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**‘We have not made anybody homeless’:
Urban development, citizenship, and the Zimbabwean state**

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In May and June 2005, thousands of Zimbabweans were brutally displaced from urban areas. But ‘Operation Murambatsvina’ was not simply an unpredictable ‘tsunami,’ rather it provides a moment in which long-held prejudices and assumptions which shaped the developmental state became visible, reflecting not just the internalisation of the Rhodesian, modernist world-view, but also its imbrication with local understandings of home and home-ness. To see Murambatsvina as simply a politically expedient move is to miss the deep resonance of the political rhetoric, the ways it was embedded in the state, and how it is shaped by norms of citizenship. Contextualised against Harare’s urban politics, the clearances reveal a long-standing set of policies designed to regulate and control urban life, forming part of a broader crisis of the post-colonial developmental state. (150 words)

Keywords: Citizenship, Urban, Harare, Zimbabwe, belonging, autochthony, clearances, informality

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‘We have not made anybody homeless’: Urban development, citizenship, and the Zimbabwean state

We have not made anybody homeless. These people were not living in homes; these people were living in shacks. And these are the things that we were destroying. We have not destroyed anybody’s home....We are not making anyone homeless....before they put up these structures these people had homes somewhere. We are saying go back to your homes.

Dr Godfrey Magwenzi, Zimbabwe Embassy,
BBC Today Programme, 27 June 2005.

In May and June of 2005 thousands of Zimbabweans were displaced, their homes and livelihoods destroyed. For many this was an overwhelming human tragedy, for others politically motivated attack. But the claims above, attempting to both justify and rationalise the brutal actions of the state, call for a closer examination. Despite seeming so bizarre as to be unacceptable, they serve to remind us that disruptive and disastrous as Operation Murambatsvina was, it was not without precedent, nor was it entirely outwith the norms that shape Zimbabwean citizenship.

As this article will show, Murambatsvina was the most extreme iteration of a long-standing set of policies reflecting deeply seated ideas about how ‘urban’ people should behave. This is not to say that we should simply take the ‘official line’ at face value, but to argue that we need to examine both discourse and practice, over the ‘longue duree’ of independent Zimbabwe, and against the context of Zimbabwe’s burgeoning urban crisis. Looking at this helps us to understand that the pattern of urban clearances and intolerance of informality found in Zimbabwe are not simply a reflection of uncritical continuities with the colonial period. Instead, we can see how the re-assertion of ‘order’ by the post-colonial state is tied into nation-building, claiming the land and framing post-colonial citizenship, not just as ‘belonging’ but as ‘producing’.

With Zimbabwe already high up on the news agenda, Murambatsvina captured the world’s attention and rapidly made its way into the academic literature (Potts 2006, Vambe 2008, Kamete 2009, Fontein 2009). Most explained it as ‘punishment’ visited upon urban residents for supporting the MDC in the 2005 election (Sachikonye 2011; Mlambo 2008). Others raised the possibility that this show of might was also directed at factions within the ruling party whose support also emerged from informal traders operating in these neighbourhoods (Sadomba 2011,

223; Vambe 2008; Musoni, 2010). While there is doubtless truth in these interpretations, the data presented below reveals that Murambatsvina was planned well before the 2005 elections, and inexplicably delayed until after the fact.

If we discard simple instrumentality as an explanation, we see that the clearances also speak to broader issues of sovereignty and citizenship, as Hammar (2008) shows in exploring how both rural and urban removals allow the state to affirm its sovereign (and exclusionary) power. Chimedza (2008) reads Murambatsvina primarily as a denial of citizenship rights, but in his account citizenship is bipolar: either exists or it is denied. Following common usage in citizenship literature (Dorman 2014), it is also primarily framed as being about belonging to a particular ethnic or racial group. While this is a crucial part of the story, I argue here that we need to move beyond this focus on autochthony and see Murambatsvina as an attempt to shape a particular kind of citizenship.

In order to do this, the article traces the emergence of the urban developmental state, which like the rural state, lionizes order and formal planning in the quest for the creation of the modern post-colonial state.¹ It then contextualises Murambatsvina against the broader urban crisis, using previously unconsidered documentary sources from political elites. To set this up, it first explores theoretical approaches to thinking about citizenship in Africa, before developing in more detail the state's repeated attempts to order the post-colonial urban sphere and the complex inter-relationships between the state, citizenship and political identity in Zimbabwe.

Citizenship in Africa: belonging or producing?

