Chapter 3
Urban Planning and Policy in Zimbabwe: Change with Continuity

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Abstract The purpose of this chapter is to diagnose the relationship between the planning of urban areas and the policies on the ground concerning Zimbabwe, a country that has gone through a full cycle of policies—colonial and postcolonial, capitalism and socialism, and chaotic and orderly. The urban–regional space is one that stresses the interconnections between rural space that largely constitutes the hinterland and the urban cores; hence, core–periphery interactions. Seen in the light of these symbiotic relations, this chapter studies the colonial ideology introduced in the country in 1890, which defined rural areas as predominantly occupied by the majority of black African populations serving as labour reserves on land that the capitalist society relied on for workers on its farms, mines and urban areas. The black government after 1980, has always tried to paint a picture of rural areas that are more populous than urban areas for political and election purposes. In addition to political marginalisation, however, the major towns and cities are facing increasing difficulties as the shrinking economy over the years, with limited employment and a fragile taxation base, has rendered planning a useless tool in the hands of a weak state. If the planning is to meet the twenty-first-century demands in Zimbabwe, the policy environment and goals must become clearer, more specific and pragmatic than now.

Keywords Urbanisation · Urban sprawl · Socio-economic segregation · Stakeholder participation

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3.1 Introduction

Once a British Colony before the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965, most of Zimbabwe's urban planning and policies still reflect British standards (Wekwete 1990). The anchor of the pre-independence urban planning and policies was white supremacy over the indigenous Africans (Magwaro-Ndiweni 2011). This ideology led to the segregation of the indigenous people on the grounds of the race for political purposes. At the dawn of independence, the Zimbabwean government tried to do away with the racist policies and thus promoted an African identity and sovereignty through policies and plans that were meant to be inclusive. Nonetheless, such inclusivity had its price: it was a magnet in attracting people into the once 'only-whites' territories. Subsequently, rapid urbanisation ensued, and the new government sought to control the influx of people into the urban areas (Chirisa 2014). Hence, both the colonial government and the post-independence governments planned and implemented (or drafted) policies as a reactionary stance of controlling the urban populace (Mjanga 2016). The thrust of this chapter is to demonstrate that there was little change, but rather a continuity, of urban planning and policies, albeit from different perspectives, of both pre- and post-independence governments.

The chapter is organised as follows: Following this introduction is the conceptual framework, African literature review, methodology, contextual background, the results that include the case studies of the four major cities of Zimbabwe, discussion, and conclusion and future direction.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

The concept of urban planning is complex and dynamic. Rather than focusing on physical planning, most countries are now inclined towards 'spatial planning', which is a more integrative approach to planning and urban development (Ferreira et al. 2009). With regard to spatial planning, Albrechts (2006: 1492) noted that there is a need for "levels of government to work together (multi-level governance) and in partnership with actors in diverse positions in the economy and civil society". Such a collaborative stance in urban planning and development dissects the planning problems more efficiently to come up with one identifiable sustainable system of development in the urban areas since it involves stakeholder engagement (Healey 2006). This is the basis of the Hydra model of urban planning, which maintains that inclusivity in urban planning encourages competent engagement through dialogue from various perspectives to derive the best solutions for different problems (Ferreira et al. 2009). This idea echoes Davidoff's (1965) theory on advocacy and pluralism planning, which submits that planning should be pluralistic and represent diverse interests., The pluralistic stance in planning lead to the concepts of community planning, participatory planning and bottom-up approaches today (Cornelius et al. 2017).

However, Watson (2003) argued that urban planning in the Global South, and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in particular, is defined by conflicting rationalities, whereby the central authorities and other stakeholders, the communities in particular, often have divergent interests. Therefore, Sarkis et al. (2008: 2582) observed that "it is important to take a broad view incorporating broader stakeholders and communities, beyond immediate investors or building users … [taking into account] the intergenerational aspect of sustainability … [and] influencing the needs and requirements of future generations". As such, it is pertinent to note that the employment of the Hydra model in urban planning incorporates issues of the economy, society and environment at large and this results in a better future for both the users and inhabitants of the urban landscape (Chirisa 2014).

