

Chapter 1

Introduction



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Abstract This chapter introduces the book. The focus is on providing a nuanced understanding of secondary cities and their role in urban development and urban agenda. It is pointed out that secondary cities are contested, starting with the ambiguities in defining what they are and their place within the urban hierarchies in different countries. These categorisation and conception are especially important as they form the bedrock upon which government policies are formulated and implemented regarding the governance and management of the secondary cities. We thus examine the meanings of secondary cities by identifying the typologies of these secondary cities in a southern African context. Secondary cities are inherently complex and have comparative advantages that may spur sustained urbanisation. Hence, we explore these opportunities and most importantly situate the exploration within the bounds of local governance and question why governments continue to marginalise these secondary cities when they have so much potential of alleviating urban challenges. The chapter proceeds to present the aim and objectives of the book and lastly outlines the scope of the book.

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1.1 Trends in Urbanisation Systems in Southern Africa

African cities are urbanising rapidly. Many studies have documented the urban dynamics in southern African cities. Most of the studies undertaken focus on the larger metros such as Johannesburg and Cape Town in South Africa (Abrahams and Everatt 2019; Scheba et al. 2021), Harare in Zimbabwe (Muchadenyika et al. 2019), Lusaka in Zambia (Umar et al. 2023) and Francistown and Gaborone in Botswana (Samuel et al. 2022). This focus has often resulted from the capitalist urbanisation that has resulted in the attention and focus among policymakers and planners on these large metros while seemingly casting a blind eye to the smaller cities. Yet, there is growing evidence that most urbanisation in sub-Saharan Africa, including southern Africa, will occur in secondary cities (Githira et al. 2020). According to Zimmer et al. (2020), the total urban population in southern Africa increased from 22.8 million to 67.3 million people between 1975 and 2015. Their study confirmed that secondary cities accounted for nearly 50% of this growth. Currently, southern Africa accommodates 70% of the urban population in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). By 2016, 15% of the South African population resided in secondary cities showing a large share of the urban population in these second-tier cities (Marais et al. 2016). Likewise, there is increased urbanisation of secondary cities in Zimbabwe as evident from the slowed or stagnated urbanisation in the larger cities such as Harare, Bulawayo and Gweru (Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development 2017; Mbiba 2017; Moyo 2020). This confirms studies by Potts (2009, p. 254; 2010, 2012, p. 14) that show the misconception of the ‘rapid urbanisation’ narrative for Africa where the primate cities are assumed to be urbanising more.

Despite the growing evidence that secondary cities are urbanising more rapidly than primary cities in most parts of southern Africa, many urban development and governance interventions prioritise the primary cities (Githira et al. 2020). This prioritisation of primary cities has resulted in polarising effects, with growing physical and socio-economic development gaps between primary and secondary towns, creating socio-spatial inequalities and multiple deprivations, including water and sanitation services. These inequalities and gaps are largely attributed to limited economic investment in the secondary cities. Much of the investment is directed towards the large metropolitan areas often envisaged to become ‘world-class’ cities. The same applies to disaster interventions that remain concentrated in capital cities (Samuel et al. 2022). In this regard, climatic risks are also exacerbated in these fragile secondary cities due to rapid urbanisation, exposing the poor to multiple stressors (Kagaya et al. 2021). It thus becomes critical to analyse how climate change adaptation strategies are integrated into these secondary cities’ governance and management policies.

Over time, the focus on the primary cities has created weak governance systems in the secondary cities as power and authority remain centralised (McGregor and Chatiza 2020; Githira et al. 2020). Such state-led type of top-down governance has tremendous implications for the development trajectories of secondary cities as resource allocation may be unfairly divided between the centre and the periphery, marginalising the latter, while the development needs of these cities remain overlooked (Smith 2019; Alves 2021). With the centralisation of power, authority and decision-making, it becomes critical to note that even budgetary issues tend to be centralised together with oversight of local resources and services that in most instances stifle sustained urban development in the secondary cities. Most importantly, there are instances where some regions are prioritised over others, and this has negatively affected service delivery in such secondary cities (Nugraha et al. 2023). Evident is in Zimbabwe's Matabeleland regions that have been marginalised by the government (Matamanda et al. 2021).