Although citizenship debates in Africa often seem to revolve around petty distinctions about birthplaces and colonial borders, this sort of instrumentalization should be understood as a symptom of the deep unease that surrounds notions of citizenship. Embedded in these debates is a less easily articulated, but none-the-less real, idea about citizenship being linked to notions of place and production. So, examining ideas about citizenship in Tanzania, Brennan (2006) has identified “three discernable ideals: someone who was ‘African’; someone who either worked as a labourer in

¹ The paper draws on interview and documentary research conducted in July-August 2003, May 2005 and October-December 2005, but is also informed by research visits starting at the time of the 1991 clearances. The paper would not have been possible without sources made available to me by Michael Laban and Mike Davies. I'd also like to thank the editors and two anonymous referees for their guidance, as well as a number of colleagues and students, particularly Joost Fontein.

urban areas or, preferably as a farmer in rural areas, and someone who not only refrained from but also fought exploitation” (391). This idea of citizenship as something to be ‘earned’ finds resonance elsewhere in the continent, where post-liberation states extend citizenship first to those who have defended the state (Dorman, 2014). John Lonsdale (2008) further shows how discourses – of being sons of the soil and of being productive – are related, especially where land has been fought for in a liberation war. He notes that in Kenya, claims to land are not necessarily made by those who identify as autochthonous, but by those who claim to have ‘improved’ the soil, or ‘brought development’ (306). Also in Kenya, the existence of Nubians, descended from Sudanese ex-soldiers, is said to be precarious because they ‘lack a rural home’ (Balaton-Chrimes 2011, 208). Lonsdale further reminds us that to many, urban Kenya is an area of “houses not homes” (309) – exactly the phrase used by Zimbabwe’s Ambassador in the heated exchange with Radio 4’s John Humphrys excerpted above.

Attempting to disentangle these ideas, this paper argues that the belief that citizenship is rooted in the soil is not simply a primordial ‘african’ trait. Rather, it reveals the tenacity of colonial notions about urban/rural divides in settler states, which explicitly excluded unemployed Africans and women from cities. This colonial era urban-rural divide remains salient, and in complex ways reinforces nationalist ideals that have shaped assumptions about how states function and how citizens ought to behave. It has been argued for some time that Zimbabwean state-building is founded on a notion of rural productivity (Potts 2000b, 905; Munro 1998), but the implications of this for urban citizens and democratic politics also need to be explored. The state’s concern for productivity profoundly shapes emergent conceptions of citizenship and nationhood. Inclusion in ‘productive’ realms of the state, determines inclusion in the political project as full citizens (Potts, 2000a; see also Rutherford 2005).

The focus on ‘productivity’ makes urban citizenship conditional, at least for the poor. In the colonial period, urban residence was conferred on the basis of labour, while in the post-colonial period participation in democratic processes is conferred on the basis of land ownership and taxpaying not residency until well after Independence, *contra* Mamdani’s (1996) widely cited thesis. Most of those removed during Murambatsvina had only been granted the right to vote in urban elections 10 years earlier, fifteen years after independence.

The regulation and control of urban areas needs to be understood as an integral part of the construction of Zimbabwean citizenship because it created areas which were not homes, and political institutions upon which people could not make claims, a notion which, as we shall see, reappeared in public discourse post-2000. The emergence of urban residents associations (as opposed to rate-payers' associations), and more generally of opposition political movements in these newly politicised spaces, thus formed a potent threat to that nation, as well as to ZANU(PF)'s control of the political sphere. The discourses of 'planning' and 'order' reappear at times of political crisis, as the ruling party seeks to demonstrate its control and ability to mobilize the state apparatus.

But we need to drill deeper. In addition to tracing the attempts to restore order, the article examines committee transcripts and reports into Harare's politics, which provided the backdrop to Murambatsvina. These show how political elites blame Harare's urban crisis on voters who were not "ratepayers" and thus not seen as legitimate urban dwellers or political actors decades after independence. (Kurasha Commission; Kurasha Report; Tomana Report). Those attacked in Operation Murambatsvina and the many other clearances are not just 'politically unreliable' because they voted the wrong way or come from the wrong ethnic group. They are not seen as legitimate citizens because they do not contribute enough to the state. Just as the extension of the franchise in colonial times was contingent on owning property and having a certain level of literacy, modern Zimbabweans are criticized by those on both sides of the political divide for not possessing full citizenship.

The sections below trace the post-colonial state's engagement with urban developmental policies, not merely as a passive recipient of a set of policies, but generating new expectations and norms. The top-down attempts to impose order can also be read as a narrative in which urban residents continually innovate in their experiences of urban life, and their expectations of political institutions which structure it. First the article sketches the evolution of urban policy and politics through the 1960s and 1970s, as the nationalist movement moved to the rural areas; then in the 1980s as the cities were deracialised; and challenges of the 1990s as liberalization targeted urban areas with particular ferocity, and the finally the twinned political and economic crises of the 2000s. In the final section, the implications of this interpretation are explored, both for our understanding of the recent urban crisis,

and the broader question of how the urban case contributes to our understanding of the Zimbabwean state and the politics of citizenship.

