Housing Cooperatives and the Politics of Local Organization and Representation in Peri-Urban Harare, Zimbabwe

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Abstract: Housing cooperatives have emerged in the context of housing challenges in the urban areas as a strategy for securing low-cost housing accommodation in peri-urban Harare. They constitute vehicles that allow people to pool resources and secure tenure. The paper explains the "politics of peri-urban housing" in contemporary Zimbabwe by looking into the resurgence of these new forms of housing cooperatives. The paper compares five sites in Harare (Whitecliffe, Hatcliffe, Caledonia, and Southlea Park and Hopley in Harare South) to provide insights into the politics of peri-urban housing and security of tenure. We argue that political identity, networks, and participation have been at the core of these housing cooperatives as residents sought to secure tenure in the peri-urban areas by enhancing citizenship rights.

Introduction

More than one million people in Zimbabwe constitute the country's urban housing backlog as of 2004.[1] The government launched Operation *Murambatsvina* (Operation Restore Order) in 2005, to get rid of illegal structures that had mushroomed in urban areas.[2] The government action reduced the amount of illegal housing stock but increased the housing backlog. This exercise made the Zimbabwe African National Union government (ZANU PF) unpopular at home and abroad. To regain support, the government subsequently responded with Operation *Garikayi/Hlalani Kuhle* (Operation Live Well), by constructing housing units to accommodate the victims of Operation Murambatsvina.[3] The latter initiative failed to close the gap, and with the economic crisis peaking in 2008, the housing backlog grew rapidly.

Due to the government's failure to deliver urban public housing, the demand for low-cost housing in the country's peri-urban areas increased. Housing cooperatives grew rapidly in the peri-urban areas as government acquired land near urban areas to resettle those affected by

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Operation Murambatsvina. Resettling the victims of Operation Murambatsvina on unserviced peri-urban land seemed to be the right thing to do. These housing cooperatives have their identity in the ruling party of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe African National Union. This explains the politics of patronage and clientelism.

Some housing cooperatives like Nehanda in Dzivaresekwa (Harare) have made major strides and have been celebrated as success stories. However, a number of these still face challenges in the provision of water, sanitation and road infrastructure. The City of Harare is yet to incorporate most of the farms that house these settlements and therefore they are inadequately prepared for urban development. Because the Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) "nationalized" most rural land, peri-urban settlements are mostly on state-owned land.

This paper attempts to answer why these cooperative schemes have been resurgent and whether they are sustainable by examining five sites in peri-urban Harare, namely Whitecliffe to the west of the city, Hatcliffe to the north, Caledonia to the east, and Southlea Park and Hopley in Harare South. We argue that political identity, networks, and participation have been at the core of these housing cooperatives as they sought to secure tenure in the peri-urban areas by enhancing their citizenship rights.

Research Design and Methodology

We conducted this study against the background that the Zimbabwe state has struggled, over the years, to create better and habitable sites of human settlements. We conducted a household survey between February 2011 and June 2012. Our data collection took full cognizance of the fact that communities in Zimbabwe were polarized along political lines. The survey had 402 respondents and included both closed- and open-ended questions. The survey was administered in the peri-urban sites of Whitecliffe (100), Hatcliffe (100), Caledonia, (100), and Southlea Park and Hopley (102). Random sampling avoided bias and enhanced representativeness. We analyzed the quantitative data using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In addition to the survey, we interviewed community leaders, officials from government departments like the Department of Physical Planning (DPP), war veterans, and selected members of community in the five research sites.[4] We then made use of textual and content analysis to analyze this qualitative data.

Urbanization, Cooperatives and Informal institutions: A Review of the Theoretical Literature

Urbanization, defined as "the proportion of a country's population living in urban settlements," has been an increasing trend in developing countries, especially since the 1950s.[5] Africa has witnessed "runaway urbanization," which has created immense gaps between citizen demand for services and the supply of infrastructure, including housing.[6] Deborah Potts suggests that urbanization activates certain kinds of development, including population and civic participation in matters that affect the inhabitants living in the city on a day-to-day basis. Nucleation, with or without urbanization, provides a window for development and innovative behavior. Specifically, Potts argues that "Political, social and behavioral changes are just as significant in densely settled, nucleated settlements and these are occurring whether or not the level of urbanization is rising."[7] This statement is critical in understanding how, in the face of

crises and challenges, urbanites strive to form groups and associations as avenues to participate in urban settlement development.

