Inclusive Cities and Housing: Analysis of stewardship instruments in Epworth, Zimbabwe

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Key words: informal settlement; squatter upgrading; the law of adverse possession; participation; standards; urban poverty; slum urban

ABSTRACT

This article makes an analysis of the stewardship instruments that have been put in place by the Government of Zimbabwe and the Epworth Local Board (ELB) as well as land occupiers in Epworth. Epworth was established as a settlement around 1892 and has continued to grow more on informal grounds than anything. Being at the edge of the capital city of Zimbabwe, Harare, this small town has remained outside the city's boundaries despite other places far distant relative to it being included in it. In effect, the small town was asked by the City of Harare to upgrade itself to 'reasonable urban standards' without exaggerated informality, as a condition for it being included. Efforts for upgrading were tried around 1982 but up to now, the 'programme' has not been completed. Incongruously, new cases of informal settlement have been recorded. Meanwhile, the local authority, in a bid to prevent 'free-riding' of its services by these settlers has embarked in some kind of levying them. The question is: Is the levying not somewhat legitimizing the illegitimate, who, legally somewhat 'own' Epworth taking the 'law of adverse possession, to context. By some qualitative research, the paper attempts to solicit answers to these questions interrogating literature. This invites some innovative thinking towards housing and urban populations in the face of urbanization dynamics. Stewardship being a concept to do with ownership, possession and caring becomes a 'thorny' issue where formality and informality are in a head-on collision.

1. INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

This article examines the stewardship instruments that have been put in place by informal land occupiers hence squatters in housing themselves vis-à-vis those tools the local authority of Epworth has also devised for or against this move. Epworth, as a peri-urban settlement and a satellite of Harare, the capital city has been a place in the centre of externalities of a big city (DSHZT, 2009). Epworth can be said to be a complex humanitarian crisis driven by institutionalised poor governance, corruption and politics (cf. Chenga, 2010). Since the late 1970s it has attracted a large number of poor homeless people. Numbers have grown from about

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20 000 people in 1980 to 123 250 by 2002 and presently the local board has lost count, but rough estimates put the population at around 500 000 (Chenga, 2010). It is against this milieu that Epworth has arrived at a situation whereby 70% of its 30 000 families are staying in informal settlements with the remainder in formal areas (DSHZT, 2009). The city is a centre of commerce, industry, transport, manufacturing, trade, recreation, sports and housing after which planning plays a central role in the fulfilment these deliverables (UN-HABITAT, 2009). Through the use of standards and legislative frameworks the development of liveable habitats is thus achieved (World Bank, 2004). High standards of living are traditionally taken synonymous with the city (Payne and Majale, 2004; Payne, 2000; 2002). For this reason, the concerns of the better-off populations are set as primarily marking the city. In the history of mankind and the city, concerns of the poor have often been regarded as peripheral. Planning, as an instrument in the hands of the better-off segments of the population hence the government, has been blamed for failing to create inclusive spaces in cities (UN-HABITAT, 2009; Tibaijuka, 2005; World Bank, 2004). An inclusive city can be defined as the spatial entity in which there is a just promotion for the livelihood and sustainable habitation of both the poor and the rich whose guiding philosophy for sustenance are productivity, equity and justice. In the era of increasing urbanization, inclusivity in urban centres becomes a primary goal for sustainability. Researchers and scholars like Payne (2002; 2000; 2004) and Tostensen, Tvedten and Vaa eds (2001) have in effect, advocated for the 'lowering of the ladder' with regard to standards guiding the development and management of urban centres so that they are no longer inhibitive for the tolerance of activities and settlement of the poor. This is in the face of contemporary urbanity characterized by increased informality (Chirisa, 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010a; Toriro, 2008). Africa is one of the worst affected regions in the world where this informality is wreaking havoc (Kessides, 2006; Muzvidziwa, 2005; Laleye and Ayeni, 2005).Compared to other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Zimbabwe seems to be one country where 'lowering the ladder' to take aboard the poor and their concerns has been suppressed and sometimes reversed (Chirisa, 2007; Tibaijuka, 2005). Yet the country underwent economic stagnation and decline lasting more than a decade (1997-2008). Poverty increased. Even the rural areas suffered in terms of the main activity – farming – due to the harsh environment posed by the controversial fast-track land resettlement programme by the government as well as the harsh climatic episodes in the same period (frequent droughts, unprecedented cyclonic and flooding conditions). These made rural areas difficult places for those who might have wished to stay there. Urban centres became more attractive for many. In this vein, a new demand for employment and livelihood activities, as well as housing in the urban centres, emerged (cf. Skinner, 2008; Chenga, 2010).

