# Chapter 10
# Governing Urban Food Systems in Secondary Cities: Contestations and Struggles from Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe

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**Abstract** Food is a critical basic human need affecting different urban life facets. Its contribution to urban health cannot be understated, especially considering food quality. Food access is also a measure of poverty levels, and this is a critical indicator that relates to sustainable development goal (SDG) 1. Overall, the availability of food in cities is vital and links to SDG 11, which focuses on the livability of human settlements. However, planners seem to pay little attention to food systems in cities, despite their importance. The chapter examines how urban governance in secondary cities relates to food systems. Using Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe, as a case study, we analyze how urban governance in this secondary city impacts food systems. This analysis focused on the interrogation of the governance of food production systems, which include urban agriculture within and on the edges of Chitungwiza. This interrogation is especially important considering how residential development in Chitungwiza has been encroaching into the communal lands on the periphery of the city. These areas, such as Seke, have been vibrant hubs of horticultural production. A qualitative approach guides this chapter, where mapping, surveys, and interviews have been triangulated with secondary data sources to enhance our findings.

**Keywords** Chitungwiza · Food desert · Foodscapes · Urban governance

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## 10.1 Introduction

Zimbabwe has been mired by political, economic, and social turmoil for the past two decades. Despite being a net food producer in the 1980s and early 1990s, the country became a net food importer, a major beneficiary of food aid after 2000, and lost the breadbasket title (Tawodzera and Zanamwe 2016). These years were characterized by high unemployment, a negative GDP growth rate, rising urban poverty, national shortages of basics or food, hyperinflation, and migration (Glantz and Cullen 2003). Both rural and urban households were affected by this turbulent environment. While socioeconomic problems have been mounting in urban areas, the situation has been dire in secondary cities such as Chitungwiza and Norton, which were originally established as dormitory towns with no economic bases. Coupled with several problems experienced in Chitungwiza, food insecurity has become a challenge in Chitungwiza (Murambadoro 2010). In 2019, it was reported that household food insecurity in Chitungwiza rose from 33% to 35% (Zimbabwe Vulnerability Assessment Committee 2019). However, this percentage was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw many people losing their jobs, livelihoods, and policies and strategies that failed to integrate food systems (Murendo et al. 2021).

This chapter argues that the persistent and increasing food insecurity in Chitungwiza is attributed to the poor governance of food systems, which results in food deserts. This confirms the argument posited by Misselhorn (2005), who said that the increasing food insecurities in African cities result from complex dynamics at the local level, for example, political and governance issues, with less impact from drought and climate change. This brings to the fore the dynamics around politics and governance systems and how they impact urban food systems and, eventually, food security. We also note that this situation is prevalent in secondary cities where spatial planning and governance frameworks fail to integrate food systems into the spatial planning and governance systems, thus compromising food availability, access, and affordability. Therefore, this chapter analyzes the food governance system in Chitungwiza to understand how food access, production, marketing, and consumption are influenced by the governance system inherent in the city. In this regard, the chapter commences with a historical overview of Zimbabwe's socioeconomic and political events and how they influenced the urban food system. Second, the chapter provides an overview of the realities in Chitungwiza. The discussion and implications for food governance are presented, as well as, lastly, the conclusion, which wraps up the chapter.

## 10.2 Food Governance in Zimbabwean Cities

Governance is a term that defines the formal and informal arrangement of governing an entity or society. It is premised on the need to direct and control the activities within a particular system to enhance its functionality. Therefore, food governance looks at the processes of making and enforcing decisions that affect the production,

marketing, and consumption of food (Boylan et al. 2019). At the heart of food governance is a food system that considers the value chain of food commonly referred to as "from the farm to the fork." In this system, food is produced, transported to markets, traded in different spaces, and eventually consumed. This value chain has rules and regulations that impact the food system and eventually food access, affordability, and security.

To understand the magnitude of the food governance and security dilemma faced by Zimbabwean households during this crisis, it is crucial to revisit the larger economic and political environment generated by the country's diverse economic policies. The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP), and Operation Murambatsvina (Restore Order) were among the policies adopted by Zimbabwe. All these politically motivated developments contributed to the deterioration of urban livelihoods and the rise in family food insecurity.