During the colonial era in Zimbabwe, national and local authorities converged in promoting white supremacy, while their instruments for urban planning were skewed towards the suppression of Africans. Nonetheless, after independence, the Zimbabwean government inherited these instruments, particularly, the Regional, Town and Country Planning Act (RTCP Act) that was marginally 'panel-beaten' to suit the interests of the new regime (Watson 2009). However, critics asserted that little had changed (UN-Habitat 2006).

3.3 African Literature Review

As highlighted above, modernist planning and policies in SSA can be traced back to the colonial era when the European regimes foisted Global North planning designs and policies on their territories. De Satgé and Watson (2018) argued that theorising about the nature of cities and regions and the kinds of interventions that are appropriate and possible, based on assumed characteristics of Global North regions, has lost traction; the planning environment in the Global South is different from the ideal one of the Global North perspectives. This infers that urban planning and policies, based on colonial instruments, such as the marginally revised British Town and Country Planning ordinances, are bound to result in planning failure. Nonetheless, Watson (2003) argued that in Africa it is not always justified to blame colonial planning and policies on the failure in planning, but to rather blame the stewards of urban planning.

Noteworthy is the fact that urban planning and policies in SSA are unique in the sense that there is a significant influence of colonialism. Home (2015) and Njoh (2009) both observed that the settlement policies during the precolonial era were centralised on the promotion of safety and health for the settlers, whereby medical experts advised racial segregation to curb the spread of diseases believed to emanate from the 'black' people. As colonial planning policies were founded in racial segregation ideologies, this resulted in discrete residential areas for Africans, Asians and Europeans (Rigon et al. 2018). Watson (2009) pointed out that the colonial era left behind a planning legacy that is difficult to redress.

On the other hand, Okeke (2015) submitted that urban planning in SSA is discernible through certain distinct characteristics: the resilience of informality, and the poor relationship between the rhetorical and practical meaning of urban planning. In the African context, the superficial dichotomies, such as state/society or legal/illegal, do not reflect reality on the ground since their implications depend upon the whims of those in power. As such, spatial urban planning and policies in SSA are seldom aligned with social dimensions (Roy 2005). This assertion echoes the sentiments of Bolay (2015) who observed that urban planning in the Global South mostly partially addresses the real problems facing urban populations, generally abandoning the vulnerable housing neighbourhoods, areas poorly regulated by-law and urban peripheries. Thus, the urban poor are neglected, favouring the urban affluent, discouraging the role of civil organisations in planning and policy implementation. This paves the way for political opportunism, allowing the usurpation of urban settlements by the political elite that echoes urbanism during the colonial era (Filipe and Norfolk 2017).

Urban planning and policies in SSA mostly resulted in territorial and social exclusion, as depicted by informal settlements (Roy 2004); yet local authorities, in their bid to replicate alien models of urban development, hobble local possibilities (UN-Habitat 2020). Subsequently, Bolay (2015) pointed out that planning, as accepted in the 1960s, is no longer appropriate as it can no longer operate in a linear and progressive perspective. Agboda and Watson (2013) concurred that African city planning and design are changing rapidly, albeit, with inadequacy being evidenced in dealing with informal settlements, climate change and city inclusivity. In general, the urban landscape is more open to the African and foreign elite than the less affluent. Consequently, the African urban landscape is mostly characterised by illegal urban sprawl, while exposed settlements are bourgeoning outwards (Bolay 2015).

Consequently, as urbanisation tends to be synonymous with informal settlements in SSA, it infers obsolete urban planning and policies (UN-Habitat 2020). Conversely, Tomor et al. (2019) argued that SSA planning systems and bureaucracies are not buttressed by their original legal foundations and this exposes the limitations of reactive planning. Thus, most SSA national urban planning designs and policies are weak, and are propelled by dysfunctional governance systems, guaranteeing unsustainable urban development (UN-Habitat 2014, 2020). Resultantly, there is an incessant lag between urban population growth and housing development in the SSA region (UN-Habitat 2020).