Stewardship implies the existence of an ethic of personal responsibility, an ethic of behaviour based on reverence for the Earth and a sense of obligation to future generations (Chirisa, 2010b). Williams and Magsumbol (2006) observe that definitions of stewardship are quite inconsistent and contextual. It can also imply being under the custodianship of a local authority (cf. Young,

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2007; Schnug et al, 2006). The stewardship principle, applied to housing is better understood in the context put by Trodin (undated) that:

> "Stewardship…is an aspect of Habitat II goal of sustainable development. Housing co-op members try to conserve and recycle resources; we house ourselves modestly, in the context of our societies; we plan and maintain our buildings to pass them own to the next generation."
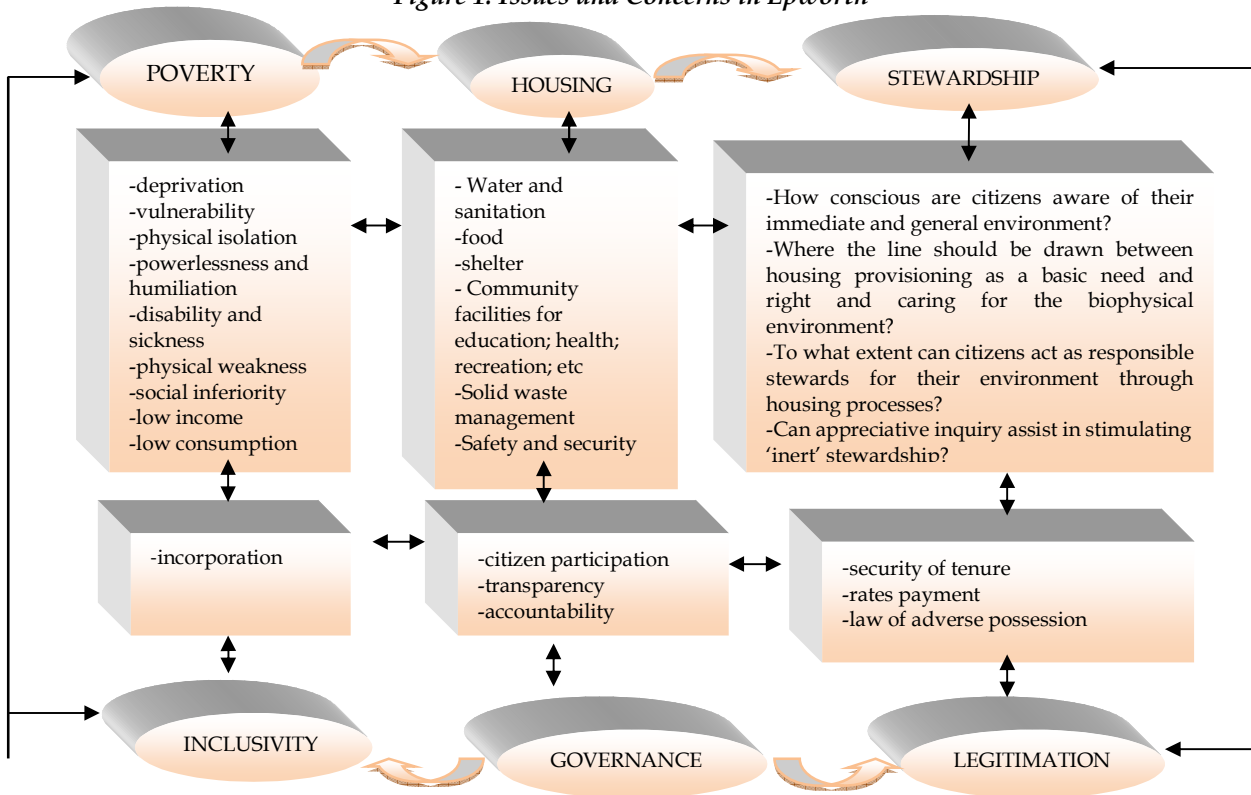
2. THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This discourse is based on some hypothesis drawn from the link between poverty, housing, and stewardship, law of adverse possession, legitimacy and governance (cf. Figure 1). Tannerfeldt and Ljung (2006) state many urban poor live in the outskirts of cities and Epworth is typical of a peri-urban settlement that emerged informally and has continued to grow in the same pattern of informality (cf. Ndlovu 2004); Mbiba, 2002). Manifestations of poverty include hunger, ill health, ignorance, discrimination, exclusion and denial of dignity (Tannerfeldt and Ljung, 2006; UNFPA, 2007). Urban poverty encompasses all conditions scientifically or materialistically proven as beneath the reasonable definition of human decency. Chambers (1997:13) defines poverty as