Housing cooperatives have emerged as one form of associations used by the urbanites to participate in human settlement development. Cooperatives in Zimbabwe increased in popularity in the 1980s when the government strictly pursued the communist-socialist agenda, which defined the country in its first decade of independence (1980-1990). With increased rural to urban migration and the failure of state housing schemes in urban centers, housing cooperatives increased their prominence in towns and cities.

With the adoption of neoliberal market reforms in the 1990s under the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP), the state removed subsidies and all forms of public support to the citizens. Another dimension of state retrenchment was that the national housing fund for public-sector housing shrank. Discussing the influence of the economic performance and decisions by households to stay or move away from the city, Potts stresses how economic structural adjustment conditions in most of Africa restricted households regarding the initial decisions to stay in cities. In the context of Zimbabwe Potts states:

> What people would like to do and what they actually do are often different— their choices are constrained. The interaction of these shifting forces means that there are also shifts in the relative prevalence of different types of migrants who might be more usefully divided into four groups: characterized as willing stayers, reluctant stayers, willing leavers and reluctant leavers.[8]

This categorization of the migrants under pressing socio-economic conditions is important as it shapes the type of spatial pattern of living that emerges ultimately, which determines the manner the inhabitants behave in space.

In addition to the decline in public support for housing during this period of structural adjustment, the formal channels of housing provision had their own shortcomings. Usually the formal channels were so stringent that they would blockade efforts by the public. The formal procedures were overly cumbersome and bureaucratic.

To counter the bureaucratic bottlenecks, communities and groups have formed informal groups in the form of burial societies, women's groups, and youth groups.[9] These informal groups tend to enhance popular participation, especially of low-income households trying to cushion themselves against the vagaries of state and market failures, which include inadequate housing provision. The failure of formal service delivery systems has given rise to the resurgence of societies and cooperatives. Cooperatives had been common across Africa since the 1970s. However, by the 1990s, cooperatives had declined and seemed to be relics of prior statist policies. By the 2000s, however, local cooperative organizations re-emerged as an instrumental way of dealing with the problem of housing and land tenure, particularly among the residents of peri-urban areas. In these housing cooperatives, community members pooled their resources together as a way of dealing with their own challenges.

Housing cooperatives have adopted an incremental approach, as they are not able to pool sufficient resources at one time. The incremental approach to housing development emerged as an alternative to the traditional housing development model, which emphasizes providing full infrastructure and services before housing construction and habitation. This incremental

approach allows for "parallel development," as people settle in the presence of basic services like water and sanitation, with roads and electricity provided later. Macro-economic hardships compromised the ability of people to service land in totality. Thus under such conditions, the incremental approach was advocated.

In sum, popular participation in the informal sector urban development has seen the growth of slums or informal settlements normally characterized by tenure insecurity and inadequate infrastructure and services like water and sanitation. The next sections provide analysis of the research findings.

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents in the Case Study Sites

The below section briefly describes the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents from the five case study sites. Whitecliffe, Hatcliffe, Caledonia and Harare South's Southlea Park and Hopley are all in the immediate vicinity of Harare. Of the 402 respondents, 158 (39.3 percent) were male, while the remainder was female. The majority of the respondents were heads of households 123 (30.7 percent) or spouses to the household heads (47.6 percent).

In terms of education, 71.1 percent had attained secondary education, with 19.9 percent having gone only up to primary school. Four percent of the respondents claimed to have attained college training, presumably holders of professional certificates or diplomas. Only two respondents (0.5 percent) had university degrees. Overall, this distribution in educational attainments is quite normal and typical of most urban settlements in Zimbabwe.

Only 10.2 percent of the respondents claimed being formally employed. The majority, 45.3 percent, claimed to be unemployed and 39.9 percent said they were self-employed. Table 1 summarizes the foregoing distributions and descriptions. These results on the ground confirmed the state of employment in the entire economy, where the bulk of the population relied on informal employment as a source of household income. This may point to the general instability in income that typifies peri-urban settlements. Urban centers in Zimbabwe are presumed to be affiliated predominantly with the Movement of Democratic Change (MDC), an opposition party formed in 1999. In contrast, the peri-urban majority is purported to be supporters of ZANU PF. During the time of the survey (as of any other time), households were very sensitive to questions or statements deemed to be 'political' so no reliable statistical data was generated on party affiliation.

