

Dynamics of Housing Land Allocation in Bulawayo. Implications for Low cost Housing

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Presented by Simbarashe Chereni, Department of
Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe

Structure of The Paper

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Background Information

- The housing problems in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the colonial era mainly because of:
- Separate development
- Restriction of Black house ownership for some time

The City of Bulawayo

- The second largest city in Zimbabwe
- Population of around 1 million people
- Located in the south-western part of Zimbabwe
- Mainly dominated by the Ndebele people
- A history of less government arms length control in development because of Gukurahundi

Theoretical Framework

- The paper uses a composite framework
- The Marxist Socialist Tradition- the State should embrace the social responsibility of housing supply because the market is always not efficient
- Neo-liberalism – The market should be left to operate and improve the GDP and create jobs. The poor will work and save towards house ownership
- Neo-patrimonial theory- African government institutions are characterised by formally functioning bureaucrats operating in impersonal spheres of influence. As a result patronage, gift giving and corruption are rampant in processes of resource allocation.
- Liberation Culture Theory- provides an appendage to the Neo-patrimonial Theory by providing an additional causal element o the selective approach to the allocation of resources especially in post-colonial states. This is because of their historical specificities which relate to the liberation struggle. This in turn defines new forms of citizenship and belonging which determines who has to benefit. Those who participated in the struggle or at least linked to the ruling party stand a better chance to benefit compared to those who did not participate.

Previous Studies

- Chen and Wills (1997)- evolution of China's housing policy which shows a shift from the socialist paradigm to a social-scientific approach (mixing socialism and capitalism)
- Marais et al (2008)- Dweller control versus State Control in Self help projects in South Africa.
- Lizzaralde and Root (2008)- Market inefficiency in low cost housing in Cape Town. The use of formal contractors increases the overall cost of housing units which was not affordable for the majority of low income earners.
- Chikwanha (2005) Liberation logistics in housing delivery in Harare and Cape Town
- Kamete (1997) - Experience of formal financial institutions in low cost housing in Zimbabwe. Significance of PUPS.
- Crook and Kamp (1999) Experience of Formal Financial Institutions in low cost housing in the UK- Failure of Housing Investment Trusts (HITs)

Methodology

- The thrust of the study was to establish how housing delivery has evolved in the city of Bulawayo in the light of increased government incapacity to provide housing. It examined the implications of involving private sector institutions like Building Societies and property developers, and third sector organisations (Co-operatives) in low cost housing supply.
- In-depth interviews were held with senior officials in the 3 building Societies, the City Council, and Property Developers.

Findings

- There has been a marked shift from the traditional approach to more innovative approaches to housing delivery since 1990
- The traditional approach was that of providing subsidised site and service schemes (using funds from rates, council entrepreneurial projects, the fiscus and mortgages from the Building Societies) , and core- housing schemes for the low income earners by the city council with a private market for housing land and housing units.
- The private housing market was basically of those houses which were supplied by the City Council which were later sold at market price after qualifying for title registration.
- Before 2003 the City Council did not allow development on unserviced stands. Therefore home seekers were supposed to register their names on the housing waiting list and wait for the availability of serviced stands which would be allocated to them on a first come first serve basis, irregardless of gender, race or political affiliation
- Co-operative members did not necessarily have to wait on the Housing Waiting list but were allocated to unserviced land. They would then contribute money for servicing the land after which they would begin the construction of housing units collectively or individually.

Shifts in Strategies

- Mid- 90s City Council City Council highly incapacitated to service land- depended mainly on property developers, NGOs, Co-operatives and building Societies.
- The Council through its initiatives could only manage to issue out vacant developed land in existing neighborhoods but still through the waiting list.
- NGOs worked with building societies which would develop land and/or core houses then sell it to beneficiaries through a loan. Eligibility for land allocation here depended on whether or not one qualified for the loan- A democratic style but not pro-poor.
- Qualification for a loan required one to save money through the building society for two years to cover 25 % of the cost of the property applied for and possession of title deeds for a property somewhere.
- In 2003 the government embarked on Operation Murambatsvina