1.2 Conceptualising and Categorising Secondary Cities

Secondary cities are broadly defined and their characterisation differs across countries and regions. Definitions generally focus on the urban areas' demographic characteristics, size, economic base, function and administrative hierarchy. In their definition, the UN-Habitat (1991) highlighted that a secondary city is one whose population ranged between 100,000 and 500,000 people. However, Roberts (2019) suggests that a secondary city must accommodate approximately an equivalent of 10–50% of the country's largest population, or between 100, 000 and 1.5 million people. Scholars such as Brand et al. (2021) have used the national urban hierarchy system to define secondary cities. In this regard, secondary cities are those cities that fall under the primary or primate cities. Examples include Chinhoyi in Zimbabwe, Kitwe in Zambia and Sasolburg in South Africa. Thus, secondary cities emerge as development growth poles that cater to areas' commercial and administrative functions with extractive industries like agriculture, mining and fishing (Hoffman 2015).

Overall, there are three broad spatial categories proffered by Roberts (2014) that help understand the spatial dimension of secondary cities. First, secondary cities are sub-national cities comprising centres of local government, industry, agriculture, tourism and mining. In such an instance, cities such as Zvishavane and Shurugwi in Zimbabwe apply as they are mining cities, while Witbank, in South Africa, is also another example of an industrial city. Second, secondary cities are characterised as city clusters synonymous with expanded, satellite and new town cities surrounding large metropolitan city-regions. Examples in this regard include Norton in Zimbabwe and Midrand and Centurion in Gauteng, South Africa. Third, secondary cities include economic trade corridors representing urban growth centres planned or developing along major transport corridors.

1.3 Argument and Rationale for Local Governance and Secondary Cities' Nexus

We make four arguments in this book based on secondary cities in southern Africa. First, we argue that secondary cities have been neglected in the urban narrative for southern Africa, as evident from research and policy that focuses on larger cities and metropolitan regions. In this vein, little is known about these secondary cities' development trajectories and how they can contribute to sustained socio-economic development and the national urban agenda. Yet, secondary cities are complex and have a variety of economic bases, including administrative, regional services, mining, farming, tourism and tertiary institutions (Roberts 2019). However, it is still not understood how these cities may become part of the broader national urban agenda by establishing sustainable links between the hinterland and the centre and the most suitable models for governing these cities.

Second, we recognise the seeming neglect of secondary cities in urban agenda and urban development due to the prioritisation of the major metropolitan regions. This is evident from the work of Nugraha et al. (2023) who have posited that these neglected cities are also 'overlooked cities' hence the need to reconsider urban research and practice. This eventually perpetuates spatial injustice where the secondary cities lag in development. The major question we ask here is how the governance of the secondary cities impacts the spatial justice discourses and the liveability of the cities.

Third, we postulate that there are economic bases inherent in secondary cities that have remained largely untapped or ignored for long. The significance of these secondary cities has long been identified by Kamete (1998), who highlighted the interactions between Banket, a small town, and the surrounding commercial farming areas. Kamete (1998) concluded that the role of small towns and their interactions with the hinterland remain ignored or taken for granted in research and policy. Rondinelli (1983, 42) argued that secondary cities have the ability 'to stimulate the economies of surrounding rural areas, [...] slow migration to the largest urban areas, and [...] spread the benefits of economic growth to lagging and depressed regions'.

Lastly, a capital city or world city focus has pulled urban development policy and practice into the global arena, ignoring the local peculiarities. Studies of secondary cities also showed that many have narrow economic bases and are thus vulnerable to changes (due to globalisation) (Marais and Nel 2019). Consequently, we argue that there has been limited investment in the secondary cities which stifles socio-economic development in such cities while also jeopardising property taxes as the investments made are low quality. Moreover, good secondary city governance practices do not adequately inform national and local governance and urbanisation management. Thus, we seek to identify the potential of southern African secondary cities in stimulating such growth while also evaluating the constraints to realising such capabilities. Considering the complexity and diversity of secondary cities, the selected secondary cities will be categorised into different clusters related to their geospatial characteristics.