Nationalism in the City: the 1960s and 1970s

Nationalism's ambivalent relationship with cities can be traced back to Rhodesian attempts to control the urbanisation of the black population (Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni 1999). Although labour movements were the birthplace of much nationalist organization, the links between unions and nationalist parties were not straightforward, especially in the 1960s and 70s (Raftopoulos 1997; Brittain and Raftopoulos, 1997). Rhodesian 'influx control' failed as the liberation war intensified in the countryside, more and more people fled from the rural areas to the cities. In addition to men seeking jobs, women fled to urban areas to avoid the dangers of both the guerrillas and the security services in the countryside. The increasingly rural focus of the nationalist movement meant that city-dwellers were often seen as 'sell-outs', suspected of supporting either the Rhodesian regime or the internal settlement parties, which had rejected the armed struggle. This growth in the urban population, and increasing levels of unemployment, contributed to the development of squatter settlements around Harare, and changed the gender and racial composition of the cities (Rakodi, 1993).

Ennie Chipembere (2005) argues that the UDI government "went out of their way" to deal with this urban influx: taking over the construction of low-income housing and developing new partnerships with private industry, financial institutions and mortgage lenders. In addition to new townships, in 1972 the presence of 'lodgers' in high-density townships was legalized. New housing designs were developed, which facilitated the presence of lodgers by adding extra rooms, often with separate outside entrances. Diana Patel (1988) also suggested that between 1976 and 1980, "the government adopted a more tolerant policy towards squatters". Until this time, squatter settlements around Harare had been demolished, and in only one case were alternative arrangements made to shelter those who were displaced. But in 1977, the municipal and national governments co-operated to re-locate squatters and provide them with land on which they could build. And in 1979, faced with over-crowding in 'African' areas, and shantytowns emerging on vacant land and in the urban periphery, 'transit camps' were authorised within the city, on which temporary shelters were erected (Patel p 208; Rakodi p 79).

A careful reading of contemporary sources also challenges the notion of the controlled, regulated colonial city. By the early 1970s public transport for urban commuters was overstretched, with busses regularly carrying passenger numbers well above their official occupancy. 'Pirate' taxis emerged to absorb some of this demand. Hardwick (1977) reported that at least a 1000 passengers were travelling from Highfield into town daily in illegal and poorly maintained 'pirate taxis' averaging 10 passengers per vehicle (100-101). Urban agriculture also grew dramatically from the late 1960s onwards. Mazambani's research (1992) shows a 67% annual increase in 'illegal' cultivated areas from 1965 to 1980.

It seems likely that the overstretched UDI regime – fighting a war, sanctions, and lacking manpower – may have seen urban residents as less of a problem than rural residents, suspected to support the guerrillas. Carole Rakodi (1993) also hints at divisions between more liberal Harare councillors (many of whom were independents) and the Rhodesian Front. She notes that the 1970s were 'marked by tensions in the ruling white class' and that as the national government 'moved to the right' the municipal government 'polarised' (177). This stalemate left a multifaceted urban crisis for the new government in 1980.

Deracialization & Expansion: the 1980s

In many ways, urban areas, and the nature of policies applied to them, changed little in the years immediately after independence. Colonial era by-laws, plans and statutes remain essentially unchanged. These well-documented continuities of planning as a 'rational, technocratic' activity (Wekwete, 1988: 59), do not seem to apply to the more politically contingent enforcement of such policies. Nonetheless, distinctions between rural and urban areas remained clear, and attempts to only allow those with 'legitimate business' in urban areas continued.

To look first at housing: in cities like Harare, former 'white' suburbs were renamed 'low density neighbourhoods' and middle class Black, Asian and Coloured families moved into them – a process that had actually begun in the late 1970s (Cumming). Urban high density neighbourhoods expanded, but slowly. Few new suburbs were developed. Carole Rakodi claims that in Harare housing production *decreased* in the post-independence period (Rakodi cited in Zinyama, 25). Although government plans in the early 1980s proposed to build 115 000 units across the country, by 1985 only 13 500 were complete and waitlists grew in cities around the

country. Housing developments instead took the form of aided self-help, in which serviced sites were made available, and owners expected to build to particular standards, with housing plans approved by the municipality. But the costs of building materials, and the high standards expected, were beyond the resources of the poor households intended to benefit from these schemes (Auret, 17).