> "… a set of conditions where one faces deprivation (of not only wealth), social inferiority, physical weakness, disability and sickness, powerlessness, social isolation and humiliation".

Meanwhile, Townsend (1993) in Chambers (1997:48) argues that poverty has to be given a scientifically acceptable universal meaning and measurement" and hence defines it scientifically as "… low-income or often as low consumption which is more easily and reliably measured". Poverty is a relative term, which is both multifaceted and multidimensional (Chambers, 1997; Murowe and Chirisa, 2006; Kessides, 2006). It is a Marxian topic in that difficulties in conceptualizing it can be seen as part of the condition for its existence. The majority of Epworth residents live under the poverty datum line (Sigauke 2002a; 2002b). This poverty translates easily from the households to the local authority, Epworth Local Board (ELB), a local government entity created by the Government of Zimbabwe whose functions are in the custodianship of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MILGRUD). Figure 1 is a summary of the issues and concerns about Epworth.

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Figure 1: Issues and Concerns in Epworth

POVERTY

-deprivation
-vulnerability
-physical isolation
-powerlessness and humiliation
-disability and sickness
-physical weakness
-social inferiority
-low income
-low consumption

-incorporation

INCLUSIVITY

HOUSING

- Water and sanitation
-food
-shelter
- Community facilities for education; health; recreation; etc
-Solid waste management
-Safety and security

-citizen participation
-transparency
-accountability

GOVERNANCE

STEWARDSHIP

-How conscious are citizens aware of their immediate and general environment?
-Where the line should be drawn between housing provisioning as a basic need and right and caring for the biophysical environment?
-To what extent can citizens act as responsible stewards for their environment through housing processes?
-Can appreciative inquiry assist in stimulating 'inert' stewardship?

