# Chapter 4
# Studentification and Its Interplay on Urban Form and Urban Policy: Reflection from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe


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**Abstract** The chapter contributes to the ongoing debates concerning studentification as an emerging urban policy agenda in university cities. On-campus accommodation shortages compel students to find accommodation in the private sector. This chapter explores the opportunities and constraints of off-campus student housing and its influence on the spatial form of urban areas and ultimately urban policy. Adopting a qualitative research approach with Bulawayo as a case study, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis informed the collection of data that was inductively analysed through thematic analysis and content analysis. It emerged that studentification is an emerging trend in urban Zimbabwe and is associated with various challenges and opportunities. However, the existing urban policy framework for Bulawayo does not integrate studentification in the urban fabric. The spatial configuration of the city of Bulawayo is therefore compromised due to increasing communal housing amid detached housing, increased rentals and commercialisation of residential properties. Therefore, this chapter provides an insight into this emerging phenomenon of studentification and how it can be used for urban policy reform and decision-making for the development of sustainable urban forms.

**Keywords** Bulawayo · Studentification · Gentrification · 'student ghetto'

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## 4.1 Introduction

Western education in Africa is a legacy of the settlers who introduced it during colonial times when they conquered Africa (Berman 1975; Higgs 2012; Nyamnjoh 2012). The introduction of this education system was a strategic move by the settlers to provide literacy training to natives who would help them as catechists, messengers and with other duties to advance their socio-economic development needs (Omolewa 2006). Unlike the South African government that established bush colleges[1] in the homelands where natives would acquire tertiary education, the situation in most parts of Southern Africa, including Zimbabwe, was different as the colonial governments never attempted to invest in tertiary institutions for Africans (Anderson 2003; Cebekhulu and Mantzaris 2006). This is evident from the numerous alumni among the Pan-African leaders that include the late former Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe, who obtained their tertiary education at the Fort Hare University in South Africa. This shows that there was no chance for Africans to study in Zimbabwe where the opportunities for tertiary education among Africans were next to zero. However, at the time, tertiary education was also considered a privilege for the African elites and not many would be enrolled (Davies 1996; Reddy 2004).

In Zimbabwe, education for Africans was largely limited to secondary education, and university education remained a privilege for the settlers only. The small population of these Europeans on the continent meant that there was less need for the establishment of multiple tertiary institutions, considering that most of them would even acquire their university education in their home countries abroad. This is evident from the case of Zimbabwe. The British first settled in present-day Harare in 1890 but it was only in 1952 when the first university in Zimbabwe, the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (now University of Zimbabwe) was established, and only accommodated a small number of students. Resources and infrastructure were adequate to cater the needs of the students, for example, on-campus accommodation, which was even in excess, as reported by Chung (2006: 39–40): "There were only four black women students. Two from Zambia, one from Malawi and only one from Rhodesia. They too had a whole corridor and sitting room to themselves"!

Studentification refers to the urban transformation process that is spurred by the increase in, and concentrations of student populations in cities or specific neighbourhoods (Smith 2008). The focus on studentification is mainly on students at tertiary level.

Researchers have already explored the definitions and trends of studentification. However, most of this scholarly work is situated in the Global North context, considering the long history of universities in this region, especially in Europe and the United States of America (Smith 2008). Only in the recent past has there been a boom of universities in the Global South, especially in Africa, where tertiary education for the minority remain restricted. Within the African context, studentification

[1] As part of the apartheid government to accommodate Africans in tertiary institutions, separate universities were established in the different bantustans where Africans could be enrolled. These universities include the University of Zululand and University of Western Cape (Davies 1996).

is a phenomenon that is in its infancy and thus it can be identified as an emerging paradigm. This may be explained by the fact that postcolonial governments have been making attempts to decolonise university education and enable the previously disadvantaged natives to acquire higher degrees. The studentification may also be explained as being spurred by government initiatives to develop human capital, which is believed to be a driver for socio-economic development and sustained national development (Benneworth et al. 2010; Revington et al. 2020).

