the city (Chirisa 2010). The result has been a rapid growth of most of the country's towns and cities. In addition to the rapid rate of urbanisation linked to the right to the city, the new black elite scrambled for property, farms and businesses, a situation that perpetuated the colonial segregation in the cities (Meredith 2002).

Second, the first decade of independence—described by Meredith (2002) as the honeymoon period—saw the government introducing a Growth Pole Policy that emphasised decentralisation intended to develop the previously 'neglected' rural areas. The socialist ideology that was simultaneously introduced with the decentralisation policy influenced the urban geography of the country as the government promised equality for all, across all dimensions of the citizens' lives, including urban life (Matamanda 2020b; Moyo 2018). The socialist mantra was also meant to extend to basic service delivery, which was previously developed and operated on a capitalist basis and mainly for the settlers.

Third, the recurring droughts in the 1990s, followed by the structural adjustment programmes affected both urban economies and food supply (Compagnon 2011). The capitalist city that had evolved, based on Harvey's (1985) concept of cities as developing through the production of capital, began to experience various shocks as the levels of unemployment began to soar. This was accompanied by massive retrenchments that followed the liberalisation of the economy and privatisation of some parastatals, spawning the urban informal economy (Ndakaripa 2020). This has created a set of problems with which the local authorities have been grappling over the past years. The main response has been the criminalisation of the informal economy. Yet, in a country that is deindustrialised and in which the unemployment rate is high, this stance is puzzling. This book responds to this by exploring the urban economy of the country and how the informal sector has given a new meaning to the country's urban economic system.

Fourth, the socio-economic and political dilemmas that plagued the country since the late 1990s, emerged as a turning point in the country that saw a decade (1999–2008) of suffering and hardships for most Zimbabweans (Godwin 2011; Meredith 2002). The 'lost decade' as it has come to be termed, commenced with the establishment of a vibrant opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) by the late Morgan Tsvangirai (Hammar et al. 2010). Gaining a support base in urban areas, mostly among the youth, the MDC also won a majority of seats in urban councils and this influenced urban governance with opposition party ruling at

the local level and the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF) in power at the national level (McGregor and Chatiza 2019; Raftopoulos 2006). It is during this period that urban governance and management in the country were adjusted with great implications for its urban geography. The recent social movements and protests that began in 2016 have become imprinted in the cities and towns of Zimbabwe and this affected the spatial and social planning and the governance of the urbanscape (Gukurume 2017; Nyarota 2018).

Another critical issue in urban areas has been the government's responses to informal settlements. Following the proliferation of informal settlements in the country, the government has responded in different ways and the responses tend to be politically driven instead of being guided by legislation (McGregor and Chatiza 2020). Operation Murambatsvina of 2005 has been identified as a gross violation of human rights and several similar demolitions and evictions have come to characterise the urbanscape of Zimbabwe in recent years (Kamete 2007, 2009).

Fifth, the 'fast-track' land reform programmes launched by the government in the early 2000s had a major impact on the urban geography of Zimbabwe. The land grabbing that characterised the process has affected urban perspectives in the country in multiple ways. The citizens' perspective towards land markets, urban ecology, land allocation and management, livelihoods, human settlement development, urban form, basic service delivery and, most importantly, urban informality, have never been the same since the land reform programme was launched (Marongwe et al. 2011). Lastly, natural phenomena over the years have also contributed to the alteration of urban geography, as evident from climate change-induced disasters (Chirisa et al. 2016).

These events over the past four decades have contributed to the current state of the urban geography in Zimbabwe that is characterised by malady, informality, corruption and a lack of basic services. Despite these challenges, Zimbabwean cities remain focal points of growth, which may support the national economy. Moreover, the impacts of cities on the environment and climate are immense and require to be redressed proactively to avoid compromising the cityscapes. This book provides a sectoral and case study-based approach to the changes, challenges, opportunities and prospects for sustainable urbanisation in Zimbabwe to assist the country to advance and develop in a sustainable and resilient manner.