Against this background, we situate this body of work in the narratives on local governance in secondary cities. We seek to delve into the seemingly less researched area from a southern African perspective. The increasing attention on the large cities and metropolitan areas (metros) suggests the neglect and deprivation of secondary cities in southern Africa. Other than South Africa, where human geographers and urban planners have researched secondary cities (Marais et al. 2016, 2021; Marais and Cloete 2017; Marais and Nel 2019; Ranchod 2020), few similar studies have been undertaken in other southern African countries.

Many of the existing studies on secondary cities in the region have focused more on regional economic development and the contribution of these cities in supporting local economies (Kessides 2006). Other studies on secondary cities focused on country-specific issues, while some considered the socio-economic development issues (UN-Habitat 2014; UN-Habitat and IHS-Erasmus University Rotterdam 2018). A regional study that focuses on local governance subjects in secondary cities has been missing from this literature, considering their increasing role in urban growth and development. Therefore, we seek to address this gap by adding a different perspective that examines specific substantive topics inherent in the local governance of these secondary cities.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the broader objectives of the book are to characterise the urbanisation process unfolding in the secondary cities; investigate the local governance strategies and policies guiding the urbanisation process in the secondary cities; explore the nexus of local governance and secondary cities' selected substantive matters that include climate change, land markets, spatial justice and the right to the city; analyse the opportunities and challenges facing secondary cities through the lenses of socio-spatial, economic and political dimensions; and examine the policy implications for enhancing the sustained growth and development of secondary cities to create safe, sustainable, resilient and inclusive urban spaces.

Specifically, the book contributes to understanding urban spaces in southern Africa. This contribution is critical considering the shift from metropolitan cities and primate cities that are largely dominant in urban studies among many scholars with little understanding of the dynamic issues in these cities. Therefore, this book contributes to this growing literature on secondary cities. Moreover, the book contributes to the theoretical work on urban governance by adopting a multidisciplinary perspective that considers different issues in cities, including perspectives on spatial justice, political economy of development and governance of the secondary cities and right to the city.

1.4 Structure of the Book

In trying to gain insights into the governance issues in secondary cities, we have compiled the book based on the following five thematic issues:

1. *Urban governance and urbanisation.*
2. *Land governance in secondary cities.*
3. *Governance for climate change disasters.*
4. *Urban service delivery and governance.*
5. *Planning, urban management and policy.*

Part I focuses on *urban governance and urbanisation* and consists of three chapters. First, Chap. 2 by Tazviona Gambe explores the different strategies that can be employed to improve urban governance in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe, in the face of rapid urbanisation. Employing both primary and secondary data sources, the chapter analyses the land delivery system in Chitungwiza in the face of increasing urbanisation and political interference in urban governance. The chapter found that an informal land delivery system in Chitungwiza led to illegal developments, some located in sensitive areas such as wetlands and within the flood plains of the city's water courses. Therefore, the study recommends policy interventions to eliminate informal/corrupt land governance practices in Chitungwiza.

Second, Chap. 3 by James Chakwizira uses the case study of Nelspruit in South Africa to analyse the urbanisation trajectory in the city and urban governance dynamics. In the chapter, James argues that with rapid urbanisation and the implementation of post-1994 apartheid reversal policies, the challenge of managing expanding peri-urban settlements is emerging. The chapter notes the existing segregated form of the city inherited from the Apartheid government. It continues to impact the sustained growth and development of the city in the face of rapid urbanisation. Making use of a transit-orientated development theory and approach, Nelspruit's urban development opportunities are highlighted while constraints are discussed. The chapter concludes that Nelspruit's development model can better integrate land use and transport corridor dividends for enhanced growth of its core and immediate environments.

Third, in Chap. 4 Lochner Marais and Verna Nel apply the concepts from evolutionary governance theory to discuss six main governance challenges in South Africa's secondary cities. They conclude that path dependencies, goal dependencies and interdependencies, compounded by a planning system that emphasises plan making rather than implementation, hamper governance in these cities.