Therefore, more recently, especially in South Africa, researchers increasingly undertook studies on studentification (Gregory 2020; Gregory and Rogerson 2019). The focus of such studies tends to be on the perceptions of residents and students on studentification (Ndimande 2018), to safety issues among the students (Ijasan and Ahmed 2016) and gentrification (Ackermann and Visser 2016). In this chapter, we add onto this growing scholarly work by situating the debates on studentification in the Zimbabwean context where there is a dearth of such investigations, notwithstanding the proliferation of universities over the past two decades. Using the case of Bulawayo, we focus on the interplay and ways in which studentification, urban form and housing policy are intertwined in Zimbabwe. We argue that studentification is an emerging urban trend that seems to be ignored and marginalised in policy and research, a situation that compromises the form and function of urban spaces.

Against this background, the chapter asks critical questions that are situated on the phenomenon of studentification, which is an emerging paradigm in the Zimbabwean context. First, we seek to understand the spatial extent of studentification in Bulawayo. In this regard, we interrogate how studentification unfolds in Bulawayo and examine whether is it has involved the displacement of the settled local population who have been residing in family houses in the neighbourhoods around the tertiary institutions. Second, we explore the sociospatial problems and opportunities that are currently being presented by the growth in student numbers and the growth of off-campus student housing in Bulawayo. Last, the chapter focuses on how planning in Zimbabwe has dealt with studentification.

## 4.2 Studentification and University Towns: A Literature Review

Studies on studentification sought to understand the changes brought about by the increased concentration of student populations in certain suburbs around the universities. This concentration has different socio-economic and physical implications on urban space and ultimately urban policy. First, studentification results in the transformation and creation of ‘student ghettos’ that are segregated and concentrated in particular urban areas (Duke-Williams 2009). This phenomenon of student ghettos has been prevalent in the English college towns, to such an extent that students end up dominating entire neighbourhoods (Smith 2002). The same situation has been recounted as occurring in Braamfontein, Johannesburg, where studentified districts

have emerged due to the increased concentration of students at the University of Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand University (Gregory and Rogerson 2019; Visser and Kisting 2019).

It is also critical to note that this concentration of students in neighbourhoods close to the universities is often temporary but may result in the replacement of 'settled' residential groups (Kinton et al. 2016). The result of 'student ghettos' includes changes in the sociodemographic structure of certain neighbourhoods that may be characterised by the out-migration of displaced families who fail to adapt to the increased presence of students in their neighbourhoods (Gu and Smith 2020). In this way, studentification results in the disruption of the wider existing housing and the displacement of established households from these student ghettos (Hubbard 2009; Smith and Hubbard 2014). As a result, urban dormitories emerge and consist of the proliferation of student housing in residential areas previously owned by families (Revington et al. 2020). What emerges is youtification as the neighbourhoods eventually end up being accommodated by the students and other young adults, usually young couples (Moos et al. 2019).

Miessner (2020) pointed out that studentification is associated with some form of segregation which is spurred by the property owners through their rentals. This argument is premised on the context of Germany where rental housing serves the majority of urban dwellers, which is also typical in most Zimbabwean cities considering the high proportions of individuals who do not own properties but depend on rental housing (Chirisa and Matamanda 2016). In such instances, it has been found that property owners take advantage of the students who are better-paying tenants as they are willing and can afford to pay more for their rentals, especially if the properties are close to the universities. Thus, property owners influence urban segregation as the displacement of marginalised groups is noted due to the high rentals charged (Miessner 2020).

The out-migration of settled families is caused by anti-social behaviour that is associated with students. These include the noise and litter problems that are so often characteristic of students' lives of partying and a general lack of stewardship for the places they rent. Moreover, the increased density of students also comes as a burden on public service delivery as family houses tend to be occupied by more residents. Kinton et al. (2016) also point out that a reconfiguration of local population structures is evident where unrelated students live in shared housing, while young cohabiting students change the local class and household structure through the emergence of a distinctive student-cultural lifestyle.