Peri-Urban Cooperatives: Local Organization and Representation on the Outskirts of Harare

The focus of this section is to unpack the variables of political identity, networks and participation as they have influenced the dynamics of the peri-urban sites of Harare. The presentation and interpretation of the findings connected to the above named variables now follow.

Caledonia

Caledonia, east of Harare city center, is partly a product of the fast-track land reform program in Zimbabwe and partly a result of Operation Garikayi/Hahlani Kuhle (OGHK) in 2005. OGHK sought to resettle people affected by Operation Murambatsvina in the same year. The residents

of Caledonia are also people from Porta Farm. Porta Farm was a holding camp for squatters in Harare.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF SOCIO- DEMOGRAPHIC RESULTS FROM THE RESEARCH SITES (N = 402)

Aspect	Frequency	Percentage
Sex Distribution of Respondents		
Male	158	39.3
Female	244	60.7
Total	402	100
Household Headship of Households		
Male	123	30.7
Female	279	69.3
Total	402	100
Education		
Never been to school	18	4.5
Primary School	80	19.9
Secondary School	286	71.1
College	16	4.0
University	2	0.5
Total	402	100
Employment		
Formally employed	41	10.2
Informally (self) employed	160	39.9
Unemployed	182	45.3
Undefined	19	4.6
Total	402	100

In terms of political identity, the majority of the inhabitants of Caledonia have a few weak ties with ZANU PF given that the inhabitants are mostly those who were in Porta Farm. These relocated people could not have a strong working relationship with the ZANU PF government. For example, Lucia, a resident of Caledonia elaborated, "I cannot say I am here because I support ZANU PF. Remember these are the people who dumped us at Porta only to come again and say we are moving you, again. Our life has been that of pilgrims. We are not sure if they now mean it that we can permanently stay here at Caledonia." Francis, Monica and Tarupiwa echoed the same sentiments. These three stayed in the same area. For this reason, we can say that the relationship of the inhabitants of Caledonia and the ZANU PF party is faint and opportunistic. A few of the others, though, do claim allegiance to the party. For example, Guru explained: "Had it not been for ZANU PF which empowered us by giving us stands for building houses, who else could have given us this land?"

Certainly, there are networks in place in Caledonia. However, these lack distinct definition given the assortment of the inhabitants residing there. They came from different places and are of different origins, some from squatting at Porta Farm, others straight from lodging in the city,

and yet others being beneficiaries who got land for housing by default having originally been seeking land for farming and then taking advantage of the 'wind' of the fast-track land resettlement program.

The diversity of the people in Caledonia affects the parameters of community participation. The area has loosely arranged and fragmented housing cooperatives. Consequently, the habitat is still largely "ill-developed." For example, 70 percent of the structures were of a temporary nature made from sun burnt bricks, plastic, and timber boards. This is in contrast to Nehanda where finished housing structures were already in place. The absence of a development animator, a development agent to provide technical expertise as is the case with UDCORP in Harare South, organizing housing development partly explains this. In the absence of a strong development agent in an area, participation by community members is minimal. A development agent is required to provide technical advice or support for sustainable housing projects.

Whitecliffe

Whitecliffe was once a farm, owned by a white farmer (the late Sammy Levy) under the Zvimba Rural District Council. Whitecliffe exhibits apparent housing developmental chaos. Such chaos is associated with the fast-track land reform program (FTLRP), which the government embarked upon in 2001.[10] Residents in the area argued that during the period of the farm invasions, Sammy Levy tried to change the name of the farm by incorporating Edgar Pfugari into its ownership. Unfortunately, the deal was unsuccessful. The reason for selling the farm was to turn it into a residential area. Some land invaders took over certain sections of the farm under the name Tongogara Housing Cooperative.

Whitecliffe farm also houses Operation Garikayi/Hahlani Kuhle (OGHK) houses. These houses were constructed using the 2004 Housing Standards and have been developed on an incremental basis, without water, sewer and related utilities in place. One female participant in Whitecliffe observed that:

> I blame the government's policy for the mess we are in as this place was well planned. It was going to be one of the most beautiful places, I tell you. However, *jambanja* [haphazard land invasions] came, hijacked and messed the entire town planning goal for the area. The developer was not faithful as well. He was only concerned pocketing money but never considered water and sewer infrastructure. The responsible authorities must impel the private developer to re-consider health standards for a settlement lest we contract cholera, dysentery and typhoid here. The majority of blacks who are in private development are corrupt, self-enriching, unscrupulous and inconsiderate to the laid down building standards.