Part II of the book comprises two chapters focusing on *land governance in secondary cities*. Chapter 5 by Johannes Bhanye, Vupenyu Dzingirai and Maléne Campbell examines the transactional and supplementary strategies adopted by migrants on the margins to access much-coveted land in Norton, a secondary city in Zimbabwe. The chapter revealed that left alone, marginalised migrants in secondary cities resort to transactions in the form of inheritance, purchase and rentals based on fictive kin. They also affiliate with modern political patrons, traditional leaders and investors in accessing land. In other instances, migrants turn to supplementary strategies such as using occult, witchcraft and land seizures to secure land. However, supplementary strategies are measures of last resort. The chapter concludes that informal settlements in secondary cities emerge as 'hyperactive' spaces with novel forms of authority that regulate access and security over resources for urban settlement and production.

Chapter 6 by Charles Chavunduka and Tsungirayi Tsikira examines various opaque and corrupt practices in public land management that privilege favoured entities. The chapter applies a multi-case study design and examines the public land management system in selected secondary cities in Zimbabwe. Based on content and thematic analysis, the chapter draws the main conclusions and policy advice on the goal-directed management and control of public land in secondary cities. It demonstrates how influential people have been using power structures to make money from public land management.

Part III focuses on *climate change governance in secondary cities* and includes two chapters. First, in Chap. 7 Kudzai Chatiza and Tariro Nyevera explore how war and climate change have stunted economic growth and development along the Beira Corridor, in Mozambique. The chapter explores the extent to which national and regional urban policies are connected. It draws on a review of relevant academic and policy literature at the Mozambican and SADC levels to illuminate strategic responses that may or may not elevate the national and regional importance of the city connecting its planning to other secondary cities in SADC and attracting regional attention to investment along the corridors connecting them and within the individual cities. In doing so, lessons are drawn for Mozambican and SADC urban development policy regarding secondary cities and regional infrastructural investment in general.

Second, Chap. 8 by Abraham Matamanda, Nelson Chanza, Edwin Nyamugadza and Queen Chinozvina focuses on the land use planning strategies for climate change adaptation in secondary cities. Chinhoyi in Zimbabwe is used as a case study, and it is revealed in the chapter that land use planning in Chinhoyi is yet to integrate climate change adaptation, as is evident from the sprawling of the town. The land use planning process fails to acknowledge the realities of climate change, as is evident from the lack of institutionalisation of climate issues at the local level. The authors conclude that the disconnect between land use planning and climate change adaptation largely emanates from lack of skills, technology, funds and personnel in the limited understanding of climate change.

Part IV is premised on the theme *Urban service delivery and governance*. There are two chapters in this part. First, Chap. 9 by Tazviona Gambe and Thomas Karakadzai uses a qualitative methodology to explore the different strategies for improving the water supply and sanitation management system in Masvingo City in Zimbabwe. Data were collected from water and sanitation experts directly and indirectly involved in water and sanitation issues at city and district levels. The chapter found that the management of water supply and sanitation in Masvingo City is increasingly threatened by institutional weaknesses, unfavourable water governance structures and financial instability. Tazviona and Thomas propose several strategies that can improve water supply and sanitation management: the amalgamation of rural and urban water supply and sanitation governance structures; promoting inclusivity, concerted efforts and shared responsibility among water and sanitation stakeholders; and promoting 'resident patriotism' as a way of improving the city's revenue base.

In Chap. 10, Hussein Mugumbate, Wesley Selemani and Abraham Matamanda examine how urban governance in secondary cities relates to food systems. Using Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe, as a case study, they analyse how urban governance in this secondary city impacts food systems. This chapter is especially important considering how residential development in Chitungwiza has been encroaching into the communal lands on the city's periphery where subsistence farming and horticultural activities have been prevalent in areas such as Seke. The chapter found a misconnection between urban governance and food systems. This is evident from lack of integration of fresh food and vegetables markets into the urban form and lack of recognition of the city's food value chain, which compromises citizens' access to adequate food.