### *10.2.1 The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP)*

A series of recurring droughts in the 1980s and early 1990s, combined with a global recession and the resulting drop in demand for the country's exports, convinced the government that the economy needs to be restructured. Influenced by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), the government was forced to implement the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in 1991 (Nangombe 2015). The World Bank and the IMF spurred the implementation of ESAP, which included economic reforms in two phases, each lasting 5 years: first, ESAP from 1991 to 1995 and, second, the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST) from 1996 to 2000. ESAP was technically introduced to help the country address its internal and international debt problems while encouraging investment and prosperity (Marquette 1997). However, the program brought more harm than good to the nation. It involved massive retrenchments that left many urbanites out of formal employment. Some parastatals were privatized, which affected the delivery of some social services as citizens had to pay for urban services such as primary health care and education, which were largely subsidized by the state in the early years of independence. In essence, ESAP brought a transition from a socialist ideology to a capitalist (Machemedze 2004). Consequently, the cost of living in cities rose beyond the reach of many people, especially those retrenched from their formal employment. This situation resulted in food security problems across the country.

The effects of ESAP included deregulation, which resulted in the elimination of agricultural producer price ceilings, parastatal marketing monopolies, and crop input subsidies. The economy was, for a certain period, a liberalized market-based pricing with reduced government intervention in the pricing of commodities (Ranga 2004). Agricultural marketing parastatals, for example, the Grain Marketing Board

(GMB) and Cotton Marketing Board (CMB), were the exclusive marketing channels through which farmers were required by law to distribute their agricultural goods before the introduction of ESAP in 1991. The impact of agricultural price deregulation was obvious: farm revenues increased, which directly impacted food prices (Sachikonye 1997). However, due to the withdrawal of subsidies, commodity prices like seeds and fertilizers increased significantly, and this improvement was never sustained in the long run, eventually leading to the economy's collapse.

### *10.2.2 Deindustrialization and Food Security in Zimbabwe*

According to a UN assessment, Zimbabwe has been subjected to large-scale deindustrialization since 1995, condemning most people to grind subsistence as communal and resettlement farmers. Mlambo (2017) commented that Zimbabwe has been deindustrializing since 1995, leaving many Zimbabweans to rely on community and resettlement agriculture. The manufacturing sector, an important part of the economy, shrunk from 10% to 4% of total employment due to the closure of many firms. The service industry lost jobs and now employs just 9% of the labor force, down from 19% before 1995. Operators in the wholesale, retail, hotel, and restaurant industries slowed operations to employ the percent of the national workforce. Similarly, the mining industry went from employing 5% of the workforce to merely 3% (Bhebe and Mahapa 2014).

Mlambo (2017) traces the growth and eventual decline of the country's manufacturing sector, demonstrating that, beginning in the year 2000, major manufacturing companies began scaling back operations or closing their doors due to many factors, the most significant of which were foreign currency shortages, a lack of raw materials, and the country's ongoing power outages. Low agricultural productivity caused by the FTLRP made it difficult for food processing enterprises like National Foods to get enough raw materials to manufacture mealie meals, cooking oil, flour, and other food goods. Most grains were diverted to the illicit market by the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), controlled by JOC and reeked of corruption.

Unilever South East Africa, which makes most of the country's soaps and detergents, is also cutting back on operations, owing to a lack of raw materials and foreign currency, to import more raw materials and replacement parts. OMO washing powder, surface cleaners, soaps, and Stork Margarine have all vanished from the market. Olivine Industries, a major manufacturer of cooking oil and canned goods, also had significant issues obtaining raw materials (Mpofu 2018). The firm was involved in several price disputes with soya bean farmers, who always demanded higher rates for their crops, forcing the company to rely on imported raw materials. In 2005, the firm stopped producing cooking oil, protesting the FTLRP's violent takeover of white-owned commercial farms (Tawodzera and Zanamwe 2016). Dairiboard, which was at that time the country's biggest dairy company, was seriously affected by reduced milk production following the FTLRP, and the company's milk brands Chimombe and Fresh Milk disappeared from the market. At the same

time, retailers who wished to make bulk purchases were instructed to place their orders well in advance.