Moreover, as a direct consequence of ad hoc planning in SSA, of the world's 2.4 billion people without access to sanitation, 695 million are residents of the SSA (United States Department of State Humanitarian Information Unit 2018). Such deprivation affirms the cost of improvised planning in contrast to deliberate planning and design; hence the call for densification policies in most urban areas of the SSA region (Wisner et al. 2015). Unfortunately, as Smit and Pieterse (2014: 157) asserted, "very few African states have explicit policies to deal with urbanisation and intra-urban development challenges". Part of the problem is the denial by most African statesmen and authorities that the region is urbanising at a rapid pace that "creates a

public policy vacuum", and exposes the urban space to land grabbing opportunists (Pieterse 2014: 201).

However, some countries in the region have adopted national urban planning policies, for example, Morocco, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Ghana and South Africa (Bolay 2015). For instance, Morocco launched a three-year progressive human settlements policy for the integration of slum settlements into the formal urban fabric, namely, the National Action Plan for Reabsorption of Slums (Lahlou 2014). On the other hand, Ghana's national urban plan is an epitome of pragmatic planning as evidenced by the stance to recognise informality, where the policy guide emphasised "changing the official attitude towards informal enterprises from neglect to recognition and policy support" (Government of Ghana 2012: 24). Nonetheless, ambivalence in planning and policy implementation has pushed national authorities to launch such reactive and fantasy planning designs, and this is typified by the erstwhile South African official position in informal settlement integration, preferring rural development instead (Turok 2015).

3.4 Research Methodology

This study employed a desktop research, scrutinising secondary data sources, particularly parliamentary presentations, central and local authority reports, non-governmental organisation reviews, journal papers and interview extracts. The wide sourcing of information ensured the collation of accurate information. Furthermore, the analysis of the information collected was made more explicit through the use of case studies. The major cities of Zimbabwe, Harare and Bulawayo, and two provincial capital cities, Gweru and Mutare, were included in the study since they reflect the general urban planning and policy trends in the country.

3.5 Contextual Background

Concerning Zimbabwe, just like most countries in SSA, the bottlenecks in planning may be traced back to the colonial era where urban and rural development was heavily influenced by the political ideology of white supremacy and the subsequent suppression of the indigenous people. Legal instruments, such as the Land Apportionment Act, Act 30 of 1930, the Land Husbandry Act of 1951, and the pass laws, controlled and minimised the flow of people into urban areas that were mostly designated and reserved for the whites (Magwaro-Ndiweni 2011). Before the 1950s, colonial legislation regarded blacks in urban areas as temporary residents whose main base was their rural homes and therefore there was no need to provide them with family accommodation but only bachelor hostels (Auret 1995; Mangizvo and Dzikiti 2009). Hence, urban planning during the colonial era promoted dual residence, whereby the rural areas were meant to be the permanent homes, and urban

towns were meant for the Europeans. Later, when family housing was established, this was mostly the responsibility of employers to provide accommodation and this was more evident in mining towns such as Kwekwe. Additionally, urban planning and policies during the colonial period were skewed against the Africans, as evidenced by the establishment of black townships that were located far away from the central business centres. Subsequently, spatial inequality between the European areas and the African areas, and between residential areas meant for Europeans and African townships, was captured in zoning area planning that was segregationist.

3.6 Results

The spatial imprint of the colonial era is still evident in post-independent Zimbabwe as reflected by high-density lower income suburbs being located further away from the urban centres. Interestingly, Chirisa (2014) noted that Zimbabwean planning systems use master and local plans that are statutory plans prepared by following the provisions of the RTCP Act of 1976, Chapter 29:12 (revised in 1996). Wekwete (1989), cited by Chigara et al. (2013), observed that the RTCP Act "maintained a large measure of continuity in town planning, with the major innovation being the inclusion of regional planning in the new legislation". Subsequently, the United Nations Special Envoy Report of 2005 described the RTCP Act as outdated and in need of immediate revision (Tibaijuka 2005).