The rental housing market is a major area that is influenced by studentification. The result is often gentrification where property owners try to reconfigure their houses to make them suitable for occupation by the students. In their effort to regenerate their properties, some owners compromise the cultural value of a place, as is evident in the case of Stellenbosch, where some historical buildings have been demolished to pave the way for student communes (Donaldson et al. 2014). In most instances, the universities and municipalities fail to keep pace with the influx of students and come up with alternative urban and housing policies that regulate studentification (Donaldson et al. 2014). The result is that the rental housing market becomes informalised and

unregulated (Uyttebrouck et al. 2020). On the other hand, property prices tend to be inflated, as the demand for housing in areas close to the university increases to such an extent that low- and middle-income earners are excluded from the housing market, leaving it for high-income earners and developers who then buy most of the properties on sale and convert them into student communes or blocks of flats (Donaldson et al. 2014). The form of the housing put up by the developers may be flats, resulting in the emergence of vertical studentification, as noted in Australia (Holton and Mouat 2020).

Urban planning responses to studentification in Africa are still limited while absent in many instances. This can be explained by the point previously highlighted which emphasises the concept of studentification as an emerging paradigm in Africa that governments are still grappling with. In South Africa, albeit the increasing challenges being posed by studentification in university towns such as Bloemfontein, Stellenbosch and Johannesburg, it seems planning is still grappling with addressing these challenges and maximising the gains of this emerging trend (Ackermann and Visser 2016).

It is imperative that the housing market be regulated so that there is a restriction on exorbitant rental prices being charged by property owners. Another point of concern is the quality of the housing which, in most instances, remains neglected as property owners reconfigure their properties to be suitable for accommodating the students (Donaldson et al. 2014). Revington et al. (2020) have argued that planning for studentification must be adaptive and forward-thinking as evident from how the University of Waterloo in Canada has managed to project and integrate the opportunities and constraints of studentification in urban development.

## 4.3 Methodology

This chapter is qualitative by nature and is based on a case study research design, which situates studentification in the context of Bulawayo. The case study design enabled the examination of the concept of studentification in Bulawayo and this helped to bring insights regarding the interplay of studentification, urban form and housing policy. This is supported by Merriam (2009: 40), who pointed out that case study research enables an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system. This bounded system is the city of Bulawayo and the selected neighbourhoods that are affected by studentification. In understanding these bounded systems, we sought to provide a descriptive study that unpacks the aforementioned interplay in the city. Therefore, data was collected from both secondary and primary data sources. In-depth qualitative research was undertaken through interviews with students living off-campus, established settled residents and key institutional actors, who include officials from universities, the City of Bulawayo, the Department of Physical Planning and real estate development companies or local housing agents. These interviews were triangulated with secondary data sources. Content analysis was used to analyse

the secondary data, while the primary data was analysed using textual and thematic analysis.

## 4.4 Contextualising Bulawayo

Bulawayo is the second-largest city in Zimbabwe. Although the settlement had for long been occupied by the Matabele under the kingdom of Lobengula, the current city was officially declared on 1 June 1894 by the British colonialists who anticipated to find some mineral prospects in the region (Ranger 2010). This followed the discovery of the goldfields of the Witwatersrand in South Africa, but it transpired that the lands further north of South Africa were not as prosperous, considering that the same pursuit had been undertaken in vain in Harare in 1890. The absence of mineral prospects in the region resulted in the city thriving as a transport hub due to the construction of the railway line, which eventually bolstered Bulawayo as an industrial hub during the colonial period (Ranger 2010). This railway network was initially developed in 1897 and enabled Bulawayo to be identified as the regional capital for the southern region of Zimbabwe, while also linking the city and Zimbabwe to various neighbouring countries including South Africa and Botswana (Gumbo 2013; Hamilton and Ndubiwa 1994). The development of this railway network was to become a critical infrastructure that enabled the city to evolve and develop into an industrial, commercial and cultural centre and capital for the south-western parts of Zimbabwe. The industrial dominance of the city is evident from the presence of important heavy industries, food processing factories and a thermal power station (Gumbo 2013).