Despite this, squatter areas which had been tacitly tolerated in the dying years of the Rhodesian regime were 'cleaned up'. Potts and Mutambirwa (10) report that in 1984 there were 8 squatter settlements in Harare, but that 42 others had been 'cleared'. Chirambahuyo, a community near Chitungwiza, established by squatters relocated in the late 1970s, was demolished soon after independence. Patel reports that although they were offered ultra-low cost houses in Chitungwiza, most could not afford them. Some resettled themselves in another squatter area, which was itself demolished in 1982. She quotes the Minister of Housing's 'disappointment' that so few of the residents wanted to return to rural areas. Similar attempts were made to return people living at the Mbare Msika 'transit camp' to their rural homes, but most were eventually rehoused in former hostels in Mbare, while others were moved "further away from the road, out of sight"(Patel 210).

Fearing the 'ruralisation' of urban areas bans on agriculture on public land were retained, albeit unevenly enforced. In 1982, Maurice Nyagumbo, Minister of Mines, and ZANU(PF) national secretary, told party members:

If people want to go into large scale farming, they must apply to Government for proper resettlement... Zimbabweans must know that urban areas and farming areas are different. They must not do as they please. They must follow regulations and adhere to them. City Councils must act now and stop this. (cited in Mbiba 92)

From 1985 onwards, Harare city council officials, accompanied by the police, slashed maize and vegetables growing on council land. Although some areas were demarcated for cultivation and were allocated to co-operatives, many crops were slashed, even in areas where cultivation had been permitted pre-independence (Mbiba, 95). Colonial assumptions that residential areas were not appropriate sites for small industry – car repairs, welding, and carpentry – were also maintained through 'an impressive array of legal stipulations that were meant to control the conversion of homes into workplaces'. (Kamete, 1999, 143).

Attempts were also made to keep the central business districts ‘modern’ and ‘clean’. In a remarkable continuity with the colonial discourses only those with ‘legitimate’ business were supposed to be found in the city. ‘Authorised’ markets, opened in the late 1970s were the only outdoor venues where vegetables could be sold, informal markets, hawkers and the informal selling of food were banned. Pirate taxis, which carried multiple passengers were licensed at the end of 1982, providing a level of regulation and control over a burgeoning informal sector. This was justified as an ‘emergency’ response to a temporary public transportation crisis, and indeed, the taxis themselves were called ‘Emergency Taxis’ or, more commonly, ETs.

As mentioned above, squatters were targeted for removal, often over-ambitiously. In 1983’s infamous ‘Operation Clean-up’ the police arrested over 6000 women in urban areas on the pretext of removing prostitutes from the streets. The women arrested included the elderly, schoolgirls, and women with babies, who were arrested while they waited for busses or walked home from work; some were taken out of theatres and their own homes. On release, they were told to go to their rural homes. In a similar operation ‘Chinyavada’, before the Non-Aligned Movement summit in 1986, women were dumped in rural Mashonaland.

Liberalization and Informalization: the 1990s

Tensions between policy and implementation became more strained in the 1990s. It was clear that government policies would fail to meet its target of housing for all by the year 2000, set in 1985. In 1991, it was estimated that there was a deficit of 70 000 dwellings in Harare. This figure is probably derived from the housing waiting list, which by 1994 had increased to 92, 251 households (Tipple 1999, 2). In Bulawayo the waiting list was 38 9000 in 1991 (Auret, 1995, 39). For the country as a whole it was estimated that up to 1.5 million people were without adequate housing in 1994 (Auret, 1). By 1999, there was a backlog of 1 million units of housing (670 000 of these in Harare) with only 200 000 housing units/serviced stands having been created in the intervening period (*Herald*, 1999, 10).

Although the Minister responsible for housing claimed that the roots of the crisis were to be found in the spiralling costs of land and building, it is not clear that this is an accurate assessment (Chisaka and Mtutu). Experts suggests that the problem was in fact neither a shortage of land, nor a simple shortage of financial support. Rather the shortage was in the availability of technical support such as surveyors to

make the land available for building (Rakodi 1993). In response to the demand for housing, and their own declining incomes, home-owners increasingly turned to renting out rooms, or backyard shacks to lodgers. Rents derived from lodgers became an increasingly important source of income, and it appeared to be grudgingly tolerated by councils, who issued permits for some of these conversions and out-buildings.

But reactions to visible urban poverty also continued to include ‘clear-ups’ and the removal of squatters. Throughout the 1990s, street-kids and the urban destitute were targeted for removal to holding camps, training centres and former refugee camps (Bourdillon, 1991, 90-97). In the best known case, squatters were moved to a peri-urban farm from Mbare, Epworth, and 19 other settlements in preparation for Queen Elizabeth’s attendance at the 1991 CHOGM meeting (Auret 1994 71, Rakodi, 1993 74-76). In 1992, a new set of regulations on squatters were gazetted, with particular emphasis on urban and peri-urban land (GOZ 1992). Mike Auret reports homeless people evicted from Churu Farm in 1993 being told to “go back where [you] came from”.