-security of tenure
-rates payment
-law of adverse possession

LEGITIMATION

Important to note is that housing in the context of poverty should not be viewed narrowly, of just having a roof over one's head (UN-HABITAT, 2008). In this aspect, SINA (2000) and Mafafo (2003) assert that housing covers aspects including the provision of protection from the elements and a suitable living space for its inhabitants; a house should have access to basic services and infrastructure, be well-located for economic and social opportunities and should be affordable. A house represents the different physical, social, economic and cultural dimensions of people's lives. It is a basic need ensuring the modicum of human decency and privacy. Exclusion from decent and affordable housing, for the majority of peri-urban residents is the hallmark of housing poverty in the majority of African countries (Chirisa, 2010a; 2010b; Mbiba, 2002). The stewardship concept is linked so much to housing and housing development and the sustainable development agenda gives the tie great strength (cf. Odero, 1993). Gurney (1997:54) at the National Housing Convention in Zimbabwe pointed out clearly that:
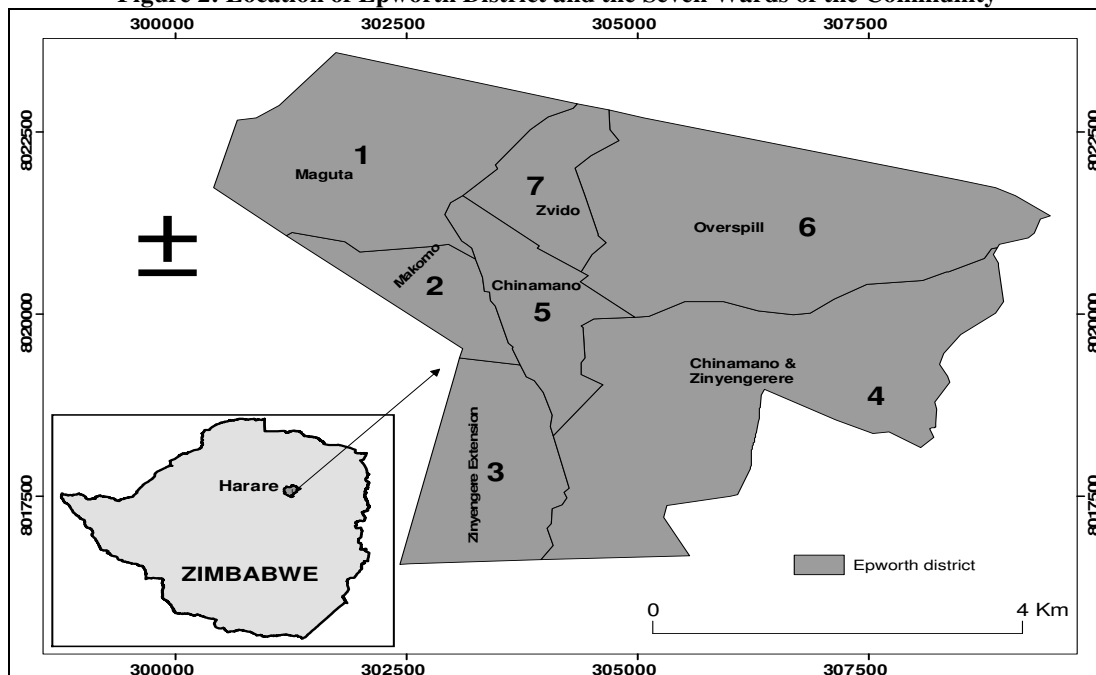
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"In all instances, it must be remembered that the natural environment is the primary source of satisfaction of our basic human needs. It is thus most important that the built environment is treated as an affordable amelioration of the natural environment and not as a strong competitor, whose success spells inevitable doom to the natural environment"

It can be deciphered from this citation that the ecological footprint problem (Wackernagel and William, 1996) can be a menace to the natural environment. Clearly the main constituent of the built environment is the housing component hence the need for putting to light the aspect of stewardship. The informal settlement of Epworth, depict certain critical patterns that reveal that communities not only depend on their environments but in the process of exploiting resources do harm the environment as well (Chirisa, 2010b). But there are also those who actually 'invest' in the environment, which raise questions about stewardship.

3. LOCATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF EPWORTH

Epworth settlement is found 15 kilometres outside the capital of Zimbabwe, Harare towards the east. It is easily accessible from the city centre and the eastern industrial employment nodes of Msasa and Ruwa. The area lies between 1,500 -1,600 metres in altitude. Relief consists of gently undulating ground interrupted by granite outcrops and picturesque balancing rocks that are very popular with tourists. Some of the most beautiful balancing rocks in Zimbabwe encrypted on (former) Zimbabwean bank notes are located in this local government area. Epworth covers about 3600 hectares in extent and was home to roughly 150,000 people by December 1997. Epworth is divided into 7 wards (see map, Figure 2). Wards 1 and 4, that is Muguta-Makomo and Chinamano-Zinyengere areas respectively, have predominantly residents linked to the early settlers and they are colloquially referred to as 'originals'. However, this does not mean the current occupant is an original settler as some of them have inherited from their parents (second or third generation). Wards 2, 3 and 5 are mainly composed of residents who moved into Epworth prior to the inception of the Local Board in 1986. Their areas are generally referred to as 'extensions,' for example; there is Muguta Extension, Makomo Extension, Chinamano Extension and so forth. These are said to have no link with the "originals" despite both of them being regularized by the local authority.

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Figure 2: Location of Epworth District and the Seven Wards of the Community

Source: Chanza and Chirisa (forthcoming)

Ward 7 is occupied by the largest group of illegal "settlers" including some small portions of other Wards and these areas are informally referred as ma-Gada. The word 'gada' is derived from a Shona ideophonic construction meaning some purposeless sitting. Their areas are informally referred to as 'Gada,' loosely translating to 'free riders.' The same thus described the tradition in the area (Ward 7) whereby people just settle wherever they wished without seeking the permission of the authorities. These residents are the illegal and informal settlers above are a new breed of squatters. The above two groups have almost all their plots regularised by the local authority with a few others on the official relocation list. The last and largest group occupies Ward 7 and some small portions of the other Wards.

4. ESTABLISHMENT AND GROWTH OF EPWORTH

The state of housing and habitat in the peri-urban settlement of Epworth shows that the poor tend to be less of good stewards than the better-off, because when people adequate financial as well as other resources they often have little choice, but to take what they can from the environment to meet their needs without consideration for the future (Chirisa 2010b). Discernible in the way people settled and have continued settle is some aspect related to a concept known as the 'law of

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adverse possession'. The term describes a situation whereby people just settle wherever they wish without seeking the permission of the authorities. After some time of this occupation they become so entrenched into the settlement system are seem quite legitimate. Rent payment provides some legal ground to this effect. In Epworth, the payment of rents by tenants to the landlords has created a serious gap between the local authority and these informal settlers. The landlords pay rates to the Local Board. The tenants and sub-tenants remain unrecognised ELB, leading to the raising of critical questions regarding their legitimacy and how governance issues are to be operationalised (cf. (DSHZT, 2009).

The settlement was founded and established in 1892, when the British South Africa Company, (the then governing authority) granted the Methodist Wesleyan Mission, Epworth Farm. In 1908 the Mission purchased two adjoining farms to cover what is present day known as Epworth. According to Butcher (1993) by 1950, the settlement had about 500 families who subscribed to the Mission values and legitimately owned 4000m^2 of land each allocated by the Mission for residential and cropping purposes. During the peak of the liberation war (1966-1979), there was an influx of people into Epworth by those who were fleeing their rural areas for various reasons associated with the war as they found it easier to settle in Epworth as there was no direct local authority that could control movement of people and development like in other urban archetypal settlements (Nyamvura and Brown, 1999; DSHZT, 2009). Epworth was also a natural choice as a destination because of its proximity to the capital where these people would seek new opportunities (Butcher, 1993; DSHZT, 2009). The church acquired three farms in the area namely Epworth, Greenwood and Adelaide. Throughout the colonial years the settlement grew as a Church Mission. Then it consisted of two main villages, that is, Chiremba (Muguta and Makomo) and Chinzungu (Chinamano and Zinyengere).

At the inception of the Local Board in 1986, Epworth had about 5,000 residential stands that were regularised in situ. For the residents who had settled in areas that were deemed inhabitable, land was identified, planned and serviced and these were relocated. This exercise ended up creating about 6,000 residential stands for the whole of Epworth. But, a few informal homesteads sprouted around this time. The government chipped in, demolished the illegal structures and relocated the settlers to other areas outside Epworth (ELB, 2002). By 2007, Epworth had a population of around 300 000 in its seven Wards with three distinct characters of residents.