The foregoing quotation reveals the foiled capacity of a formal development initiative whose plans failed as chaos "dictated" by the state crept in. When state action (or inaction) comes in, not all private initiatives will stand. The people who participated in the *jambanja* and then embarked on housing development took advantage of the state's position of "riding on the chaos for political advantage."

Whitecliffe contains OGHK houses and is a case of "inadequate housing" given the absence of proper sanitation, water and roads facilities. In effect, when the government realized that it could not shoulder the burden alone, it then invited private companies to help. But, due to the restrained economy (for more than a decade) they could not then do much. The ailing economy and souring relations between the Zimbabwean government and the international community short-circuited the network between government and the private sector in providing adequate housing for Whitecliffe OGHK houses. In the miasma, the local utility companies, specifically the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority and building societies, have not been able to aid the situation.

Southlea Park

Southlea Park is located in Harare South and is predominantly a consortium-based housing arrangement between working-class people and their employers. Membership of the consortium include up to fifty-four private companies that guarantee their workers for land acquisition and support for building. In Southlea Park, chiefly work-based beneficiaries have increasing disposable income and can afford to build their own houses over a short to medium-term period. The chief determinant for housing development is income.

The Urban Development Corporation (UDCORP), a state-run agency and an arm of the Ministry of Local Government, National Housing and Public Works, is spearheading the development project offering project management and technical services. For Southlea Park, the inhabitants had to move into the settlement only after certain minimum conditions (provision of basic infrastructure especially water and sanitation) had been met. In this arrangement, UDCORP prepared the project plan, which it reviews on a regular basis to check if development is on track of the stipulated provisions. A UDCORP officer describes the Southlea Park development: "The project is being implemented in phases, beginning with those ideas [we deem] easier to handle, for example, water and sewer reticulation. We started with major roads, the fifteen and twenty-meter roads.... They applied for a Parallel Development Permit. The City of Harare gave some conditions about water and accessibility. Only paid-up beneficiaries are already on site, have built temporary structures, and are in the process of putting up permanent structures. They have also established a primary and a secondary school. The secondary school is now operational."

Despite the fact that Southlea Park is a consortium-engineered development, it is following an approach where the blueprint plan for the site under development is first set and then construction follows the plan in phases. The case of Southlea Park shows how the presence of a strong quasi-government entity is a step towards ordered housing and settlement development. The mere presence of a statutory body in the name of UDCORP has gone a long way in covering the gaps of uncertainty produced by the incremental approach adopted at Southlea Park.

The formation of a consortium is clear evidence of strong networking among employers seeking to provide shelter to their employees. And, yet, the consortium remains a relatively loose network of employers. Instead, the workers are participating with verve, fighting for their own cause to battle homelessness, with their employers paying a peripheral guarantor role. Thus, the workers have pride in effectively participating to change their destiny.

Hatcliffe

Hatcliffe, located north of Harare City Centre, has many housing cooperatives. This is clear evidence of social groups consolidating their standing by producing a shared political identity. Most of the members of these cooperatives were victims of Operation Murambatsvina. When the operation was unleashed, some of them had built state of the art houses from their life's savings. Operation Murambatsvina resulted in the destruction of all of these illegal developments.

For over six years, Chimutsa had been watching the environment and had become a housing cooperative member. For him, the environment is now more conducive to start building. Chimutsa's cooperative had been hampered by uncertainty but now they felt they could go ahead and start building because they had now been fully recognized by the government. The lingering memories of Murambatsvina had hampered the cooperatives from resuscitating developments, as they did not want to fall victim again should such a similar government operation get launched. But, now the members felt more confident because the same government that had pulled their houses down before had now given them permission to build houses and then later undertake road construction. The permission to build was probably a political move by the government to gain popularity and support. However, only those with a steady flow of income from either formal employment or entrepreneurship were ready to build. Nevertheless, there are other issues now. As one resident explained, "You see we are coming from a crisis [economic crisis] and only those who are employed or engaging seriously in self-employment activities and earning significant money, are building."