Bulawayo was then the second capital city, while Harare was established as the politico-administrative centre for the colonial government, a situation that has persisted post-independence. Urban development (including the establishment of a university) in Bulawayo during the early years of independence was stalled by the civil unrest caused by the politics of difference between the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF) party and the Patriotic Front–Zimbabwe African People's Union (PF–ZAPU) (Musemwa 2006a). It was recounted by Falola (2003: 119) that "those in power tend to reward areas where they come from roads, universities, and a host of other amenities". Therefore, the National University of Science Technology was only established in 1991 and became the second-largest university in the country.

The antagonism between these two parties was also based on ethnic grounds, considering that Bulawayo, like most parts of the Matabeleland Province, was predominantly inhabited by the Ndebele who had voted for the 1980 presidential elections of the PF–ZAPU, as well as the 1984 parliamentary elections. As Moyo (1992: 28) pointed out:

> The ruling party's incessant losing streak in elections in ZAPU's dominant constituency of Matabeleland, first in 1980, then in local municipal elections in Bulawayo in 1984, and finally in the 1985 national elections, was a source of humiliation and anger for ZANU–PF.

Musemwa (2006b) described Bulawayo as a segregated city that was planned and developed based on the colonial ideology of racial segregation.

### *4.4.1 Evolution of Tertiary Institutions in Bulawayo*

The Zimbabwe School of Mines was established in 1926 and operated from Gifford High School with only 39 students. In 1934, the Zimbabwe School of Mines was moved from Gifford High to resort under the Bulawayo Technical School until 1994, when the Zimbabwe School of Mines moved to its current premises in Killarney. The institution mainly offers full-time study to students at the following levels: national certificate, national diploma and higher national diploma in mining-related courses. The student enrolment per annum has been increasing over the past five years in the various departments. On average the Zimbabwe School of Mines has 600 students per annum. The existing hostel within the institution can only accommodate 86 students, leaving the other students to reside in off-campus accommodation.

Hillside Teachers' College was established in 1956 as a secondary school teacher's training college. The institution continues to train secondary school teachers who graduate with diplomas and degrees. At its inception, the College had two departments with an annual enrolment of 120 students, but both the departments and enrolment have increased significantly over the years. Currently, there are ten departments at Hillside Teachers' College that accommodate approximately 1 500 students. Considering the initial capacity of the college that only had two departments, the current enrolment places a burden on the institution concerning accommodation, because there are only six hostels, with the capacity to accommodate only 699 students. The remaining students are thus forced to reside in off-campus accommodation. There are plans to construct two hostels, each with a capacity to accommodate 100 students to meet the demand for student accommodation.

At independence, the University of Zimbabwe emerged as the only university in the country, and by the mid-1980s, the strain on the institution was beginning to show due to the decolonisation of tertiary education and the increasing number of Africans who were completing their advanced level education. A commission of inquiry was set to assess the feasibility of establishing another university and it recommended that a "Second university should be established with a Science and Technology bias and this university should be located in Bulawayo" (National University of Science and Technology [NUST] 2019: 40). Mlambo (2005) pointed out that the Government of Zimbabwe took a hasty decision in the establishment of NUST because it did not engage in much forward planning, especially for adequate sustainable long-term funding and infrastructural development. This lack of forward planning contradicts the suggestions by Revington et al. (2020) who have advocated that governments should embrace adaptive and forward planning approaches in their attempts to address studentification.

Moreover, the establishment of NUST in 1991 was followed by the 1992 droughts and the structural adjustment programme of 1994, which limited government spending on public services. The economic meltdown that was to follow from 2000 and the political mayhem in the country made it even more difficult for any meaningful development to be undertaken at this institution. Consequently, although NUST sits on a 160 ha piece of land, it offers very limited on-campus accommodation for its students, forcing most of the 10,000 or more students to be accommodated in off-campus accommodation. In 1991, NUST accommodated a mere 270 students, but at present, there are approximately 156 rooms on campus, with 48 at Mpilo Hospital, mainly reserved for medical students, and an additional 42 at Rose Flats in the central business district (CBD). There is a mismatch between student enrolment and available on-campus accommodation.