Overall, the transition to majority rule in Zimbabwe in 1980 saw the lifting of decades of racial restrictions to the 'right to the city' (cf. Tibaijuka, 2005). More people entered the cities in search of economic opportunities. In this euphoria, Epworth with its informal set-up provided easy ground for the establishment of urban living by most new arrivals from the rural areas or those who could not cope with the pressure of the big city, Harare (Butcher, 1993). There was unprecedented growth in the town (cf. Jenkins, 2006). The Methodist church decided to donate part of its Epworth Mission land to the government for the subsequent establishment of a local

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government structure (Butcher, 1993; Chenga, 2010). The central government directed a freeze of all unpermitted new developments in the area (ELB, 1987). Epworth was formalized into an urban residential area in 1983. ELB was created by 1986. Its main task was to administer and regulate the growth of the settlement. In addition, it was to upgrade and improve the area that had grown informally. This was to be achieved on a non-economical basis, since most people in the area were reckoned as poor; they had failed to acquire land and decent housing in Harare. The inception of the local board saw the unveiling of regularization and formalisation initiatives whereupon new extensions were established to decongest overcrowded areas.

Meanwhile, the formalisation process resulted in Epworth becoming somewhat 'attractive', hence the continued influx of more people (DSHZT, 2009). This culminated in a cumulative causation, which saw the emergence of more informality as people occupied the remaining open spaces. These uncontrolled developments gave birth to areas that are now popularly known as Ma-Gada. Despite Epworth having acquired a local government board status in 1986, the settlement has hardly progressed beyond its squatter camp outlook. Apart from the two tarred main feeder roads much of the intricate jig-saw puzzle of hovels called Epworth are linked by makeshift nameless dust roads and paths. Home-owners have no title deeds, electricity and access to tap water and the spectre of displacement forever looms.

5. THE DECENT HOUSING ISSUE AND POVERTY IN EPWORTH

In the context of urban poverty in Epworth, most of the slum dwellers are trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty. This is a result of low labour productivity, which is part a function of an inadequate supply of physical capital (Sigauke 2002a; 2002b). But the shortage of capital is attributable in large measure to persistently low levels of saving-caused in turn by low income, thus completing the vicious circle of poverty (cf. Skinner, 2008). This is patent at both household and local authority levels as explained by poor revenue generation and levying capabilities by the ELB hence free riding of a number of services by the poor in its jurisdiction (Chenga 2010; DSHZT, 2009). Jordan (1984) asserts that urban local authorities receive revenue from a number of sources which come in the form of rates, supplementary charges and tariffs. Quite a significant number of the residents in Epworth are little skilled, hence have no formal employment. Most work in Harare's northern medium- and low-density suburbs like Greendale, Hatfield, and Eastlea where they sell their labour as either domestic workers, security guards for some private companies or part-time labourers in their farm fields of residents there. Squatter settlements are documented as having high levels of health problems, poverty and criminal activities (Chirisa, 2010a; Tannerfeldt and Ljung, 2006; Muzvidziwa, 2005; Herald, 9 November 2010). Over the years Epworth has been labelled as a haven of criminals (Chenga, 2010).

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The poverty of local authority poses some administrative problems, the mere fact that residents are not paying rates (Chenga, 2010; DSHZT, 2009). One of the reasons by residents for not paying rates is that the local authority is not servicing their settlement (Nyamvura and Brown, 1999). Ward 7 seems to be the most problematic section of the settlement. Free-riding by the land occupiers is very rampant. The place is known is MaGada. 'Gada,' loosely translates to 'free riders.' These residents are the illegal and informal settlers (new breed) and their settling in the area for free implies that they are depriving the Local authority of its constitutional dues, hence its being poverty stricken (Sigauke 2002a; 2002b).