The chairperson of a Housing Cooperative in Hatcliffe tries, as much as possible to indicate that his cooperative is working flat out to involve his work with local government. His use of the term "us" in his narrative is revealing: "We are working with the local government. When I say local government, I mean Harare City Council and us, actively involved with each other to have this settlement completely serviced…. We are doing everything possible to ensure formalization of the settlement. What they are saying, we have no way but to follow if we are going to have a good place to live in, free from disease outbreaks. It is difficult but good for us at the end." From this statement, it is evident that housing cooperatives in the peri-urban areas of Harare are making frantic efforts to ensure that they are politically recognized by the state. They are embedded in the politics of patron-client relations. In addition, they are striving to affiliate themselves with political parties while at the same time seeking technical legitimacy by following the standards spelt out with the city of Harare as the local authority.

Origins of Migrants to the Peri-Urban Area

This study has revealed that the large majority of respondents had moved from an urban centre, in this case, Harare to reside in the peri-urban areas (76.5 percent, 66 percent, 77 percent and 96 percent for Whitecliffe, Hatcliffe, Caledonia and Harare South, respectively) (see Table 2). Relatively, very few of the respondents mentioned that came directly from rural areas (21.5 percent). This is not surprising for a settlement emerging outside any large city. This is because the housing waiting list) provides first preference to those who have been on the waiting list the longest.

TABLE 2: PLACE OF STAY BEFORE COMING TO THE PERI-URBAN AREAS (N=399)

Research Site	Urban	Rural	Total
Whitecliffe	75	23	98
	76.53	23.47	100.00
Hatcliffe	66	33	100*
	66.00	33.00	100.00*
Caledonia	77	23	100
	77.00	23.00	100.00
Harare South	96	5	101
	95.05	4.95	100.00
Total	314	84	399*
	78.70	21.05	100.00*

*For one respondent, not determined whether from urban or rural area

Accessing Land in the Peri-Urban Area

The official expectation is that for a person to qualify to own a plot to build, he or she must have first registered with the local authority, and, hence, have been on the housing waiting list. However, our data shows that 21.5 percent of the participants came directly from the rural areas to occupy peri-urban land, which falls under a local authority. The question emerges how these rural migrants managed to move into the peri-urban without having been on an urban housing waiting list. The answer is simple. Both urban and rural classes of people have used other means to obtain access into this zone. It is not the rigid, formal route but, rather, use of the "twilight institutions" of the housing cooperatives or consortiums. For example, in Southlea Park, the settlement is predominantly a consortium-based project which is composed of work-based cooperatives that have come together to enhance their critical mass in order to access land and contribute towards its servicing. To legitimize their actions, these residents always align themselves with the politicians or "people in government." Largely, the reason that most of the cooperatives are aligned to ZANU PF is "seeking some legitimacy" to a claim of land for housing.[11] This reveals the importance of informal networks of patron-client relations between cooperative members and the ruling party.

Duration of Stay in the Peri-Urban Area

Tenure security is a function of many factors including whether the inhabitants of any area have managed to gain legitimacy for their stay in a place through formal channels or not. Sometimes, politicians lead the homeless into acquiring unapproved pieces of the land for occupation. When laws are subsequently enforced, the people are left wanting. This happened before Operation Murambatsvina in 2005. The evocation of the law resulted in housing being destroyed completely, with no compensation for the owners. Residents found that it was a myth to assume that if they stayed in an area for a long period, they would have security of tenure.

Most of the peri-urban dwellers (50.5 percent) moved to the areas of their habitation in the past three years (Table 3). Nevertheless, in Whitecliffe, Hatcliffe, and Caledonia, some

households (14.25 percent) have been in the area for a period between six and ten years. That is a significant length of time for them to have put up structures.

TABLE 3: PERIOD SPENT IN THE PERI-URBAN HABITAT

Research Site	< 1 year	1-3 years	4-6 years	6-10 years	11+ years	Total
Whitecliffe	23	52	10	12	1	98
	23.47	53.06	10.2	12.24	1.02	100.00
Hatcliffe	25	36	17	13	9	100
	25.00	36.00	17.00	13.00	9.00	100.00
Caledonia	3	46	19	32	0	100
	3.00	46.00	19.00	32.00	0.00	100.00
Harare South	30	68	4	0	0	102
	29.41	66.67	3.92	0.00	0.00	100.00
Total	81	202	50	57	10	400
	20.25	50.50	12.50	14.25	2.50	100.00