Lobels Holdings was not immune to the economic downturn that afflicted other businesses. As previously stated, the company's issues began in 2002 when its ownership shifted. Wheat shortages in the country exacerbated an already dire scenario for the bakery, which saw its output drastically curtailed. Before its closure, Lobels had a huge fleet of delivery trucks that served many areas across the country. However, after 2001, particularly in 2007, the firm could not even satisfy Harare's bread needs, and outlying cities, such as Chitungwiza, were also heavily affected. Subsequently, most of the bread produced was sold on the black market at exorbitant rates or in foreign currency (Zvikomborero and Chigora 2010).

### *10.2.3 Land Reform Programme*

In September 1998, the Zimbabwean government initiated the Second Phase of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme, a food governance program to improve social stability, poverty alleviation, peace, and justice (Cliffe et al. 2011). Since 2000, the Zimbabwean government has implemented land/agrarian reform as one of its primary food governance policies. While appreciating the need to redistribute the land, the land reform program in Zimbabwe became politicized, chaotic, and elitist. Fundamental issues such as equity and sustained food production were overlooked, resulting in increasing food crises in the country. The situation was dire in urban areas that rely on agricultural produce from the rural areas and urban hinterland. As a result, extensive working procedures should have been implemented to ensure food governance at all levels.

Food governance, security, and nutrition were not guaranteed due to the land reform program. The land reform program caused more problems in food security and nutrition. The chronic and transient consequences of the land reform program on the employment and ability of agricultural laborers to support themselves were discussed by Sachikonye (2003). In other words, the strategy directly affected food and cash crop production, inputs, and outputs as they negatively affected food prices. During the redistribution procedure, several crops that were supposed to be cultivated by commercial agricultural regions were unavailable and out of reach (Moyo 2011).

Private companies that used to buy grain directly from farmers have ceased doing so. The flow of cash income to maize surplus families was reduced (Mkodzongi and Lawrence 2019). As a result, cash flow issues for input purchases for the following agricultural crop arose. Traders who bought corn in excess areas to sell in food-insecure communal and urban areas were made illegal. The movement of grain to deficit areas was destabilized due to this, leading to grain shortages. The land reform legislation was designed to empower the indigenous people with land rights and possibly food sovereignty, but it created more challenges as input and maize prices skyrocketed (Scoones et al. 2011).

### *10.2.4 Political Factors*

Between 1950 and 2013, Zimbabwe had at least 23 droughts (Nangombe 2015). Climate change is to blame for the increased frequency of severe droughts and other natural disasters. People survived by picking wild fruits during the 1861 drought, which persisted until the harvesting season. Some people had to drive 80–100 km with only a few beans to exchange for maize (Nangombe 2015). During the 1896 famine, he also mentions that the Chief Native Commissioner chose to stop providing help to the people, claiming that people could still subsist on fruits, which were adequate to keep them alive. In the early and late 1995–2000s, Zimbabwe, then known as Southern Rhodesia, experienced two major droughts, which Phimister claimed were exacerbated by the collapse in cattle prices and changes in the beef market in the first half of the decade, and was later exacerbated by the East Coast Fever, which resulted in massive quarantines, destocking, and the prohibition of animal movement (Tawodzera et al. 2016).

Another drought hit certain sections of the region in 2002 and 2003. For Zimbabwe, it was compounded by economic instability resulting from deteriorating ties with Western nations following Zimbabwe's contentious land reform program in 2000, which handed land to the country's landless black majority while removing land from the white minority (Wamuti 2020)). Another drought hit certain sections of the region in 2002 and 2003. For Zimbabwe, it was compounded by economic instability resulting from deteriorating ties with Western nations following Zimbabwe's contentious land reform program in 2000, which handed the land to the country's landless black majority while removing land from the white minority (Scoones et al. 2011).

Mpofu (2018) Zimbabwe's economy was agro based throughout the years 2001–2003 due to vulnerability to such harsh weather, and any developmental ambitions are hinged on a successful rainy season. Around 80% of Zimbabweans rely on rain-fed agriculture to support their families (Madzwamuse 2010). Irrigation projects have been known to collapse altogether during drought years, requiring more than one season to recover. According to studies, the rainy season after the 1995–2005 drought generated just 80% of typical rainfall, insufficient to maintain river flow or raise the water table to safe levels (Madzwamuse 2010).