Lack of title deeds by residents in all wards has been a critical; factor restricting Epworth residents from paying development levies charged by the local board (Munzwa, Chirisa and Madzivanzira, 2007). Illegal settlers are not interested in investing their resources to properties they do not possess. Of interest to note is that the officially approved residential stands have not increased in any significant manner from the originally regularised 6000 stands (ELB, 2007). Illegal settlements have continued to flourish over the years thus hindering incorporating a regularised Epworth town into City of Harare. By 2010, close to 70% of the Epworth residents largely live in overcrowded non-permitted, unplanned and unserviced areas (Chenga, 2010; cf. Gurney, 1997).

Up until the early 1980s, the Methodist Church, which was grappling with the ever increasing population of Epworth, ended up donating a larger part of Epworth to central government in 1983. The Zimbabwean Government that had assumed power only three years earlier welcomed the donation; directed a freeze of all non-permitted new developments; took an aerial photograph of the whole settlement and undertook an ambitious programme to develop the area in situ for eventual incorporation into Harare City (ELB, 1987; Butcher, 1993). Being at the edge of the capital city of Zimbabwe, Harare's urban Municipal boundary, this small town of Epworth has remained outside the city's boundaries despite other places far distant relative to it being included in it. In effect, the small town was asked by the City of Harare to upgrade itself to 'reasonable urban standards' without exaggerated informality, as a condition for it being included. Efforts for upgrading were tried around 1982 but up to now, the 'programme' has not been completed (cf Toriro, 2008). In this vein, the matter of concern is that illegal and informal settlements have continued to flourish despite the establishment of the ELB whose very purpose of establishment was to ensure that no future non-permitted development would take place in the

After the Operation Murambatsvina in 2005[1], the town of Epworth has been characterized by a number of housing challenges. These have been magnified by the population increase.

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[1] The year when the government mooted and implemented Operation Murambatsvina which was a wholesale clearance campaign against illegal settlements and slums (Toriro, 2007; Chenga, 2010)

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Upgrading for inclusivity has been retarded by the poverty experienced by the residents and the local authority. It has been very difficult from the late 1990s to date to mobilize construction and maintenance of the town through external funding (Chenga, 2010). Incorporating Epworth into Harare would not tantamount to ruralising the city. Consequently, the peri-urban settlement has grown to be a typical congested rural setup with services including water, power and sewer being shoddily supplied. There is stark inability by the town to meet existing urban standards (Toriro, 2008). The ELB is applying housing standards in formal urban areas like Harare and Chitungwiza and regularization is very costly. As well, managing new cases of illegal settlement in Epworth has proved very difficult (Chenga 2010). This has been politicised to some extent. Epworth remaining organic as it is, means the the poor settlement is used by politicians for their desires. The fact that local board, until recently, was run by government appointees means there was a lot of political manipulation used (Munzwa, Chirisa and Madzivanzira, 2007) - patronage or clientilism. There has always been ambivalence – to develop it or not to. However the question of urban standards remains central to the debate, determining issues of affordability, sustainability, viability, acceptability and relevance of the settlement.

5.1 Upgrading efforts in Epworth: key dates and actors

On the whole, development of towns and cities is often episodic, responding to events and cycles of political, economic and sometimes cultural waves and change (cf. Svendsen, 2009). Epworth evolved in resemblance of 'organic' growth which was in part to gain from the Squatter Upgrading Scheme adopted at independence in the early 1980s (ELB, 1987; Butcher, 1993). Following the 1985, cholera outbreak, the then Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MILGRUD) commenced upgrading the water and sanitation supply under the supervision of the Blair Research Laboratories (BRL) which was funded by the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare (MOHCW) (Nyamvura and Brown, 1999). In 1986, the Epworth, Adelaide and Glenwood farms were gazetted as Epworth Local Government Area and Central Government appointed the Epworth Local Board responsible for administration of the settlement. For effective grass roots participation in upgrading Epworth, four Area Development Committees (ADC) were elected –one each for Muguta and extension, Makomo and extension, Zinyengere and extension and Chinamano and extension. The Finance, Works and Planning sub-committees were set up. The Planning sub-committee was responsible for the approval of building plans, development permits and layout plans. It dealt with work in progress e.g. implementation problems faced by the contactor, new works, recommending next development stages and maintenance work. This was a positive move towards upgrading the Epworth settlement.