But as the decade went on, tolerance of the informal economy seemed to increase. While such measures are often seen as ‘coping strategies’ on the part of the urban poor, from a political perspective, they also serve as an indirect form of ‘distribution’. Even if the government is increasingly unwilling or unable to distribute welfarist goods, it can prevent living standards decreasing too much, by permitting access to informal sources of social goods. After the drought of 1991-92, the Harare municipal council relaxed controls on urban agriculture, and by the late 1990s, maize-slashing had ceased, despite concern about the pollution of Harare’s water sources from environmental NGOs (Brickhill, 1998). The introduction of commuter omnibuses signalled the partial deregulation of public transport. Limited resources to expand the government-owned ZUPCO fleet of busses, and the difficulties of importing spare parts, had contributed to the transport crisis. These multiple-passenger vehicles, which began to be imported in 1994, greatly improved travel into and out of cities, replacing the ‘pirate’ (unlicensed) ETs that had proliferated as pressure grew on the transport system (Mbara and Maunder, 1996). Despite this, by 1999, the Herald was reporting that the Kombis, as they were called, were now ‘overwhelmed’ by the city’s population, and that the ‘80s transport blues’ had resurfaced (*Herald* 15 February 1999, 11).

Regulations on informal trade were relaxed in the early 1990s, and the numbers of hawkers and vendors increased (Horn, 24; 64). Kamete (1999) reports that the spread of small scale industrial workshops within low income residential areas, was tacitly accepted in the early 1990s “there is no single report of a major crackdown on illegal land and building use”(p143). Indeed, in 1994, a policy change emanated from central government, which partly lifted restrictions on industrial activities. Kamete suggests that the motives behind this shift were political. Designed to ‘empower the hitherto disadvantaged minority’ and provide an “enabling environment for emergent businesspeople” (1999, 144) the policy change was clearly influenced by the ‘indigenisation’ lobby. Tevera and Chimhowu’s study of backyard shacks in Harare, published in 1998, concluded that:

...the general mood has shifted from intolerance during the ‘socialist era’ of the 1980s to tolerance during the 1990s. The need to maintain a rapidly eroding political power base and to soften the impact of political hardships...has compelled both central government and the Harare city council to grudgingly allow the proliferation of backyard shacks in the low income residential areas.(Tevera and Chimhowu, p.20)

In the 1990s, under these increasingly difficult conditions, the urban areas became fertile territory for opposition mobilization. Strikingly, it was only in 1995 that Harare’s elections came to be fully democratized, with legislation finally passed allowing all residents eligible to vote in national elections to vote in municipal elections – a privilege previously reserved to rateholders *ie* those who owned property – primarily salaried males, not domestic workers, women or residents in backyard shacks.

These elections were hotly contested. Amin Kamete argues that the urban areas were ‘ruling party strongholds’ until 2000, but he ignores the campaigns contested by independent candidates (Kamete, 2002) The ruling party’s dirty tricks played on Margaret Dongo in the 1995 parliamentary election and on Priscilla Misihairambwi and Fidelis Mhashu, in municipal elections, not to mention Margaret Dongo’s victory in Harare South all suggest that urban discontent was being channelled into political manifestations as well as into informal income generation (Dorman, 2005). These are also years in which residents’ associations in both high and low density areas – some of which had existed for decades -- became more active. In 1999 they organised themselves into the Combined Harare Resident’s Association,

and began a sustained lobbying campaign against the Harare Municipality, which was itself beset with crises.

Residents versus rate-payers: the 2000s

The political situation in the 2000s complicated management of urban areas, and brought out many of these embedded contradictions. The polarisation and intensification of politics at both the urban and the national level was part of a complicated story after the 2000 referendum and parliamentary election. The willingness of urban populations to articulate discontent even in politically sensitive national level polls became clear in the constitutional referendum held in February 2000 (Dorman, 2003). Again in the June parliamentary elections, urban turnout was high and election results reveal strong and consistent support for the MDC in urban areas, further reflected in the election of 42 MDC, and 1 ZANU (PF) councillor in the 2002 council elections.

The political results should not be any great surprise. Urban discontent with services was clearly and well articulated in backs of commuter omnibuses and in the letters pages of the newspapers. According to the 2002 census, 35 percent of Zimbabwe's population then lived in urban areas, with Harare Province, comprised of the City of Harare, Chitungwiza and Epworth — containing more than 60 percent of Zimbabwe's urban population and 20 percent of the total population (Herald 2005).

Even urban councils, which had previously received endorsements of good governance and financial stability found themselves less and less able to provide basic services as the national economy suffered. Concerns about the availability of water and electricity had begun earlier, but by 2004 and 2005, Harare's eastern suburbs frequently went for weeks without piped water. In April 2005, soon after the election, electricity cuts also became common, as generators broke down and foreign exchange shortages prevented the importation of spares. In Harare and Chitungwiza, rubbish collection periodically ceased. Raw sewage leaking into homes was a major concern in a number of Harare's suburbs, Bulawayo and Chitungwiza. While the city's supply of electricity could not be blamed on the municipality, problems of water provision and quality, were a result of the city's lack of investment, ability to collect taxes and problems of access to foreign exchange for sourcing the requisite chemicals.