### *10.2.5 Food Shortages and Political During 2007–2008*

At various points in history, hunger and food security challenges on the African continent have dominated news headlines and intellectual discussions for decades, resulting in various studies of African nations' (in)ability to adequately address the food security problems. Every day, Zimbabweans are terrified of reverting to the 2008 situation, which was characterized by hyperinflation, severe food shortages, and political gridlock. Jones (2010) coined the phrase "the nadir of a decade-long

economic collapse" to characterize the time around 2008. Zimbabwe was mired in economic and political doldrums from 2000 to 2009, when a Government of National Unity (GNU) was created in 2009.

Various authors on Zimbabwe's economic and political downturn point to the negative impact of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) on the economy in the late 1990s, as well as the economic implosion and hyperinflation era from around 2000 to 2009, which resulted in the emergence of BACCOSI and a massive influx of imported goods from other countries (Matamanda et al. 2021). The closing decade of the twentieth century was a watershed for Zimbabwe's politics and economics, as evidenced by the consolidation of a more repressive and intolerant state with patronage and accumulation tendencies, the rebirth of opposition politics in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999, and the imposition of sanctions by the United States of America (USA) and the European Union (EU) in 2000. Another group of researchers has studied the socioeconomic and political environment in post-2000 Zimbabwe, producing groundbreaking studies on roadside currency trading the foreign currency black market (Madimu 2020), price freezes and the resulting parallel market in basic commodities (Jones 2010), and the various coping strategies used by ordinary Zimbabweans as they navigated the crisis era (Jones 2010). Other researchers have looked at the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in providing food relief to the hungry (Chigodora 2016). These initiatives and boards came into existence to reduce the effects of food shortages on shelves, supermarkets, and the country at large.

Although Zimbabwe has been proven to be the bread basket of Southern Africa, exporting over 140,000 tons of sugar by 1990, Zimbabwe's food security situation in the first decade of independence has generally been characterized by a food security paradox, in which the country was food secure at the national level. Still, individuals and households were malnourished and experiencing hunger in most of the country's districts (Potts and Mutambirwa 2019). As a result, when important political decisions were taken and inflation soared to over 150% by 2006, the food security paradox emerged. Still, the food security paradox existed even when Zimbabwe was the bread basket (Sachikonye 2003).

Impromptu land seizures and the FTLRP spearheaded by war veterans, who had become the regime's most ardent supporters since the 1997 payments, represented a crucial turning point in Zimbabwe's state-building trajectory (Hammar 2009). That year marked the conclusion of a state developing since ESAP's inception. The land grabs began shortly after a nationwide vote in early 2000 rejected constitutional reforms. In an attempt to appeal to its electorate in a political context marked for the first time in the country's history by a strong and popular opposition movement, the MDC, the governing ZANU PF administration, supported the invasions (Tawodzera and Zanamwe 2016).

To appeal to its electorate in a political context, marked for the first time in the country's history by a strong and popular opposition movement, supported the invasions. The ZANU PF's rural support base was becoming increasingly alienated due to economic problems brought on by growing inflation. As a result, distributing white-owned property to rural people was meant to please the regime's rural

electorate and preserve its support in upcoming election. The plan was to allow most people to own land and increase food security. However, political decisions in this age trumped food security concerns and the necessity to implement food security measures (Manjengwa et al. 2012).

At this point, a particular segment of the governing regime's electorate (made up of security forces, war veterans, and the black business elite) had mutated into a much stronger ally, and it got greater advantages from the state – in reality, it had become an extension of the state. Rather than arguing that the governing regime purposefully generated food scarcity for political objectives, this study contends that the character of the state that ruled in Zimbabwe from 2000 created conditions that resulted in severe food shortages (Sibanda and Makwata 2017).

Without necessarily recounting the events that characterized this period of the country's history, a few examples can be cited to substantiate the view that the Mugabe government's policies created fertile ground for accumulation by the ruling regime and its cronies while failing to address the country's real economic concerns, such as rising inflation and looming food shortages. "[T]his elite has increased based on the present state attack, not just via the restructuring of ownership on the land but also through the assault on ownership structures across the economy" (Raftopoulos and Phimister 2004).