Nonetheless, Chirisa (2014) observed that the post-independent Zimbabwean government used a cocktail of instruments, ranging from a technocratic-induced minimalist ideology to socialist populism to redress the impacts of colonial policies. Policies, such as the home ownership programme, were meant to facilitate the ownership of immovable property by Africans, which had been public property during the colonial era (Paradza 2010). Such housing programmes were facilitated through the Public Sector Housing Finance System, whereby the central authority transferred funds to local authorities to benefit low-income households (Mutekede and Sigauke 2007). However, the duration of such socialistic interventions was short-lived, since the number of units owned by the government was limited. Also, the 1980s saw the government introducing rent control policies that placed a ceiling on rents determined by the government to protect the urban poor. Such regulations led to the limited supply of new immovable property since private players now made little profit from offering such services (Chirisa 2014).

While the pursuance of socialist tendencies by the government alienated it from private players, at the same time it transformed the central government into a set of highly politicised institutions. The centre–local relations in Zimbabwe reflected this trend with politically motivated decisions which increasingly undermined the integrity of local governance (Paradza 2010). Such tendencies were also reflected in 2013, before the general elections, when the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing issued a directive to all municipalities to cancel all the rates and water bills owed by residents. This led to a drastic fall in the revenue of local

authorities in urban areas (Poperwi 2018), whereas there was a need to deracialise the urban landscape through consolidating and inclusive policies. The overall effect was partisanship in local governance that stifled any urban planning efforts.

The culmination of the central–local impasse was Operation Restore Order/Murambatsvina (OM) of 2005 (Bratton and Masunugure 2006). OM was a major slum clearance operation that sought to restore order in urban areas through ridding Zimbabwe's cities and towns of illegal structures and unlicensed trading practices in the form of flea markets, tuck shops and street trading (Government of Zimbabwe 2015). However, Paradza (2010) asserted that OM was motivated by ulterior agendas other than that of planning: it was retribution against urban dwellers who voted for the Movement for Democratic Change in the previous elections; it served to disperse selected urban populations to rural areas where the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF) could more easily control them; and OM was a pre-emptive strategy to prevent a popular uprising in light of the deepening food insecurity in the country. On the other hand, Kamete (2009) opined that it was fundamentally poor planning and monitoring that permitted the emergence of illegal settlements in the presence of planners that led to OM. However, Muchadenyika and Williams (2016) concurred with Paradza (2010), asserting that planning became a useful scapegoat to achieve the political objectives of the ruling regime.

The Government of Zimbabwe sought to redress the adverse effects of OM by injecting three trillion US dollars into the Ministry of Local Government for the construction of basic four-room core houses for affected families, a programme that became known as Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kahle (OG/HK), a central government intervention discouraged by the International Monetary Fund (Mutekede and Sigauke 2007). This demonstrates that urban planning and policies are intrinsically tied to politics. Thus, the quest to retain power may be regarded as the driving force for the central authority to radically intervene in urban local government issues (Muchadenyika and Williams 2020).

3.6.1 Harare

Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe, developed from a military fort during the colonial era (Munzwa and Wellington 2010). As the capital of the country, rapid urbanisation and its adverse effects, have been evident even during the colonial period. By 1969, at least 56,018 houses were needed to accommodate Harare's 280,090 Africans at an average of five persons per family (Mangizvo and Dzikiti 2009). This ongoing housing backlog has long been a prominent feature of the city. Spatial growth is evident in Harare, a metropolitan city. Marondedze and Schütt (2019) found that in 1984, high-density residential areas covered 51.79 km^2 (5.81%) of the total Harare metropolitan area and in 2018, this area had more than quadrupled to 218.35 km^2. Besides the expansion of residential areas, the relative area of the city's central business district also grew from 3.7% in 1984 to 7.17% in 2018 (Marondedze and Schütt 2019). Nonetheless, red tape and the complexities associated with the RTCP Act in

construction procedures and plan approvals were contributing factors towards the proliferation of informal settlements (Chirisa 2014).

3.6.1.1 Reactionary Planning

The inefficiency of strategic planning, among other factors, led to OM and its adverse effects on the city in 2005. Many residents in metropolitan Harare were evicted. The national authority has nevertheless initiated resettlement programmes for some of the victims of OM (Government of Zimbabwe 2015). For example, The Hatcliffe Consortium development was a government initiative of OG/HK projects meant to provide housing units for the OM victims (Tibaijuka 2005). However, a parliamentary committee formed to investigate the progress of the OG/HK programme, questioned the destruction of home-based businesses; yet Statutory Instrument 216 of 1994 allowed residents to operate businesses from their homes (Parliament of Zimbabwe 2006). Furthermore, in most cases the evicted residents found their way back through a political ticket as in the Dzivarasekwa Extension where informal settlers reinvaded the area that had no planning or infrastructure services (Muchadenyika and Williams 2016).