Factors Militating Against Permanent Structures in the Peri-Urban Areas

Many factors hinder residents from putting up permanent structures in the peri-urban areas. The major cause was the economic meltdown that reached its zenith in 2008. Most residents were simply not in an economic position to build anything significant. The second reason was the "haunting memories" of Operation Murambatsvina in 2005. Chomukwenjera in Whitecliffe explains, "In 2005, due to Murambatsvina, I lost my house, which by today's value in US dollars is of the value between $25,000 and $30,000. It was a big loss to my family; at least in the context of the economic constraints we have been since 2000. I will see how the wind is blowing before I can build another one." In addition, absence of tenure security also delays the construction of permanent houses. Morgan in Caledonia had this to say: "Though I have been given this stand, the paperwork remains unfinished. How then can I go and build on land I am not sure is truly mine?" This statement shows how a long duration of stay in an area does not easily translate into tangible results like houses in an area. Finally, conditional clauses in the contract between people and their agency also have a bearing on the progress that takes place on the ground. How administrative structures (in this case local authorities) relate with one another has an effect on tenure issues. The communities and households lack capacity to understand these relationships. As evidenced by the experiences from most cooperatives, the communities are "insulated" from knowing these relations. Furthermore, the details of relations are regarded as the prerogative of the cooperative committees. Since charisma is a factor in the formation of housing cooperative committees, there is little attention to technical capacity and competence. This negatively affects the progress of the cooperatives, but, meanwhile, the common members find it difficult to understand the politics in detail. This tends to work against the broader interests of all cooperative members.

The peri-urban is an area of transition and sometimes can mean a kind of "no man's land" compromising tenure security. The urban local authority may be less committed to incorporate the area to include it under its jurisdiction since that would mean committing resources for the provision of infrastructure and services. At the same time, the rural local authority, under

which the peri-urban area previously belonged, may have reluctantly released the land and may continue to hold the area inadvertently. This creates "bad" politics, which tend to confuse peri-urbanites. Illustrating these dynamics, one senior local government officer said, "The peri-urban area is a place in which there is interplay of factors on non-commitment by especially the urban local authorities who may not be ready to develop the area and reluctance to release the place, by especially the rural local authorities which may be losing their source of revenue. As these forces play out, it is the common people, communities living in this area who suffer most." In the end, the peri- urban dwellers' tenure security is compromised.

The Question of Belonging

Most peri-urban dwellers did not know (24.6 percent) or were not sure (33.6 percent) of the local authority to which they belonged after moving to the peri-urban areas. Their survey responses to the question "to which local authority do you belong" thus indicate the degree to which their situation is uncertain and precarious (see Table 4). The city of Harare has inadequate public infrastructure, limiting its capacity to incorporate the land to be under jurisdiction, leaving the residents yearning for acceptance by Harare. The other reason is that the settlements do not satisfy the expected urban planning standards such as that of good infrastructure services. It is in this sphere of confusion, again, that informal twilight institutions come in to try to reinforce or at least assure the residents that they have no need to be worried. This lack of awareness could be due to lack of education. Lack of knowledge explains the interplay of politics surrounding housing land delivery in the peri urban areas.

Comparative analysis of the data below reveals that the lack of knowledge is more prevalent in Harare South where only 16.7 percent of the participants know where they belong. This may be explained by the fact that the Urban Development Corporation (UDCORP) is the main agent facilitating development in that area. The consortium, composed of work-based cooperatives, has hired UDCORP as its technical adviser on matters to do with servicing the land and managing the project. In the other cases, the housing cooperative leaders (committee members including the chairperson, secretaries and treasurers) always try to explain to their members that they are working with the City of Harare to regularize their settlements and operations with the city.

TABLE 4: THE QUESTION OF BELONGING IN THE PERI-URBAN AREAS

Research Site	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
Whitecliffe	47	21	31	100*
	47.00	21.00	31.00	100.00*
Hatcliffe	35	26	39	100
	35.00	26.00	39.00	100.00
Caledonia	68	7	25	100
	68.00	7.00	25.00	100.00
Harare South	17	45	40	102
	16.67	44.12	39.22	100.00
Total	167	99	135	402*
	41.54	24.63	33.58	100.00

*For one respondent, not determined whether from urban or rural area

The Irony of Increasing Membership against Little Development

Ironically, cooperatives continued to increase their membership even when they were already constrained to meet the needs of the original smaller number of members. The chairperson of Kuroja Kukura Housing Cooperative in Hatcliffe explained, "Of course big numbers mean bigger subscriptions per month. We have no option but to mobilize our resources. The politics behind the long queue so that it finally gets its houses, we know how to deal with that."