Grace Mugabe's purchase of Foyle Farm in Mazoe from its white owners during the height of the FTLRP, establishing herself as "probably the greatest dairy farmer in the nation" (Hove 2015), is an illustration of the accumulative tendencies that characterized the post-2000 Zimbabwean state. Nestle Zimbabwe, a prominent dairy food processing firm in the country, was obliged to acquire roughly 15% of its milk requirements from the first family's farm, Gushungo Dairies, according to allegations in the media (Hove 2015). This plainly portrayed Zimbabwe to the outside world as a terrible investment location, revealing the President's and his family's ravenous thirst for cash.

The purchase of the country's largest bread manufacturer, Lobels Holdings, by a consortium of local capitalists led by David Chiweza, a former military officer with close ties to the current regime, was also another outstanding example of this type of consolidation sponsored by the existing party. It has recently been revealed that the new owners utilized the bakery as a cover to amass foreign cash when the country suffered from severe foreign currency and food shortages (Nyikahadzoi et al. 2012).

After the economic crisis that followed the DRC war, war veterans' payouts, and the withdrawal of IMF and World Bank assistance, the governing regime's last desperate attempt to salvage its soiled reputation among its electorate was to attack white-owned commercial farms (Sibanda and Makwata 2017). The farm invasions tarnished diplomatic relations between the Harare government, the United States, and the European Union (Ranga 2004). These sanctions resulted in the cutting of donor aid, development grants, and bilateral relations, which eventually resulted in the worsening of Zimbabwe's economy, severe foreign currency shortages, a wave of deindustrialization, hyperinflation, and severe food inflation.

The emergence of a black market for basic commodities in 2008 was a direct result of price regulations and dwindling manufacturing capacity. Supermarket shelves were mostly empty, with the exception of mineral water and tea leaves (Tawodzera et al. 2018). Vendors, as had been the usual, sold a variety of items, such as cooking oil, sugar, salt, soap, vaseline, and bread, at exorbitant rates, as compared to gazetted prices, directly outside most stores. These developments typified the emerging survivalist economy, in which many who had lost their occupations either sold basic supplies on the illicit market or participated in whatever activities they could to make ends meet (Tawodzera and Zanamwe 2016).

## 10.3 Chitungwiza Foodscape and Governance Nexus

### *10.3.1 Origins of Chitungwiza*

Chitungwiza is located 25 km from the capital city, Harare. It is reported that the establishment of this city was a deliberate process by the white minority to push away the black majority far away from the white suburbs, such as Avondale, Highlands, as well as Mount Pleasant. It was meant to be a dormitory settlement to accommodate labor for Harare. The name Chitungwiza was derived from Dungwiza, the village of the legendary prophet Chaminuka. Chitungwiza is rated the third largest urban settlement after Harare and Bulawayo. The city has several suburbs, which include St Mary's, Seke, and Zengeza. St Mary's is the oldest township of Chitungwiza and is divided into two sections, Manyame Park (New St Mary's) and Old St Mary's.

Chitungwiza township consists of 397,000 residents. Despite this huge population, it is alleged that most residents obtain livelihoods through various activities, such as retailing, vending, selling secondhand clothes, and changing money, particularly the youth. Being surrounded by communal areas such as Dema and Chiwota, Chitungwiza enjoys daily produce from farmers who have urban farming as a livelihood. Most of the products produced by these farmers are tomatoes, cabbages, carrots, sweet potatoes, beans, and all kinds of farm products. Academic wise, the township has formal and informal schools. Of late, we have witnessed the emergence of informal schools to cater to the ever-growing population of school-going age.

### *10.3.2 Mapping of Food Markets in Chitungwiza*

The food system in Chitungwiza is complex. As highlighted above, most residents are into vending and retailing. Most of them obtain food products from communal farmers such as Dema, Chiwota, and nearby Marondera. This situation shows that most fresh fruits and vegetables consumed by households in Chitungwiza are