Although NUST was established in 1991, the demand for university education kept on increasing and the government urged that more universities be established to meet this demand (NUST 2019: 39). The Catholic University is one such university that has its campuses dotted across the country. Likewise, the Catholic University Bulawayo Campus was established in 2014, and currently, there is an approximate enrolment of 704 students; yet the university only has three hostels that can only accommodate 108 students.

### *4.4.2 Role of Studentification on the Form and Function of the City*

Figure 4.1 shows the spatial extent of the tertiary institutions in Bulawayo. The institutions are located close to the CBD and on the eastern side of the city, which initially accommodated whites from the colonial times, as described by Musemwa (2006b: 187): "the emergence of both the white city of Bulawayo (that is, the CBD) and the northern and eastern suburbs) and the African township of Makokoba followed different developmental trajectories". The Hillside Teachers' College was established during the colonial era and was situated on the eastern side of the city, while the postcolonial situation of NUST is also situated in the same proximity. This may be explained through the zoning regulations for the city that seeks to cluster similar land uses. On the other hand, this emerges as a perpetuation of the colonial city form that was based on segregated land uses in urban development. The CBD emerges as a buffer that separates these institutions from the western suburbs that accommodate the low-income suburbs.

As explained earlier, all the tertiary institutions in Bulawayo experience a shortage of on-campus accommodation, forcing most of the students to reside in off-campus accommodation. Due to the critical shortage of accommodation within the NUST halls of residence, a large percentage of the student population stays in privately owned rented accommodation. However, as a way of assisting students at the beginning of each semester, the university places an advertisement in the public newspaper

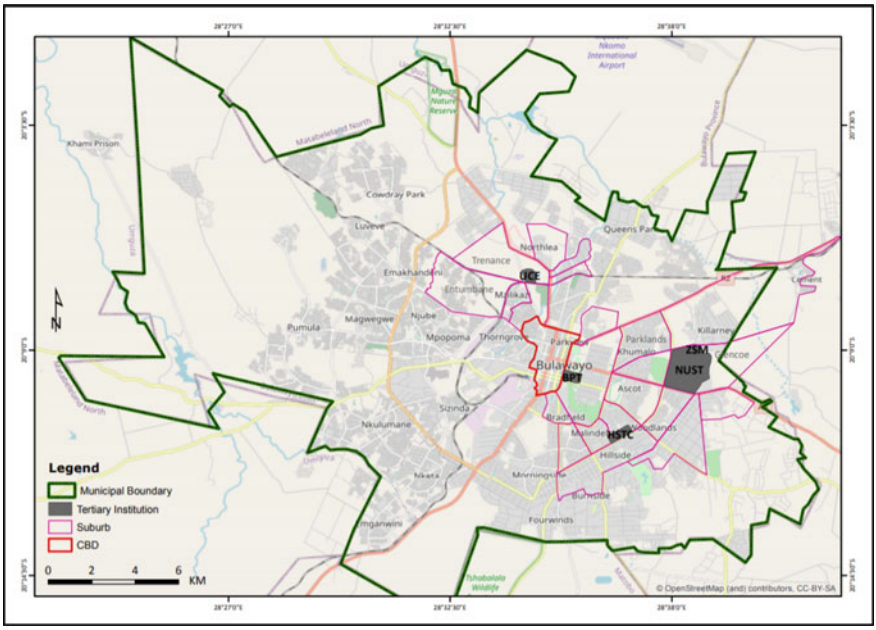


**Fig. 4.1** Spatial distribution of the tertiary institutions in Bulawayo

soliciting accommodation from the Bulawayo community. NUST is not directly involved in the management but only indicates to prospective tenants where the houses are located. The rest is a private arrangement between the landlord and the tenant, although the university does regular checks and interventions to ensure the liveability of such environments in which students are accommodated.