3.6.1.2 Fantasy Planning

Caledonia was established through piecemeal planning with only Phases 1 to 3 (6960 residential stands) having an approved layout plan, while Phases 4 to 20 (15,450 stands) had no approved plans (Government of Zimbabwe 2015). However, it was through a presidential proclamation (Statutory Instrument SI 119/2012) that led to the incorporation of this informal settlement into the Harare municipality, a remarkable example of how politics play a hand in urban area planning and policies. Muchadenyika and Williams (2016) revealed that the central authority, through the Urban Development Corporation, began a process of regularising the settlement and approving the layout plans for Phases 4–20. However, this regularisation process was central government-directed and bypassed the City of Harare although it was the envisaged local planning authority, a political manoeuvre on the part of the central authority (Muchadenyika and Williams 2016).

3.6.1.3 Ad Hoc Planning

Improvised planning and policy implementation are evident in Harare, and political influence at both national and local authority levels was the major driving force. Chirisa (2014) pointed out that Harare city planners often clashed with politicians concerning environmental impact assessments. Moreover, the Value for Money Report revealed that there were no approved layout plans for the Hatcliffe North

settlement, and the occupants of the land were thus deemed illegal (Office of Auditor-General 2019). Such land use violations highlighted the socio-economic and political segregation of Zimbabwean planning and policies: the poor are neglected or penalised under the guise of urban planning, while the rich and influential of the society are protected by the system.

3.6.2 Bulawayo

Bulawayo, the second-largest city of Zimbabwe, covers around 450 km^2. The city grew during the industrial phase (1940 and 1952) of colonial occupation and became an industrial hub for the country (Wekwete 1990). Recently, the city has experienced deindustrialisation with some factories unable to operate, partly due to water shortages (see Chapter 2), but also because of the country's economic crisis (Magwaro-Ndiweni 2011). The colonial legacy remained evident in the development of the city. To utilise land more efficiently, Hugh Ashton, the former director of African housing, lobbied for high-rise flats that were constructed in the Nguboyenja, Makokoba and Tshabalala high-density suburbs. Additionally, Makokoba, the city's oldest residential area, is densely populated and trapped between major roads that could be used to contain the rebelling populations, with access to the city from the suburb channelled through narrow causeways and tunnels and a flyover across the roads to provide strategic points for locating troops, if required (Stewart et al. 2017).

3.6.2.1 Progressive Planning

After independence, the city council also promoted socialist policies, such as home ownership programmes that benefitted indigenous Africans. However, Ashton (1991) pointed out that cheaper housing units at 50 m^2 could be obtained in the Lobengula Township, as a result of following the World Bank's advice. These 'matchbox' houses were, however, unpopular among residents (Magwaro-Ndiweni 2011).

3.6.2.2 Strategic Planning

The 2000 Master Plan for Bulawayo stressed the need for proper planning for the city to meet the demands for rapid urbanisation. Subsequently, the city's 2009 Housing Policy revealed the need for a compact city to avoid urban sprawl (Chirisa 2014). Thus, the authorities planned to utilise all the existing available land within the current city area, prior to developing new land outside the existing boundaries (Magwaro-Ndiweni 2011). However, such a policy stance led to a distortion of the zoning system and resultantly benefitted mostly politicians, business moguls and foreign business enterprises (Muchadenyika and Williams 2016). It also led to "the unpopularity of planning and its association with the wealthy and powerful" (Kamete 2011: 83).

3.6.2.3 Reactive Planning

Like many urban areas in Zimbabwe, the city suffered under OM 2005 and the OG/HK. Although this was meant to be a redress programme, it was marred with poor planning and corruption. For example, of the 10,000 Bulawayo residents affected by OM, only 43 benefitted from houses built under OG/HK (Parliament of Zimbabwe 2006). On the other hand, the invisible hand of politics in planning is also evident in the development of Cowdray Park that is a compromise of normal planning with poor supporting infrastructure and narrow plots (Magwaro-Ndiweni 2011; Muchadenyika and Williams 2016).