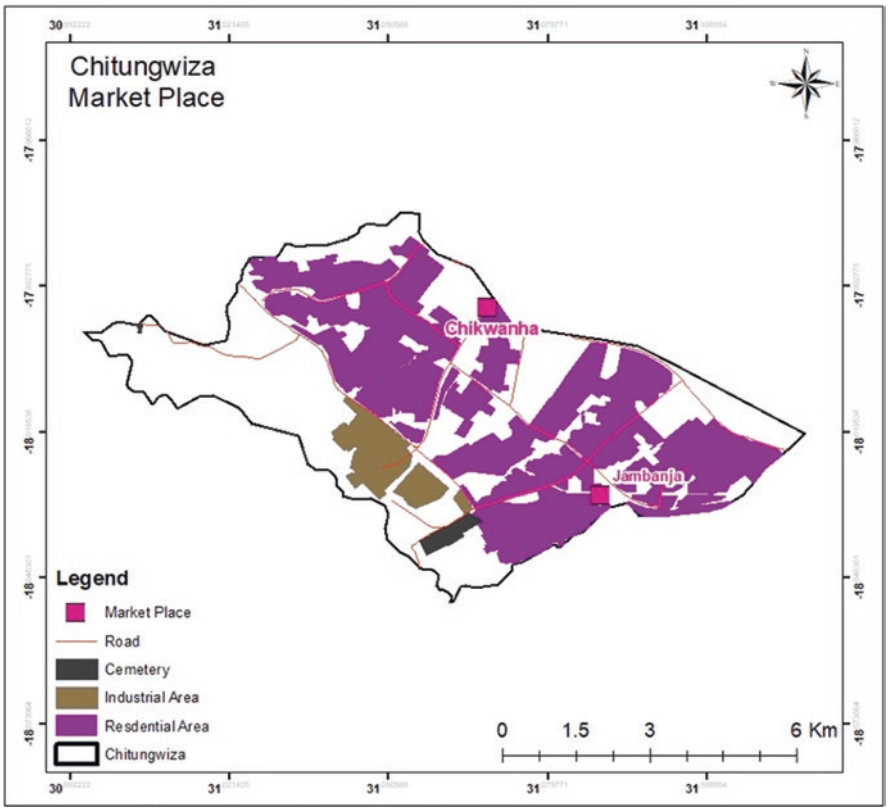


**Fig. 10.1** The location of Chikwanha and Jambanja food markets in Chitungwiza. (Source: Authors creation 2022)

produced in the peri-urban areas around Chitungwiza. The households' reliance on the farmers for fresh produce is partly attributed to the municipality laws restricting and criminalizing urban agriculture in Chitungwiza. In this regard, households heavily depend on markets such as Chikwanha, Jambanja, Makoni, and St Mary's, from which they purchase fresh vegetables and fruits (Chatiza et al. 2022). Figure 10.1 shows the location of the Jambanja and Chikwanha food markets in Chitungwiza.

The fresh vegetable and fruit markets act as supply depots for fresh fruits and vegetables in Chitungwiza. These fresh vegetable and fruit markets play a critical role in food access as households can buy fresh fruits and vegetables. Other food products such as bread and other processed foods such as peanut butter and other traditional foods fall into this category and help in diversifying the dietary needs of the urbanites (see Fig. 10.2). Usually, farmers bring their produce to the markets, allowing the consumers to also purchase the produce at affordable prices.

However, the major issue with these markets relates to their regulation. For example, the Jambanja food market is informal, and traders in this market report


**Fig. 10.2** Bread, peanut butter, and other traditional foods sold at the Jambanja food market. (Source: Authors 2021)

that the municipal authorities and some ZANU-PF youth have been responsible for the collection of daily levies from the market. Moreover, there are no formal procedures for regulating the market regarding trading spaces, which is usually client based. Many people indicated that the ZANU-PF youth has a significant say in the daily operations of this market, a situation that often results in some farmers avoiding coming to sell to this market and rather resorting to other markets, such as Mbare and Chikwanha. This then results in inflated fruit and vegetable prices to the locals, who are either forced to commute to these other markets or buy from fruit and vegetable vendors, who also charge a markup on their prices.

Some food is also sold by vendors who buy in bulk from the markets and then sell in smaller quantities. These individuals help supply households with a variety of food products, which they sell in smaller quantities (see Fig. 10.3). While serving the community, these informal vendors are always criminalized by officials and do not sell their wares freely. This criminalization is based on the official perception of informality as compromising the order, aesthetics, and functionality of urban spaces as espoused in the preamble of the Regional Town and Country Planning Act Sect. 29:12 of Zimbabwe.