1.3 The Postcolonial Lens and Urban Geography of Zimbabwe

The postcolonial narrative takes centre stage in this book, providing the context in which the contemporary urban geography of Zimbabwe is situated. 'Postcolonial' is associated with that which exists after a colonial era and is perceived to be rooted in the decolonisation of systems and the eradication of the segregation and oppression that existed during the colonial era and deals with the legacy of colonialism in the present day. Postcolonial theory is a highly contested thesis that has sparked debate

among urban geographers, such as King (2005), who described the postcolonial city as a space too complex and unpredictable for easy classification. Generally, the postcolonial theory is described as the antithesis of the colonial system. In this perspective, the postcolonial city is defined and explored through reference to its colonial past.

The central argument of the theory is that colonialism influenced societies and their culture through the colonial system that imposed political and economic processes that often constrained local communities. As a result, the present-day situation in the postcolonial environment is defined by various legacies, including communities trying to 'decolonise' themselves and be detached from the oppressive colonial system. It is for this reason that Yeoh (2001) argued that an understanding of the postcolonial city is best articulated through critical analysis of the identity of the contemporary urban spaces because postcolonial cities emerge as sites where claims of an identity, different from the colonial past, are expressed and indexed, and, in some cases, keenly contested. Radcliffe (1997) asserted that postcolonial cities are referenced, following an attitude of critical engagement with the colonialism aftereffects and its construction of knowledge. The issue of identity applies in Zimbabwe where over the years there have been enchantments of nationalisation and sovereignty which has extended to place-making; thus, it becomes critical to gain insights on how the need to inculcate a national identity has informed the shaping and functioning of the postcolonial urban context.

Moreover, the postcolonial theory recognises that sociospatial encounters are inherent in urban spaces (Yeoh 2001). These encounters are a result of the struggles among different stakeholders often contesting for their right to the urban space, what Lefebvre (1991) has called the right to the city. With independence, there have been promises of freedom and emancipation, yet the frustrations and failure to realise the fruits of the 'freedom' often causes the 'oppressed' to engage in demonstrations as they seek to influence the shaping of the urban spaces and claim their rights to services and goods. The advent of social movements which act as agencies for the vulnerable groups has been on the rise in the past decades. Issues of power also come into perspective because when there are contests and struggles, there tends to be the oppressed and the oppressor. Hence, urban geography in a postcolonial context sheds light on these power dynamics.

Power is used by different groups, especially the economic and political elites (Grant 2019; Kamete 2016), to advance their agendas, which at times may compromise the form and function of cities, especially the environment. The dawn of democracy and freedom associated with decolonisation to some extent empowers the previously marginalised communities who may have the capacity to voice and advance their concerns, and in this regard, there may be some conflicts. These conflicts are inherent in urban governance and planning and are central in influencing the manner in which cities are managed and planned.

In our analysis of the urban geography in postcolonial Zimbabwe, we argue that the urban space is dynamic and complex and requires a nuanced analysis that recognises the multifaceted and interwoven nature of cities. In recognition of this complexity, we situate our analysis in the context of the work of Brenner and Schmid (2014),

who recommended a holistic approach in urban geography studies. We recognise the following:

- The urban is not a universal form but a historical process that needs to be explored within the context of particular sociocultural and geographical contexts. This also explains the adoption of the postcolonial thesis that guides the development and argument of this book, as shall be explained later in this chapter.
- Urbanisation has become a planetary phenomenon such that the form and function of urban centres require a deeper analysis that integrates global processes (Lesutis 2020). According to Brenner and Schmid (2014: 751), the urban represents an increasingly worldwide, though unevenly woven, fabric in which the sociocultural and political–economic relations of capitalism are enmeshed. It follows that cities are now a part of a larger system that extends beyond the locale; thus, cities become constituents in an integral global network in terms of virtual infrastructure, governance systems and resource use and extraction. Planetary urbanisation is evident in the phenomenon of sovereignty and nationalisation which seems to be inherent in African states that seek to detach themselves from their colonial masters and their past and forge an identity of their own, yet try to be a part of the global network.
- The sociospatial dimensions of urbanisation are polymorphic, variable and dynamic. As Brenner and Schmid (2014: 752) recommended, we conceptualise the urban by going beyond the given territorial variables and rather "explore the inherited assumptions regarding the morphologies, territorializations and sociospatial dynamics of the urban conditions". By so doing, the book brings a more nuanced analysis of the events in urban conditions that are explored in the context of Zimbabwe.