The last part in the book titled *Planning, Urban Management and Policy* consists of five chapters. Chapter 11 authored by Charles Chavunduka, Edith Risinamhodzi and Jacob Nyamuda traces the changing centre-local relations to establish the scope for future development funding in secondary cities. The research design adopted a comparative approach to urban finance in Zimbabwe and South Africa. Data collection was based on a literature review and key informant interviews. The results show that both countries have been centralising revenue collection and reducing the scope for local finance. The chapter concludes that in the future, secondary cities will need to look for alternative sources of revenue, including land value capture and public-private partnerships or concessions.

Chapter 12 written by Verna Nel, Mareli Hugo, Abraham R Matamanda and Mark Oranje applies the case of Sasolburg which they term one of South Africa's 'new towns'. In the chapter Verna and her colleagues trace the development of Sasolburg from its inception to its current situation within the Metsimaholo Municipality and its continuing dependence on the petrochemical industry. They interrogate the development and governance challenges in Sasolburg and propose strategies and approaches that can be employed to spur sustained local governance in Sasolburg.

In Chap. 13 Martin Magidi explores how a collapsed manufacturing industry and economy have compromised local government functions in Norton, a secondary city in Zimbabwe. Martin documents how the town is in a financial crisis due to revenue challenges which, in turn, led to the deterioration of critical infrastructure and service delivery at a time when it is recording rapid urban growth. The chapter defies the modernist urbanisation perspective by arguing that African urbanisation differs from the global North and should be understood using a more grounded approach informed by African urban realities. Furthermore, Norton is a small town, and its experience should also be understood in the context of the role of small towns in linking rural areas and major cities, as well as the relationships between urban and rural areas. The chapter concludes that as a small and economically struggling urban centre that links the capital city and the rural hinterlands, urban governance challenges and the presence of rural-like practices do not take away its urbanity.

Nicholas Muleya, in Chap. 14, employs the 'genius loci' concept to analyse the particularities and potentialities of Beitbridge, a border town in Zimbabwe.

While raising a torch on the natural and man-made aspects in both rural and urban, this chapter seeks to unlock the Beitbridge-ness of the city to enhance urban Beitbridge's public space quality. The chapter follows a qualitative design with a phenomenological strategy of enquiry, which is a window to study the Beitbridge 'life world' and take the elements of 'genius loci' for granted. Nicholas has generated a framework for 'genius loci-public place' to guide the Beitbridge public space system, micro- and macro-level urban planning.

In Chap. 15, Kudzai Chatiza and Tariro Nyevera focus on Zimbabwe's urban history and governance traditions using the case of Masvingo. Masvingo has a rich and unique governance and growth whose story draws on its proximity to the Great Zimbabwe and related tourism assets, being the oldest urban settlement, having hosted the first colonial Fort and the socio-economic structure of its hinterland. Kudzai and Tariro indicate that Masvingo city's political, social and economic importance in Zimbabwe is often inadequately understood. Hence, in the chapter they argue that this denies Zimbabwe's urban planning and governance some critical lessons on urban governance and place making. Drawing on literature, key informant interviews, focus group discussion (FGD) sessions and a household survey targeting Old Mucheke and Victoria Ranch households, the chapter discusses lessons from the city's governance and spatial growth.

Lastly, Chap. 16 by James Chakwizira, Abraham Matamanda, Verna Nel and Kudzai Chatiza provides concluding remarks and a future research agenda on secondary cities based on the cases presented in the book. The authors argue that reflecting on the past and present of secondary cities' spatial planning and governance dynamics offers exciting scenario building opportunities that inform engagement with urban futures linked to models that create resilient cities that are competitive, just and sustainable. The chapter makes use of a content and thematic approach in reflecting on the main messages being proffered by various chapter contributions to this book. James and his colleagues capture practical ways to negotiating cracks, curves and contours of urbanity, post-colonial spatial identities and economies of African secondary cities. The policy, planning and decision-making implications of a refreshed understanding of the story line of secondary cities demonstrate the complementary and catalytic roles they play in allocating and managing socio-economic and spatial growth dividends in rapidly extending Southern African urban landscapes.

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