Besides the fruit and vegetable markets, other food products, such as meat and fish, are also sold by the vendors. This is a very delicate sector of the foodscape in Chitungwiza, where some individuals end up selling some meat products that do not meet the public health standards stipulated in the Public Health Act, which mandates strict controls on the selling of meat products. Likewise, section 94(1) of the Urban Councils Act advocates for the regulation of markets to maintain cleanliness, sanitation, and good order. This section resonates with the broader aim and objective of the RTCPA, which seeks to promote order and aesthetics in cities. The main problem with most urban fresh fruit and vegetable markets in Zimbabwe has been

**Fig. 10.3** Traders arranging their produce on their stalls in Seke, Unit H. The vendors buy the produce from Chikwanha Market. (Source: Authors 2021)

the failure to manage the waste generated (see Fig. 10.4). In this way, there have been issues of cholera outbreaks, which some have attributed to the unsanitary conditions in which some of the meat is sold, while others argue that the meat has also been contaminated.

### *10.3.3 Stakeholders in Chitungwiza's Food System*

There are various stakeholders involved in food production, distribution, and consumption before it reaches the consumers. That being the case, we have seen that food production, distribution, as well as consumption have various stakeholders involved.

First, there is some food produced by households that caters to their household consumption. In this regard, we found that urban agriculture is critical in Chitungwiza, where households engage in maize production during the rainy season to supplement their grains, which are used as the main staple food in Zimbabwe. This maize production is usually conducted on any open space as the plot sizes are often small and do not allow much to be produced (see Fig. 10.5). However, there has always been tension and conflict between urban farmers and the municipality, which does not tolerate cultivation in open spaces, claiming that it is against urban

**Fig. 10.4** Heap of food waste dumped at the edge of Jambanja market, posing an environmental threat. (Source: Authors 2022)


**Fig. 10.5** Urban agriculture on an open piece of land in Chitungwiza. (Source: Authors 2022)

laws and policies. Moreover, most of this urban farming is conducted in wetlands, and there have always been issues from the Environmental Management Agency, which calls for the protection of wetlands and restricts any cultivation in such spaces. While appreciating the concerns of the authorities, these restrictions have implications on the households' ability to access adequate food as some cultivate fresh vegetables also in these spaces where they are restricted from doing so. On the other hand, such restrictions are a clear indication of the misunderstanding on the part of the authorities on the value of urban agriculture in alleviating food poverty and also providing nutritious food to poor households, as stipulated by Matamanda et al. (2022).

Second, retailers are critical in the distribution of some household groceries including bread, cooking oil, and other foodstuffs required daily. While there are some retail shops dotted across the city, the distribution of these is not even as some areas are not well served thereby creating some food deserts in these areas with limited coverage of grocery shops. To address this challenge, spaza shops, commonly known as "tuck shops," provide easy access to food and groceries among the residents. The main issue with the tuck shops has been compliance with municipal regulations. During the 2005 Operation Murambatsvina,[1] most tuck shops were demolished, and this somehow created a food desert as it limited food access points for the residents (Tibaijuka 2005). Successive blitzes have continuously compromised the operations of the tuck shops to the detriment of food access among the residents.

Third, as mentioned earlier on, food vendors play a critical role in the distribution and marketing of food in Chitungwiza. As shown in Fig. 10.6, street vendors provide critical access to food to residents in Chitungwiza.

Additionally, the police also play a role in the governance of the food system in Chitungwiza. The police have assumed a great role in the regulation of informal activities and in ensuring food is sold in designated places. They usually undertake this role with the help of the municipal police and the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority. Rather than bringing order and functionality in the food markets, the police have been reported to cause mayhem as they require vendors to pay them to operate in certain undesignated places. For instance, during the Covid 19, police have been involved in restricting people's movements in markets and regulating hours of business.