This increasing membership base creates a "mammoth task" in ensuring that all members benefit. The cooperative management leader (chairperson of Nehanda Housing Cooperative) in Dzivarasekwa explained the challenge he faced: "We are working flat out with the City of Harare to get more land to house our members who have not yet benefited from the houses so far. We have over 4000 members but we have only built 800 houses so far. I think you understand what a mammoth task we have in ensuring that all members benefit."

This situation had created elements of mistrust among the cooperative members. Those who were yet to benefit were beginning to question why they have to continue suffering paying rentals elsewhere while others are made "to jump the queue" and benefit well ahead of earlier members. Corruption was becoming a major problem in such cooperatives. According to Taneta in Whitecliffe:

> Some members are now torn between pulling out and continuing. However, after investing your monies over a long time, you cannot just quit. Mudhara Pita left the cooperative after his son bought him a house in Kuwadzana. He only made so because his son who is the Diaspora (United Kingdom) said he should take such investment to the cooperative as water under the bridge. However, how many are like Mudhara Pita, who has "rich" children to buy their parents houses? Most cooperative members will have to soldier on, until they get their house.

This narrative shows how the long waiting periods are beginning to affect community participation; some are contemplating leaving, whilst others have already done so. What many considered as the easiest and quickest way to own a residential property was proving to be a

costly investment if one ends up pulling out of the cooperative. All of these dynamics dampen the morale of the cooperators.

Risks of the Peri-Urban Area

The reality of the peri-urban area is a quagmire of risks. The temporary structures peri-urban settlers in Harare have built are on un-serviced land; hence, development is taking place without adequate support infrastructure (land has not been formally acquired). Even with a few remnant and resilient settlements, it seemed the only guarantee for continuity lay in nothing but "doing the right thing." Thus, a few years after Operation Murambatsvina, "new housing schemes" have resurged in Harare's peri- urban areas. Risks to do with health, the political climate in the area, cooperative management challenges, and the state of the land on which they were supposed to build are some of the many challenges in the peri-urban areas.   Only 8 percent of peri-urban dwellers in the five sites were generally confident in the leadership of their cooperatives and consortiums guiding their development. This small number of positive-minded respondents was those among the people aware of ongoing dialogue between their cooperative leadership and the state. This dialogue is the zone in which Lund's (2006) concept of twilight institutions is manifesting itself. However, they are also convinced that they have to do something on their own in terms of establishing water and sanitation infrastructure.

TABLE 5: RATING THE RISKS

Research Site	Health	Political	Tenable	Coop	Land conf.	Other	Total
Whitecliffe	33	7	1	0	2	47	90
	36.67	7.78	1.11	0.00	2.22	52.22	100.00
Hatcliffe	58	1	1	1	0	39	100
	58.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	39.00	100.00
Caledonia	54	6	9	0	5	21	95
	56.84	6.32	9.47	0.00	5.26	22.11	100.00
Harare South	39	0	1	2	1	47	90
	43.33	0.00	1.11	2.22	1.11	52.22	100.00
Total	184	14	12	3	8	154	375
	49.07	3.73	3.2	0.80	2.13	41.07	100.00

In a state of uncertainty, individuals will try to adopt a wait and see approach. Our data reveal that the main sites with such an approach are Caledonia, Hopley in Harare South, Whitecliffe, and Hatcliffe. In these areas, the cooperatives are operating in such a way that the construction of temporary structures is more dominant than that of actual permanent houses. Harare as the local authority was taking its time to incorporate the emergent settlements hence the process was less expedited than the peri-urban residents would like.

For Harare, on the other hand, it is a question of the resource availability to incorporate them. This incorporation does not come cheap. It involves serious infrastructure financing and regularization to ensure settlement sustainability. Otherwise, the peri-urban settlements will pose a health threat to the entire megalopolis. When households have learnt about the health risks posed by the lack of infrastructure, they are more cautious and want the problem resolved

in the shortest possible time. The case of Southlea Park seems more organized given the activity of UDCORP in the development process.

In Zimbabwe, conversion of state land to private land is a process that takes many stages including acquisition, compensation for improvements, planning, allocation of stands, and full payment. The Deputy Director of Physical Planning partly explains this by saying, "You must (...) bear in mind that it's only after everything has been planned and allocation of stands has been done that State land then becomes private land." In this present case, the City administration of Harare has remained somewhat unclear in its actions putting the hopes of the home-seekers in disarray and shattering them.