The overlapping crises of urban management, the economic crisis, and City of Harare's own internal crises, manifests itself in part in more expansive

informalization. The increase in food vending reflected the inability of urbanites to buy full-size packets of staple goods. Instead we find more tuck-shops selling repackaged staple goods (for instance, a quarter loaf of bread) and vegetables. Hot food was available much more widely on the streets and in the carparks of the central business district. Informal sector workshops and backyard shacks and cottages were also built. The better built cottages were often funded by remittances from family members abroad, and generated income for the family left behind. The relaxation of regulations on urban agriculture was extended, “because of the serious shortage of food and increasing high levels of starvation and poverty among the population” (City council advert in *Daily News* 10 January 2003).

But even as restrictions were relaxed in an ad-hoc fashion, older norms began to be re-articulated. Attempts to regulate and control the burgeoning informal sector and to enforce the now ancient urban by-laws were not entirely abandoned. In 2000, houses built on land adjacent to Kambuzuma were demolished, and the land was later allocated to a housing co-op (*Herald* 3 October 2005). In 2001 the unelected commission running Harare issued notices that shacks would be demolished if not regularised. It was estimated at that time, that there were 145 000 illegal structures in Harare, which would render 500 000 homeless, if destroyed (*Herald* 13 March 2001). At the same time, vendors were threatened with eviction and sporadic crackdowns on food vendors and tuckshops were announced. In February 2004, street-people in Harare were again ‘rounded up’ after reports of attacks and rapes on passersby. The next month, a mosque in Rugare, one of the smallest and oldest townships, was destroyed by the City Council. Even in predominantly Christian Zimbabwe, this generated criticism, with one letter-writer stating “The potholes in Rugare are so bad that the roads need an overhaul. Instead of destroying Mosques – at the expense of innocent citizens – they should concentrate on constructing the roads (*Mirror* 10 March 2004).

When the MDC Mayor, Elias Mudzuri, was removed from office in 2003, one of allegations against him was the claim that he had ‘wilfully and unlawfully encouraged residents to engage in uncontrolled agricultural practices’ (Memo, 2004; Memo 2003; Tomana report 2004). A Commission of Inquiry chaired by Jameson Kurasha, Professor of Ethics in the University of Zimbabwe’s Religious Studies Department, concluded that in announcing that crops would not be slashed, the Mayor had been encouraging ‘unlawfulness and anarchy’ (Kurasha Report), p. 41; Interview Jameson Kurasha, 11 February 2005). That is, by allowing people to grow food at a

time of increasing impoverishment, the Mayor was guilty of gross misconduct. The Kurasha report then recommended that:

...given the current backlog *a blitz type operation is required* whereby council should hire transport from players like CMED, the Army, DDF and individuals with lorries; council must enforce its by-laws including removing vagrants, beggars, illegal vendors and industrial activity from the CBD. (Kurasha Report, Executive Summary p 19; emphasis added)

It is in this light - with the moral backing of an Ethics lecturer - that 'Operation Murambatsvina' was first announced by the city council in October 2004: "We have launched this operation to rid the CBD of illegal vendors, street families and those parking their cars in undesignated places". The report stated that "Murambatsvina" was intended "to spruce up the image of the city" (Mirror 2004b) and in April 2005, perhaps anticipating subsequent moves, the city advertised itself in a newspaper supplement:

Harare is clean, well laid out and compares favourably with cities anywhere in the world...Not only is the water safe, but there are adequate supplies to meet current demand. There is a constant supply of electricity (City of Harare, 2005).

Only in May – well after the parliamentary elections – did the clearances start. First came an announcement that commuter omnibus terminuses had been removed from the city centre, so that routes would terminate on the edge of the CBD. Initially, this seemed little to worry about – such announcements had been made time and time again during the 1990s, with little impact. But then flea markets, workshops, and informal vendors were chased away and had their goods destroyed. The 'clean-up' thus linked into the bigger economic crisis: where food, fuel, and currency shortages rendered day to day life nearly impossible. After the re-imposition of price controls, shortages of consumer goods began to occur frequently – as producers claimed costs of production not being met. While larger companies were charged with 'hoarding' or pricing above legal limits, informal traders were accused of hoarding goods and 'causing' food shortages; they were removed. The clean up also targeted foreign exchange dealers, and was framed as part of an anti-corruption campaign, as well as a campaign against illegal activities.