3.6.3 Gweru

Gweru is one of the major cities of Zimbabwe established during the colonial era as a gold mining village in 1894, and it attained city status in 1971. The city experienced exponential growth: between 1936 and 1946, Gweru's population more than doubled, then quadrupled between 1951 and 1974 and then almost doubled in just four years from 46,000 in 1979 to 79,000 in 1982 (Munzwa and Wellington 2010). Such rapid population growth that continued during the 1980s, was driven by rural–urban influx. This was triggered by low economic development in areas, such as Chiwundura, Shurugwi and Chirumanzu, signifying the failure of the growth pole policies, which was exacerbated by droughts (Mangizvo and Dzikiti 2009).

3.6.3.1 Progressive Planning

After independence, the Government of Zimbabwe renovated some of the 'bachelor structures' in the former African townships, such as Munhumutapa, Ascot, and Mkoba (Government of Zimbabwe 2015). Nonetheless, as overpopulation became a problem, the Gweru City Council adopted a densification policy to identify and develop 'undeveloped' space. However, this programme was not welcomed in Gweru, especially in the Ivene suburb where residents submitted some complaints against it in the 1980s (Munzwa and Wellington 2010). Additionally, the City Council, in a move towards progressive planning, invited prospective land developers to go into partnership for the servicing of land for housing development in Mkoba 21 and Randolph Phase 1 through General Notice 903 of 2020 (Government of Zimbabwe 2020).

3.6.3.2 Strategic Planning

Gweru City Council, like most urban authorities in Zimbabwe, had a challenge of piecemeal planning in the establishment of some of its suburbs as evidenced by poor

infrastructure. Burst pipes and sewerage problems are common in Senga/Nehosho, while water shortages in Mkoba 19 occur frequently. These have been problems of planning and policy implementation since future-orientated planning would have anticipated growth, such as that triggered by the Midlands State University. On the other hand, maladministration and corruption saw eleven councillors of the local authority being suspended in 2016, although only two of them were later found guilty (Parliament of Zimbabwe 2017). However, the appointment of a commission to undertake council duties in the local authority was ineffective as cases of abuse of office and corruption escalated (Parliament of Zimbabwe 2017).

Nonetheless, the revision of the city's Master Plan allowed the local authority to tackle the service delivery problems legally (Paradzayi et al. 2019). The new Master Plan proves that the city has adopted strategic, future-orientated urban planning and policies. However, one questions the cancellation of a call for a joint venture between Gweru City Council and interested private partners in various projects, which included the following: upgrading of the Gweru aerodrome, conversion of closed council beer halls into shopping malls, solar street lighting, and development of a special economic zone (Government of Zimbabwe 2020). The cancellation of such initiatives, though temporarily, exposes the local authority's policy inconsistency that may scare away prospective private city developers, hobbling the efforts in strategic planning.

3.6.3.3 Reactive Planning

OM, as a reactive policy to informal structures, disrupted urban livelihoods in Gweru. As elsewhere in Zimbabwe, local authorities had developed an ambivalent attitude regarding backyard structures and informal settlements. This might be regarded as pragmatic, ad hoc planning, whereby common sense dictated that there was, for example, no immediate and formal solutions to housing backlogs. However, following a directive from the national authority, Gweru City Council razed the Rarara slum settlement along with other structures that had no approved plans (Mangizvo and Dzikiti 2009). Nonetheless, there were less informal settlements affected in Gweru as evidenced by the initial target of only 106 houses to be constructed under OG/HK for the victims of OM (Parliament of Zimbabwe 2006).