The other stakeholders in the cycles of food distribution transport and consumption are the political party members. These groups of people have a high influence when it comes to the provision of markets as well as space for vending. The allocation of vending spaces in the markets, and eventually trading, is heavily controlled by some politicians. This is evident in markets such as Jambanja, where the ZANU-PF youth terrorizes vendors (NewsDay 2021). During fieldwork in 2022, we have heard reports from the Jambanja market in Unit M that there was an arrest of some youth. It is alleged that these people have, for a long period of time, been collecting funds in the form of market fees. Prior to this incident, the local vendors

[1] A national blitz that was carried out to regulate informal activities and resulted in informal businesses and structures being demolished across the country.


**Fig. 10.6** Roadside vendor selling fruits and vegetables in Chitungwiza. (Source: Authors 2022)

were becoming suspicious of the conmen. Eventually, they decided to report the case to the police for an investigation. After an investigation, the police confirmed that the members were not from the ZANU PF party as they claimed; rather, they were thieves taking advantage of the poor and struggling vendors. Fourth and finally, we have consumers as the last stakeholder in food production, distribution, and consumption. Through observation, we have discovered that food becomes very expensive in the market because of transport costs or they are out of season. In this regard, the vendors add extra cost in a bid to produce a profit. Despite the product being expensive, the consumers purchase it regardless of the price. One should know that food has no alternative, as compared with other products. It is the consumer who pays much of the costs of food processing, distribution, and consumption.

### *10.3.4 Governance and Management of Food Systems in Chitungwiza*

Food management and governance in Chitungwiza is a complex issue. The township is managed and controlled by the town councils. That being the case, they are the ones who authorize and regularize food distribution and transportation and decide on the location of markets. Formal markets are registered manufacturers and

retailers, such as the TM, OK, and Spar shops, that are strategically positioned in areas zoned for retail or commercial activities, for example, Town Center, Makoni Shopping Center, and Chigovanyika Shopping Center. These shopping centers accommodate mostly formal shops, which have to pay taxes to the council. However, we found that the occupancy ratio in some of these formal areas zoned for retail is low. For example, at Town Center, there were many vacant shops as tenants lamented that the rentals they have to pay are too high and are, thus, unattractive for business. This situation creates a food desert as consumers are denied the option to buy from the retail shops.

Therefore, nonregistered retailers fill in this void and provide food products in the form of tuck shops situated close to people's residences. These categories of retailers face daily conflicts with the town councils and the police, who demand the hawkers license and monitor health standards of foods. Reports confirm that small-scale retailers do not see it fit to pay monthly hawkers licence as it is expensive as well as reduces the monthly profits of businesses. One should take note that vendors and tuck shop owners have little profits from their daily sales.

The last category of food providers in the Chitungwiza township consists of farmers and vendors. The township gets farm produce from neighboring areas such as Dema. These producers have no problem with the local authority as they just deliver the products to the vendors at wholesale prices. The challenge is between the vendors and the town council. A report confirms that the town councils collect market fees daily. The fees collected are assumed to build simple structures such as toilets and shades. Surprisingly, the area has been under development for many years, and when bad weather such as high temperatures and heavy rains happen, it compromises the health of the products. This is much more witnessed in areas such as Unit M (Jambanja informal market). Chitungwiza Town Council used to have its own formal food markets, but as a result of poor governance, most of these markets are underutilized and in a poor state. For instance, Zengeza Chikwanha market and Makoni market are the prominent formal fruits and vegetable markets owned and managed by the town council. The markets are still operating but cannot cater to the ever-growing vendor population.

## 10.4 Conclusions

This chapter has focused on food governance in Chitungwiza. It addresses critical issues pertaining to urban governance in relation to food systems in secondary cities. While providing the historical background of the food situation in Zimbabwe, which was affected by geopolitical events, the chapter highlights the volatile nature of urban food systems. It is also evident that the poor suffer much during these instances of political turmoil and poor governance. The situation in Chitungwiza shows that there is limited understanding of the complexity of food value chains, and this results from uncoordinated regulations and policies that fail to integrate the needs of the community. The municipality must accommodate the diverse food

markets (formal and informal) in its plans as this would ensure that households have access to food with ease. In this way, the food deserts are minimized, and this also enables the community members to have diversity in food access. Such provisions would also help hedge against food price inflation, which impacts poor households. The politicization of food governance through the involvement and control of market spaces such as Jambanja by ZANU-PF youths greatly impacts the food system. Unless this issue is redressed in food systems, the poor will continue to be disadvantaged.

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