But the most telling proclamations were those which spoke to what was legitimately 'urban', such as the banning of urban agriculture in Harare (*Herald* 22 June 2005). The areas targeted for destruction included not just 'squatters' -- those occupying public land illegally – but also illegal use of privately owned land as

workshops, and backyard cottages and shacks. These are the people –often including secretaries, teachers and office workers -- priced out of ‘formal accommodation’ but unable to build elsewhere.

Some of these urban residents were from families whose origins are not Zimbabwean. These people, and those whose ties with their rural homes may be weak or problematic, were left stranded. The Senior Police officer in Harare, Edmore Veterai, said “No one in Zimbabwe comes from nowhere. Everybody belongs somewhere” But, when questioned in Parliament, about the fate of urban residents of alien origin who ‘do not know what a rural home looks like’, the Minister of Justice replied:

...the Fifth Parliament, passed a law which basically facilitated people of Malawian, Mozambican and Zambian origin to gain citizenship in our country..... those will be relocated to our rural areas. ...They are our citizens, they are our responsibility and we will discharge that responsibility without any problem (*Parliamentary Debates* Vol. 32, No. 4 Parliament of Zimbabwe June 22, 2005).

What is striking is the determination to send people ‘to the land’ and the conviction that this was a reasonable solution – even when the reality was that even those with formal jobs did not have anywhere to live. This cannot be simply political expediency. It is instead the re-emergence of discourses and practices first manifested under colonialism, but strengthened and integrated into state practice in the post-colonial, until nearly normalized. Fontein (2009) reports that many residents of Harare’s poorer suburbs themselves saw merit in the re-assertion of technocracy and planning. Most of those ‘chased away’ from cities were in fact ‘ethnically Zimbabwean’ but may have lost contact with their rural roots, or been only too aware that the ‘rural home’ could not sustain their families. But their presence in the city was both a ‘problem’ for city administrators to resolve, and a visible sign that rural areas could not absorb and sustain their populations. In a context where the rural is placed at the heart of the nation, unplanned urban growth and disorder function as evidence of rural crisis.

As this makes clear, ‘non-productive’ residents are not welcome in the city. Contra-Mamdani, it is not ‘residence’ that determines whether one is citizen or subject, but rate-paying. Not only are informal dwellers castigated for not

contributing to the city's financial position, but this is seen as a legitimate reason for denying them the vote. Representation thus depends on productivity and legitimacy as even the right of councillors to be elected if they don't pay rates themselves is questioned. As Dr Chris Mushonga, an MDC councillor, remarked to the Kurasha commission:

I think one of the worst laws we made in this country was the fact that we said even lodgers can vote As we have now, our council, probably 80% of them are unemployed. 70% of them are lodgers. How can these individuals really be city fathers in the true sense as we know. the idea of us saying that lodgers should vote, I know it was done for political reasons because in the low density, ZANU realised they were not going to get many seats, so give everyone a vote, but in my opinion it was a mistake. I mean, the guys, they should say you must have property for you to qualify as a ratepayer and also you must be a ratepayer to be eligible to vote for council elections, but we ignored that, but you know we will begin to reap, you may go back later on, maybe after I am dead or whatever, but definitely I think it was a mistake (Kurasha Commission)

Not dissimilar comments were voiced by the former Town Clerk Chideya, a strong ZANU(PF) cadre, who clearly resented the interference of MDC councillors:

I think it is about time through legislation that we desperately require a councillor of a certain academic level. We require a councillor who has either a better job somewhere or else has got his own or her own assets....*the losers are the ratepayers because of the arrogance in the decision makers.....*(Kurasha Commission 1331-1333)

Tellingly, at the conclusion of this diatribe, he does not say that *voters* are losing out, but ratepayers. Kurasha sums up and reinforces these views, saying:

...the majority of councillors lack requisite skills and academic qualifications and do not appreciate the gravity of the decisions they made; most of them have completely no knowledge of local government functions and relationship with central government some of the being non ratepayers their relationship with the city *are akin to that of a visitor. Strictly speaking, those falling in this category (who are a not a few) are not stakeholders.* (Kurasha Report, p13).

Conclusion: Citizenship at stake

This story of attempts to 'control' urban spaces and urban people is thus more complex than the standard account in which order was 'inherited' from the colonial state, maintained over two decades, and overtaken by politically-inspired chaos after the 2000 constitutional referendum. In thinking about the developmental state in

Zimbabwe, we need to move away from dichotomous accounts which emphasize ‘either – or’ (whether urban/rural or colonial/post-colonial) and attempt to make sense out of a more complex reality. Indeed, part of the problem is that state bureaucrats and politicians themselves have embedded these dichotomies in their planning and their understanding of the state, and it has been further incorporated into understandings of what it means to live within Zimbabwe, and to be Zimbabwean.