3.6.4 Mutare

Mutare is a secondary city that developed from a trading outpost (UN-Habitat 2020). Oppressive colonial rule influenced the city's urban planning and policies. For example, housing in Sakubva, once an African township, could only accommodate single individuals which intended to frustrate rural–urban migration. However, despite the segregation that was in effect during the pre-independence era, Africans were still attracted into the town for various reasons, which included the need for

employment. Consequently, the population for Mutare was 3566 in 1936; by 1974 it had grown to 48,000, and approximately 70,000 in 1982 (Auret 1995; Wekwete 1990). The influx of Africans as workers into the town led the white regime to establish Sakubva as the first African 'location'. The city has continued expanding, and in 2012, the Mutare city boundary encompassed an area of 16,290.75 ha, and a population of 187,621 (Mabaso et al. 2015; Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency 2012).

3.6.4.1 Strategic Planning

The local authority used a master plan that was approved in 1993 for spatial development. It appears to have been effective with over 95% of development conforming to the plan (Mabaso et al. 2015). However, Mabaso et al. (2015) found that Birkely was designated as an open space to preserve the woody ecosystem, which was now developed for residential purposes. This reflected a need to be more responsive to the environment.

3.6.4.2 Progressive Planning

In response to a backlog of housing, the local authority, funded by the national authority, embarked on affordable housing schemes. One successful development was the Hobhouse Home Ownership Scheme. However, the beneficiaries of the programme, instead of being the poor urbanites of the city, were mostly the middle-income earners. Nonetheless, the City of Mutare sought the renewal of the Sakubva Suburb (Zimbabwe Ministry of Local Government and Public Works 2020) that was among the first residential areas developed for Africans under colonial rule, where most of the structures are now dilapidated and unsuitable for human habitation. The Sakubva Urban Renewal project is a partnership between the City of Mutare, Plan Infrastructure Development and ABC Holdings Limited (operating under the brand BancABC). The project is aimed at improving the liveability of Sakubva through phased demolition and eventual regeneration of residential flats, market stalls, public and social amenities.

3.6.4.3 Reactionary Planning

There is evidence of reactionary planning in the Mutare local authority. A report indicated that the local authority sought to evict Devonshire informal settlers, one of several others on the periphery of the city; however, the move was resisted by the settlers (Nyangani 2017). On the other hand, a national newspaper, The Herald, reported on 28 July 2011 that illegal shacks in areas such as Federation and Gimboki have become a sore eye and breeding areas for water-borne diseases (Mamvuto 2017).

This suggests that the City Council needs to revise its urban planning policies to be pragmatic, proactive, participatory and future-orientated.

3.7 Discussion

Zimbabwean urban areas have undergone socio-economic transformation and politics has been at the forefront of this change. During the colonial era, the white minority protected its rule through racial legislation, which controlled the mobility of indigenous Africans into cities. The economic polarity of industrialisation in urban areas and an agrarian economy in rural areas drove Africans into urban areas seeking work in mines and industries. The postcolonial era witnessed rapid urbanisation through a large influx of people into the previously European areas. The demand for resources such as housing, water and sanitation, and employment, far exceeded their delivery through local authorities. Although spatial development plans were prepared for the major cities in Zimbabwe, the local authorities were overwhelmed. Providing decent housing units for urban residents was a challenge for both central and local authorities, despite the adoption of policies, such as home ownership schemes.

The government further tried to redress the rural–urban influx through the implementation of policies such as the Transitional National Development Plan in 1982. These policies were meant to redress the colonial imbalances through, for example, the provision of employment in rural areas (Wekwete 1990). The other significant policy that was adopted by the government to curb the rural–urban influx, was the establishment of growth points in all major rural centres and equipping these with infrastructure akin to that found in urban areas (Mapuva 2015). However, these ambitious policies were derailed by economic challenges that affected the country from the 1990s, leading to increased rural–urban flows (Mapuva 2015). Ironically, the flows may be reversing due to the ongoing economic hardships in urban areas, as well as other policies such as OM (Muchadenyika and Williams 2020).

Nonetheless, cities in Zimbabwe have still been experiencing rapid urbanisation and this caused serious housing problems. All the policies adopted by both central and local authorities on housing problems were mainly focused on the quantity of units rather than their quality, which compromised the sustainability of urban areas (Kamete 2006a). For example, planning that resulted in small and narrow houses in Cowdry Park and the 'matchbox' houses in Lobengula Township were not sustainable since they did not promote transformation and conversions in keeping with current development trends (Magwaro-Ndiweni 2011).