As of July 2020, 227 people have registered with the university's student affairs departments for possible accommodation of students. The suburbs with the largest number of prospective landlords are located near the university, namely, Selbourne Park (52), Matshemhlophe (29), Sunninghill (22), Riverside (20), Khumalo (25), Killarney (9) and Parklands (15). These residential neighbourhoods have a locational advantage, being in the vicinity of NUST; hence, they are within walking distance from the university and the students do not have to incur transport costs. Additionally, twelve properties within the CBD also registered for student accommodation. The CBD, though about 7 km from the university, has a locational advantage in terms of availability of transport. The number of properties offering student accommodation reduces with increased distance from the university. For example, in Hillside, five property owners advertised; in Woodlands four; in Lochview four; in Morningside three and suburbs three. Other residential neighbourhoods such as West Somerton, Mahatshula, Glengary, Malindela, Entumbane and Gwabalanda advertised properties, but these are very few, as that would mean transport costs on the part of the students.

**Fig. 4.2** Cottage built for student rental

The implication is that property owners within the vicinity of the university have taken advantage of this demand for student accommodation. Most have thus modified and reconfigured their houses, built cottages or even rent part of their detached houses to students. Figure 4.2 shows a cottage that has been constructed by one property owner for renting to students. The property owner indicated that he built the cottage in 2012, specifically targeting NUST students due to the critical shortage of accommodation for students. This particular cottage is among those that are registered with NUST and constitutes four bedrooms, one with an en-suite bathroom, as well as a communal kitchen and lounge. Each room accommodates two students, meaning that eight students can be accommodated in the cottage. The landlord indicated that he provided basic amenities that are critical for students. These include a stove and fridge in the kitchen, as well as a Wi-Fi connection.

The official from NUST pointed out that "[p]property owners are encouraged to register with NUST so that the university knows where students stay. However, not all property owners have registered with the institution". It was explained that such an arrangement helps to create a synergy between the university and the residents, as the students are expected to behave as if they reside in university accommodation. Moreover, the arrangement also helps as the university assesses the accommodation and provides guidelines that make the rooms suitable for students to reside comfortably. Besides, NUST periodically visits the landlords to see the conditions and establish how the students behave so that they may provide advice. Meetings are held between the landlords and the NUST student division to discuss NUST's expectations, rentals, space and behaviour. Students are not expected to drink while in the hostels on campus; they are equally not expected to drink while residing off-campus. The residence officer from NUST remarked: "Landlords need to play a fatherly and motherly role – the place is the new home for the student, but they should also feel as being part of NUST".

Property owners and developers have taken advantage of the demand for off-campus accommodation. However, most property owners have not made any effort to register their properties with the local authority, as they fear they may be asked to desist from such practices, or they might have to pay some form of tax to the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority. The official from Bulawayo City Council (BCC) also indicated that there is no specific by-law that regulates the student housing in the city, especially when individuals extend their properties. The official from the development control section at BCC further stated:

> On a high-income plot – more than 2,000 $m^2$ permitted developments are the main house, cottage (100 $m^2$) and an outbuilding. As a result, students are being accommodated in the above structures – no need for a change of use or application for special consent as the developments are permitted. A change of use of properties would only apply when the development is non-residential.

Unlike in other cities and contexts where studentification has been concomitant with gentrification, the situation in Bulawayo has proved that studentification does not always correlate positively with gentrification. Rather, property owners have simply made improvements on their own to existing properties to enhance the look of their properties and to make them more appealing to the students. Notwithstanding developments, it emerged that the council has not put in place any statutes or policy that guides and regulates the development of such housing meant to accommodate the students. The official from the BCC pointed out:

> Special consent is the basis upon which non-residential uses can be permitted as long as the proposed developments are not obtrusive. It should be noted that special consent applications do not mean a change in zoning, has a timed life span as things may change and the land use may revert to the original use.

This situation confirms the study by Uyttebrouck et al. (2020), who indicate that the emerging housing market for students and young professionals is evolving, yet remains unregulated. The argument raised by the local authority is that student accommodation is categorised as residential use, such as that there is no change of reservation of the place—use the main house and retain the character of the house; not change the fabric of the area. However, the house plans have to be submitted for approval to the local authority if a new dwelling is to be developed so that the council can determine if the proposed development conforms to the designated land use.