Quite a number of these low-income peri-urbanites indicated that they were uncertain of their future. For example, Chipo in Harare South said, "We have been here since 2005 and we do not know, whether to build or to wait. If we build and the government decides to unleash another Murambatsvina, then we are in trouble…." In the same vein, Tagara in Hatcliffe says, "the only thing we must build at the moment is temporary shelters. We cannot risk building what may be razed off like what Murambatsvina did to some of our friends." These sentiments show the level of uncertainty that most peri-urban dwellers share. The places lack adequate public health services exposing many to diseases like cholera and dysentery that since 2008 have been commonplace in Zimbabwe.

Despite the variations highlighted above, in all cases, we see the interplay of politics, both in terms of internal cooperative politics and external politics. The internal politics includes housing cooperatives ballooning their membership numbers to raise financial resources but then failing to meet the demand of the bigger numbers. Corruption is a cancerous development within the cooperatives much to the detriment of the trust and commitment among cooperative members. Regarding external politics, we see cooperatives trying hard to ally or collaborate with politicians so that they can lay a claim on the land in which they are trying to house themselves. In most cases, tenure security is vague, creating opportunities for politicians to act as guarantors for continuity of stay on the pieces of land. Besides, the fact that the land on which peri-urban housing cooperatives were trying to build is under transition, having to move from neighboring rural local authorities to Harare, there is hesitance on the part of Harare to immediately incorporate such areas by servicing them. At the same time, some rural local authorities reluctantly release such areas as they may have historically provided revenue through rental contributions by the farmers. This tug-of-war between local authorities puts the inhabitants at serious risk of tenure insecurity which may not be immediately resolved.

Conclusion

The paper has managed to unmask the key issues surrounding housing and land tenure in the peri-urban fringes of Harare. As urbanization increased, the state has continued to provide services to the urban dwellers, housing included. The formation of housing cooperatives is the manifestation of the ineffectiveness of these state-sponsored, formal service delivery mechanisms.

This study has shown a number of dimensions to the reality of political identity, networks and participation in these cooperatives in peri-urban Harare. Belonging to a membership group, particularly in the form of cooperatives and consortia, explains how low-income groups

enhance their sense of security in a place. Still, many of the peri-urban dwellers in the researched sites were not familiar with the administration that they fall under, making it impossible for them to direct with vigor their demands there. Nevertheless, most peri-urban dwellers feel they have "gained" by being in the areas of their residence. Tenure security is a major battle, and fear characterizes peri-urban Harare. In trying to resolve the challenges, individuals and cooperatives alike have to brace with the politics surrounding this matter.

Notes

1 MNHSA 2010.
2 For more on Operation Murambatsvina, see Chipungu 2011; Tibaijuka 2005; Toriro 2007. The literal translation of *murambatsvina* is "to get rid of trash."
3 See Toriro 2006.
4 All of the quoted comments in the article come from these interviews in 2011 and 2012. The identity of the interviewees has been kept confidential, and names have been changed.
5 For definition of urbanization, Potts 2012, p. v.; for developing countries, Satterthwaite 2004.
6 Guyer, 2011, p.474.
7 Potts 2012, p.xvii.
8 Potts 2011, p.605.
9 Guyer 2011.
10 This was a haphazard seizure of white-owned farms in which land was grabbed by the land hungry Zimbabweans. Before this, the government followed religiously the 1979 Lancaster House Agreement between the British Government and the new Government of Zimbabwe. The Agreement stipulated that the new government could only acquire land from the whites following a "willing-buyer-willing-seller" dictum. After 1990, this arrangement lapsed but the government had not resettled its land-hungry populace. The formation of MDC in 1990 prompted ZANU PF to look into the land issue as its escape gate towards garnering votes hence the ZANU PF Government just allowed farm seizures which it then "christened" the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FLTRP). This FLTRP in 2000 assisted in bringing to surface a critical dimension to the deep-seated urban housing question. As war veterans, the general landless, farm workers and the urban homeless joined in the race of "land grabbing," a peri-urban "chaos" arose as they began to build houses (Moyo 1995; Murowe and Chirisa 2006; Moyo 2000, 2011).
11 Murowe and Chirisa 2006.

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