Local authorities have generally shifted from being the architects of urban housing to become mere onlookers and occasionally referees in the game of accommodation and resettlement. There were more private players than public interventions in urban development, a situation lamented by Kamete (2006b) who posited that the role private developers played should be complementary to that of the state. This opened doors for 'tenderpreneurs' that led to the emergence of corrupt land barons (Rakodi 1995).

Affordability was at the heart of housing problems in Zimbabwean cities (Kamete 2001). Therefore, if the provision of accommodation is privatised, the chances are high that the urban poor will not be able to afford the houses, hence the present socio-economic segregation of accommodation. Consequently, postcolonial urban policies mostly marginalise low-income earners by encouraging home ownership. It is not home ownership per se but rather adequate accommodation that is required. Notably, a commission set up to investigate the OG/HK, recommended that the Zimbabwean government build adequate rented accommodation to cater for low-income earners (Parliament of Zimbabwe 2006).

Planning and politics are inseparable (Ferreira et al. 2009; Forester 1999). However, urban planners are the professionals, while councillors and ministers are politicians who usually have an allegiance to their parties. In Zimbabwean cities, the collusion of planners and politicians resulted in OM (Chipungu and Adebayo 2012) and the emergence of informal settlements, such as Caledonia in Harare (Chirisa 2014; Muchadenyika and Williams 2016). On the other hand, while OM was clearly politically motivated (Paradza 2010), the Economic Structural Adjustment era eroded the efficacy of urban planning and its ability to stand up to politicians (Muchadenyika and Williams 2016). The urban landscape was commercialised, as evidenced by city fathers promoting private business interests at the expense of public welfare. The cumulative impact of OM, indigenisation, land reform and affirmative action, has led to politics overriding planning and the indirect acceptance of informal planning systems (Muchadenyika and Williams 2016). Therefore, there is a need for institutions that protect and promote local authority decisions against political pressure, as enshrined in the 2013 Constitution.

3.8 Conclusion and Future Direction

Most problems in Zimbabwean cities are associated with urbanisation. Therefore, there is need for the central authority to support and promote growth pole policies, focusing on smaller towns, where resources, such as land for expansion are still available. However, small towns may also indulge in reactive, piecemeal planning, which is not sustainable over time. Hence, the central authority should assist small towns to properly plan for development through the adoption of responsive and participatory plans (Chigara et al. 2013).

Notably, the most common planning approach in Zimbabwe is improvised and reactionary planning. Regulation, development control, and enforcement measures have characterised urban and spatial planning approaches in Zimbabwe. This approach, supported by archaic legal instruments and masterplans, is no longer suitable for sustainable urban development in Zimbabwe, nor Africa at large (Chakwizira and Mashiri 2008).

While the 2013 Constitution of Zimbabwe requires that local authorities should be allocated at least 5% of the national revenue, the World Bank observed that intragovernmental transfers do not support the local government (Government of Zimbabwe,

World Bank 2017). Thus, urban local authorities are usually financially constrained since their tax base is very restricted due to the longstanding economic crisis. However, if the National Treasury injects some capital and enables local authorities to create their independent investments, the ties between the latter and unscrupulous private land developers would weaken. Conversely, central authority political manoeuvres, such as debt write-offs are destructive as they financially cripple the local authorities and stymie efforts towards lasting solutions for urban development.

Stakeholder participation, as envisaged by the Hydra model, is critical for sustainable development in urban planning and policies. The 2013 Constitution calls for all stakeholders to participate in budget allocations and no local authority budget can be approved without proof of consultation of the stakeholders, which include residents and business owners (Government of Zimbabwe 2015). The problems of urban sprawl may be solved if all key stakeholders, such as resident trusts, local authorities and the central government, enter into dialogue to map the way forward. If the residents participate in planning, slum settlement problems could be better managed more efficiently. However, accountability is essential to avoid rent-seeking, double allocation of stands and patronage and other forms of corruption. Hence, there is a need for councillors who are professional in their conduct, putting aside partisan politics in finding sustainable solutions for urban areas (Nyikadzino and Nhema 2015).

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