The studentification process in Bulawayo has also spurred a different kind of housing market and development that includes private corporates who have made plans to invest in off-campus rental accommodation. However, the main challenge has always been the demand for land, as the most lucrative sites are those close to the university; yet there is limited space and the available space tends to be highly priced, considering its proximity to the CBD. In 2019, Zimre Property Investments Limited (ZPIL) refurbished one of its properties in the CBD (NICOZ House) to pave the way for student accommodation units (Ndlovu 2018). This property accommodates 200 students on the second and third floors, while the ground floor has been retained for commercial purposes—a restaurant and surgery that are complementary to the residential use. Furthermore, ZPIL is scheduled to construct the US$16 million

Selbourne Park Student Accommodation Hub that is expected to accommodate 2000 tertiary students in Bulawayo. An official from ZPIL stressed the lucrative nature of providing student accommodation: "The next frontier in investment is in student accommodation, especially for pension funds. It's not a social investment" (Chikono 2019).

The other players engaged in student accommodation in Bulawayo is the Infrastructure Development Bank of Zimbabwe that is currently constructing the Bulawayo Student Accommodation Complex in Matsheumhlope. The project will accommodate students from all tertiary institutions in and around Bulawayo, thus easing the existing housing woes among the students (Infrastructure Development Bank of Zimbabwe 2017). They have also unrolled similar projects in other university towns across the country to contribute to the social well-being of students. Figure 4.3 shows this complex still under construction, with the development expected to accommodate 1032 students. Moreover, there will be 12 small shops, four offices, a banking hall, a gym and other commercial spaces that will also be open to members of the public (see Fig. 4.4).

The implications of studentification on urban development in Bulawayo are multifaceted. For example, the residents raised concerns about the invasion of students in the neighbourhoods surrounding NUST and the other tertiary institutions. The major concern raised was the lack of stewardship that students bring to the houses where they stay. This has been identified as a major problem, especially in homes

**Fig. 4.3** Student hostel being constructed by the Infrastructure Development Bank of Zimbabwe


**Fig. 4.4** A diagrammatic representation of the final form of the Bulawayo Student Accommodation Complex showing the upmarket facility

where the owners do not live on the property, but rent the entire home to the students. Waste management has been a challenge that got out of hand in the suburbs where students live, because they have no sense of responsibility to take care of the environment where they live. One property owner who rents out his house pointed out that "[t]he students are not willing to clean the yard; "*tinobhadhara ka mdhara imi motowona kuti matsvaka munhu*". (We pay our rentals, so you have to find someone responsible for the cleaning.) As a result, he ends up cleaning the yard by picking up the excessive waste disposed of by the students. This situation is exacerbated by the local authority not managing the waste in the city effectively, resulting in such problems. One property owner lamented:

> Vandalism is a major challenge especially the plugs and doors. Constant repairs have to be done to the door handles, electric stove and burnt plugs while the outside environment remains unmanned and can be an eyesore unless someone intervenes.

Noise was identified as another major nuisance that characterises the studentification in the various neighbourhoods in Bulawayo where students reside. Permanent residents bemoan the fact that, with the increasing number of students in the various neighbourhoods in Bulawayo, noise levels are increasingly becoming unbearable due to the lifestyles of the students living in rented houses, as they usually throw parties over weekends, playing loud music and singing, which is a great nuisance to the neighbours. Moreover, studentification in Bulawayo has also been blamed for the surge in crime and anti-social behaviour in the suburbs where they live. The presence of students in off-campus accommodation has increased incidences of crime, as criminals target the students, especially those who study in the library till late at night. Besides muggings, which often happen, resulting in students being robbed of their valuables such as laptops and phones, it was also reported that burglary cases were on the increase in the neighbourhoods. However, the victims may not always be the students (Tshili 2018); prostitution has also been identified as another anti-social behaviour that is being fuelled by the studentification process. Most students come from poor backgrounds and some end up engaging in prostitution to support themselves.

The constraints on the existing bulk services in the city, especially water and sewer services, are a major problem that haunts the city authorities. Bulawayo has always experienced water problems from its inception (Musemwa 2006b) and as the student population increases in off-campus accommodation that was meant to accommodate single households, the constraints on these services are immense. This is a challenge that the local authority has not anticipated and for which it has no immediate solution.