1.4 Aim of the Book

It is against this background that this book seeks to explore the issues articulated above and how they have influenced the urban geography of Zimbabwe. Reflecting on the four decades of independence in Zimbabwe, from an urban geography perspective, the following were the key objectives of the book:

- To identify the existing and emerging paradigms related to the urban geography landscape for Zimbabwe.
- To explore how these paradigms in urban geography have an impact on urban systems and the creation of inclusive, resilient, sustainable and safe urban areas.
- To analyse the opportunities and challenges that are associated with the urban geography of Zimbabwe cities.
- To theorise the urban geography of Zimbabwe through a postcolonial lens.

1.5 Structure of the Book

In Chapter 2, Verna Nel, Abraham Matamanda and Innocent Chirisa explore the spatial governance, social justice and the right to the city in postcolonial Zimbabwe. This chapter examines how the spatial governance system can be used to improve the lives and livelihoods of particularly the poor, by embracing informality and concentrating on controlling only the most critical activities that affect the health and safety of particularly the residents, but also that of the socio-ecological system. In addition to the management of informal settlements, specific attention is paid to how spatial governance can support poor residents through a more tolerant approach to non-hazardous home-based work activities, supporting informal transport and trading to encourage new economic nodes and opportunities, as well as accommodating informality within formal areas.

In Chapter 3, Gift Mhlanga, Innocent Chirisa and Verna Nel examine the urban planning and policy framework in Zimbabwe. They diagnose the relationship between the planning of urban areas and the existing policies formulated and implemented in urban Zimbabwe, a country that has gone through a full cycle of policies—colonial and postcolonial, capitalism and socialism, and chaotic and orderly. The chapter reveals that the urban regional space is one that stresses the interconnections between rural space—which largely constitutes the hinterland—and the urban spaces which speak of the core, hence, core-periphery interactions.

In Chapter 4, Abraham Matamanda, Tiisetso Dube and Maléne Campbell explore an emerging urban paradigm in Zimbabwe which relates to studentification and its interplay on urban policy. They reflect on experiences from Bulawayo city.

Chapter 5 by Elmond Bandauko, Tafadzwa Mutambisi, Percy Toriro and Innocent Chirisa examines the urban governance–poverty nexus in Harare, Zimbabwe. This chapter examines how the institutions of urban governance (policies, laws and organisational practices) have addressed poverty, deprivation and inequality in Harare, and whether, how and in what circumstances poor urban residents have been able to make claims on the system. By using Harare as a case study, the chapter attempts to explain the governance arrangements and policies identified and their outcomes for the poor, especially those living in slums or informal settlements.

Public health is the focus of Chapter 6, where Abraham Matamanda and Verna Nel explore the urban public health-scape in the poor neighbourhoods of Harare. The authors map and characterise the public health problems that are increasingly overwhelming cities in Zimbabwe. They demonstrate that due to poor urban management, cities are experiencing degradation of natural environments, poor quality built environments with unsafe drinking water, sanitation and waste management, all arising from, and contributing to urban poverty. The chapter argues that, despite the vulnerability of these urban areas to health threats, the planning and management of cities seem to marginalise health concerns, rather than integrating them into the land use and urban planning systems.

In Chapter 7, Innocent Chirisa, Trynos Gumbo, Simbarashe Show Mazongonda and Margaret Marewo navigate the informal city through a focus on urban economy

and question whether there is deviation from the norm or it is transgression or digression. This chapter attempts to dissect the Zimbabwean urban economy in terms of its normative versus positive developments, emerging especially after 1990. It focuses on the urban economic geography, which is a critical issue in cities and towns, considering how informality is increasingly being entrenched in the Global South and its potential to contribute to local and even national economies. Overall, this chapter provides a nuanced narrative and discussion of the informal city as a dominant phenomenon of the Zimbabwean urban economy.