Zimbabwe’s explicitly rural developmental discourse and the developmental state, with its focus on agricultural productivity, had a powerful depoliticising effect, structuring and legitimating government interventions. The material above shows that similar influences were at work in the urban areas, but that under neither the colonial nor the post-colonial state were they hegemonic. Political imperatives shaped the possibilities of the state – rendering it less than controlling and allowing the possibility of evasion and contestation. In rural areas, pressures for conformity have been resisted through discourses and practices, drawing on claims of indigeneity, tradition and locality, as Donald Moore illustrates with reference to the ‘*musha*’ (home) (Moore, 2005 p.213). In the urban areas, there were fewer (if any) legitimizing claims which could serve to offset the pressure of the modernising state. Instead, the ability of urban Zimbabweans to claim a right to life in the city has itself been weakened by the dominant and internalised assumption that ‘all’ Zimbabweans have a rural home (*musha*) and that without such identifiers people are not ‘fully’ Zimbabwean. The use of the idea of ‘home’ in claiming rural areas, discursively weakens urban claims to belonging. Indeed, this is a trope which exists for both black and white Zimbabweans – with the settler ethos imparting a strong ‘rural’ and ‘farmer’ identity to white identity formation, even as black identities became rooted in ‘peasant’ narratives of autochthony. While some ‘coloured’ and Asian Zimbabweans have resisted these norms, and claimed rights to urban spaces and cultures (Muzondidya 2001), these have been contested and very much framed within the discredited Rhodesian land uses. Urban Zimbabweans do have champions in the form of NGOs, and lawyers, who have contested attempts to remove their citizenship, but their role has also discredited by the delegitimizing discourse that elected officials are more legitimate policy makers than judges and more legitimate interlocutors than NGOs.

The claim that ‘nobody has been made homeless’ may seem outrageous, but in defining what is ‘home’ they are also defining who can claim to be home and

participate in political decision-making, as the evidence from the Kurasha Commission hearings reveal.

In much the same way as patriarchal society defines the family so that gender determines who is 'in the family' and who 'controls the family', defining what a 'home' is, also determines who has authority over that home. A '*musha*' or '*khaya*' is defined as a rural, traditional home where belonging is determined by autochthony, linking politics and political authority firmly to tradition and to the liberation war, which was fought so as to gain control over that land. In a 1999 parliamentary debate about housing conditions in his constituency, an MP, Mr Mutanga said:

...you find people building shacks and use them as houses and people are actually living there...what is happening in these houses is terrible...Instead of preventing these things we are encouraging it. Those of you who were at Gonakudzingwa [Prison] know that when we were there [during the war], we were saying as soon as we liberate our country, we must give land to the people. But, we are running from that land into town... (Parliamentary Debates, 25 March 1999)

In reality, of course, access to rural land is determined by many other factors, but the discourse still resonates, as does its counterpoint in which entitlement to an urban home is grounded in ownership and ratepaying, vividly illustrated when Mushonga questions the extension of the franchise to the unemployed and uneducated, and Kurasha suggests that those without jobs are 'not stakeholders' in the urban project but 'akin to visitors'.

As MP Mutanga enunciates, those who seek shelter in urban areas are 'running from the land' – fleeing the presumed safety of the rural home for 'terrible' unsanitary, immoral conditions. In doing so, they are rejecting the norms of the liberation war; proclaiming through their presence that the benefits of liberation are no longer sufficient for family reproduction (if they ever were). In 2005, this was not news, but the visibly growing urban shacks, shantytowns and vendors make a public statement which forcefully negated the developmental discourses which were intended to support the state. In their very presence, the teachers, secretaries and civil servants living in backyard huts, just like squatters in rural areas, were manifestations of the failure of the liberation war and the discourses which justified the state's very existence as shaped by the ZANU(PF) regime.

By ‘running from the land’ Zimbabweans were challenging both the authority of the state, and the foundations of the nation, premised upon the authentic rural counterpoint to the urban. Just as Munro (1998) suggests that the Zimbabwean state generated ideas about ‘agrarian citizenship’ as part of a nation-building project, urban citizenship required urban residents to conform to certain ways of being and living. The growing informality of the urban areas revealed the state’s growing inability to regulate this. But the people who the state seeks to regulate also organise politically and articulate their rejection of the bifurcated state, not just through their houses and livelihoods – but through political organisation and voice, in which they claim their own authenticity and legitimacy as urban citizens.

Murambatsvina therefore becomes understood as part of an on-going attempt by the state to impose its notion of urban/rural dichotomies, and in this way, reinforce the post-colonial state project, which was embedded in notions of modernity, productivity and development, binding together the rural and urban realms to produce a uniquely Zimbabwean subjectivity and norms of citizenship, at once held and contested by those at its heart.

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