These challenges associated with the studentification process in Bulawayo have thus forced some property owners in the affected suburbs to rent out their properties and move to other suburbs far from areas with a high concentration of students. However, this is not a practical option for most property owners, as few have the financial means to buy a property in another location. Some have sold their properties and moved out of their family houses. The class displacement thus comes into perspective here as the poor and affluent are segregated, based on their ability to relocate or else put up with the 'nuisance' of the students and live in these dormitory towns. It is for this particular reason why the construction of the Selbourne Park Student Accommodation Hub scheduled to be constructed on five consolidated plots in an area designated for family housing, has been met with resistance from the BCC (Nyoni 2018). Also, at a consultation meeting during the preparation of an environmental impact assessment, property owners in Selbourne Park, Matshemhlophe and Riverside objected to the construction of student hostels. On the other hand, the town planning officer from the BCC development control section mentioned that "the local authority is not doing anything to facilitate the provision of land within the abutting residential areas as NUST has adequate land within its size for all the

envisaged developments". Her reasoning, and that of the local authority, was that "NUST must be a self-contained development as it has adequate land".

The reasons for objections were depreciation in property values (they knew about townhouse development which improves or retains their property values, not hostels, hence the reason why they bought properties, otherwise they would have bought elsewhere); the increase in crime rates; the fact that the development will fuel moral decadency among their children through association with students from higher learning institutions; and the capacity of the neighbourhood and services to hold such a large population (overpopulation). The capacity of the suburb to absorb an additional 2000 students would exacerbate the existing water woes in the suburbs. The residents thus argued that the development should be on the university premises and not off-campus (Moyo 2017).

## 4.5 Conclusion

The chapter recognises that studentification is an emerging paradigm in urban Zimbabwe, following the government's initiative to establish state universities across the country. However, this policy decision was not supported by a comprehensive plan that would facilitate complementary infrastructure development in these college towns. First, studentification in Bulawayo has been concomitant with the increasing density of students in suburbs around the universities. This has been a result of the limited on-campus accommodation that leaves the students with no option but to reside in off-campus accommodation.

Second, this increased concentration of students in the various neighbourhoods has resulted in various socio-economic problems, which include an increase in crime in the neighbourhoods as perpetrators target students for their electronic equipment such as laptops and mobile phones. Noise and littering have also been identified to be on the rise, following the proliferation of students in these suburbs. The increased density of students in the residential areas has thus placed a burden on the already constrained urban infrastructure and services in Bulawayo. The major constraint is on water access, a challenge the city has been grappling with for decades.

Third, the proliferation of students has thus resulted in some 'settled' residents moving out of these suburbs as they indicated that the presence of students has diminished the residential value of their properties. However, some residents have taken the initiative to regenerate their properties to accommodate the students in the informal rental housing that is not regulated by the local authority or the universities. The displacement of families from these student ghettos has been based on classism as some families cannot acquire alternative properties; hence, they are stranded with no option but to live with the students in their midst.

The local authority has been reluctant to formulate any policy that relates to studentification, namely, the sociospatial transformations associated with the process. To this end, the urban change has remained unregulated, as the BCC argues that as long as the properties retain their residential function, there is no need to change

policy. What the BCC fails to consider is the complexity of studentified neighbourhoods that influence sociospatial development. They argue that it is the responsibility of the university to provide student accommodation on-campus, because they have adequate land available. However, such an instance has opened up an opportunity for property developers who have been investing in flats that depict the vertical studentification in Australia. This vertical development is also characterised by the development of other complementary services and functions, which include a restaurant, bank and surgery. These complementary services somehow increase the value of the neighbourhoods.

The process of studentification in Bulawayo has thus been associated with the spatial reconfiguration of the city as is evident from the renovations made by respective property owners seeking to attract students. The role of the private sector in property development can also not be underestimated, because considering the limited role of the government in funding off-campus student accommodation, which is supposed to be a social responsibility, considering that most of the students come from poor backgrounds and cannot afford the upmarket services offered, for example, at the ZPIL hostels in the CBD, the urban poor will remain marginalised in accessing housing.

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