In Chapter 8, Abraham Matamanda, Verna Nel and Lucia Khetsi-Leboto analyse the ecological risks of the postcolonial Harare. Through the human ecosystem model, the chapter seeks to provide answers to some questions that include: What are the urban ecological risks in the postcolonial city? and how does politics influence the governance of urban ecosystems? These questions are posed in the context of the rapid urbanisation of postcolonial African cities with different impacts on the urban environment. The chapter reveals that urban ecosystems are complex and fragile spaces that face multiple stressors associated with increasing urbanisation.

In Chapter 9, Jeofrey Matai, Shamiso H. Mafuku and Willoughby Zimunya bring into perspective the strategies for managing urban crime and insecurity in urban areas. Urban insecurity and violence are increasingly becoming a common phenomenon in most towns and cities. Specifically, the chapter examines the role of urban planning and design in managing crime and insecurity. The chapter addresses the question: How can urban crime and insecurity be managed through urban planning and design in Zimbabwe's postcolonial era which is characterised by exponential urban population increase?

In Chapter 10, Percy Toriro looks at urban agriculture through the use of a case for planning for urban food security in Zimbabwe. Using Harare as a case study, the chapter aims to examine the different components that comprise an urban food system to demystify the efficacy and single narrative of urban agriculture as the only and most important measure to address urban food security. Planning can, and should, address urban food security from several perspectives. The questions that the chapter seeks to answer include: How prevalent is urban food (in) security in Zimbabwe's urban areas? What strategies have been proposed and used to address urban food security? How effective are the current interventions? What else should be considered to achieve urban food security?

In Chapter 11, Innocent Chirisa and Thomas Karakadzai proffer a prognosis of Zimbabwe's future in dealing with urban development management amid climate change. This chapter suggests the broadening of urban planning practices and tools which effectively include mainstream disaster risk management into urban development. Undoubtedly, an integrated framework for the urban development management in Zimbabwe should accommodate a wide range of concepts, strategies and models of climate change together with the underpinning policy implementation modalities.

In Chapter 12, Nicholas Muleya focuses on public spaces and leisure in the post-independence context of Zimbabwe. Reflecting on the case of Bulawayo city, this chapter employs the multisensory approach, and in particular user's experiences,

to document the current state of public space and identify challenges, opportunities and prospects for sustainable urban living. Detailed observation of the interaction of users with streetscape and public parks and interviews with the users were employed in gathering data, following an exploratory qualitative research design and a phenomenological strategy of enquiry. The chapter confirms that public space can be harnessed to bring inclusivity and sustainability in cities and that the multisensory approach to public space provides a window that links the production and management of the physical environment of the public space with the aspirations of the users.

In Chapter 13, James Chakwizira examines the urban land markets in postcolonial Zimbabwe. This chapter uses a dynamic complex systems approach, transitions theory and discourse analysis in unpacking the narrative of urban land markets and performance in Africa. The lessons from the review act as a benchmark, mirror and analytical lens for infusing new insights on how post-independence Zimbabwe can utilise both formal and informal urban land markets in transforming and transitioning towards sustainable human settlements. The chapter also describes how the existing land market struggles in Zimbabwe play out as reflected by the appearance of new housing standards, products, technologies, formats and geographies. The policy implications and consequences of urban land market dynamics and failures in terms of urban spatial organisation, development and transformation of towns/cities are outlined.

In Chapter 14, Charles Chavunduka and Marylin Gaza, through a political economy analytical lens, explain the persistence of informal settlements in Zimbabwe. Using a case study approach, they draw upon academic literature, recent empirical studies, project experiences and interviews in doing a critical analysis of urban informal settlements. The chapter argues for a shift in the view of urban informal settlements, as a result of rapid urbanisation, poor economic performance and the urbanisation of poverty. In that sense, informal settlements need to be understood in the broader context of changing urban politics and policies, economic and social forces that influence their development. Only through the political economy approach and its extension, can we realise the limitations placed upon households' efforts to improve their shelters. The chapter illustrates how informal settlements are shaped by the interaction of economic interests and political considerations in a postcolonial state.

Chapter 15 is a synthesis of the whole book, where the authors reflect on the postcolonial state of Zimbabwe and its spatial implications and move from challenges to constructive proposals for putting the broken pieces together and rewiring the urban geography of Zimbabwe.

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