It must be noted that when the government took over the management of Epworth in 1986, the area did not have public utilities such as water, sewer, electricity and rubbish collection. Upon taking over the management of the area, the government's Department of Physical Planning

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(DPP) conducted a socio-economic survey and a general land use survey. The results briefly showed that 71% of residents used unprotected wells or stream water for their domestic water consumption, 94% used pit toilets or bush for personal sanitation. The serious risk of well water being polluted by nearby pit toilets and, more particularly, by surface run-off was obvious. There were two primary schools, one ill-equipped clinic with one trained nurse, and one police post with four constables. Physically, much of the land in Epworth was unsuitable for building development. Approximately 700 existing homes were situated on such unsuitable land. Compounding the difficulties of the topography, Epworth is located on the eastern side of Harare, across the city from high density/low income housing. As such, bulk supplies of water, electricity and sewer required to improve living conditions were not available in this side are stands were on septic tanks (cf. Skinner, 2008). Hence upgrading Epworth meant massive capital investment.

A figure of 290 protected tube wells and 1000 toilets were constructed in 1987 (Nyamvura and Brown, 1999). The wells were provided at a ratio of one well to ten households. They were sited in future road reserves public open spaces or next to community facilities, e.g. schools, market places and similar and dug by the locals with supervision from BRL. Wells were fitted with Blair hand pumps. These had low capital cost and low maintenance requirements and to be serviced by the locals with supervision from BRL. Blair toilets were also constructed. These were located within 8 metres of the back boundary of the stand and aligned in straight lines so that the tanker could easily drive between rows of toilets dislodging each unit as it went along the alignment of toilets also meant it would be possible in future to install sewer lines. A number of miscellaneous developments were implemented; tower lighting, tarred roads, more schools. The total investment for infrastructure committed by the Ministry by 1988 was Z$76 million the about £ 5 million (Nyamvura and Brown, 1999).

By 2007, it was reported that the Local Board was finding it impossible to carry out planned developmental projects because the informal settlers sat on most of the sites earmarked for the projects and this only served to trap the informal settlers in a vicious circle (ELB, 2007). In 2008, Epworth had over 18 000 informal/illegal settlers, some of them sitting on school sites, hospital sites, electricity substation and other areas earmarked for various developmental projects. Of interest to note is that the officially approved residential stands have not increased in any significant manner from the originally regularised 6000 stands (ELB, 2007). Again in 2008 were the controversial Harmonised Elections in which Parliamentary, Presidential and Local Government elections were conducted in simultaneity. The elections brought in a lot of unprecedented developments to Epworth (cf. Munzwa et al, 2007). For the first time they could now have councillors instead of government-appointed commissioners (ibid.). In the history of the governance of the places, this was a major development. It seems that the general economic decline was an edge to the town's upgrade and/ upsurge and growth.

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It must be underscored that the Government's decision not to bulldoze Epworth helped in meeting the basic shelter needs of the urban poor. Nyamvura and Brown (1999) document that, Plan International has been heavily involved in constructing market stalls, sewer, electricity, water reticulation and shopping centres, tower lighting for two administrative districts, educational sponsorship for 1000 children, started Women's Clubs, provision of book grants for two primary schools and organizing management workshops for women's groups. World Vision did its work through the Epworth Local Board in training management, promotion of drama groups and co- ordination of churches, concentrating in Chinamano extension. The Zimbabwe Women's Bureau (ZWB) developed a women's soap making co-operative. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Society made provision of toilet kits for residents to construct their own toilets. Help-Age whose target group was those 60 years and above provided food grants, services, water toilet construction and clothing.

Mututu (1999) narrates that in 1997, Housing People of Zimbabwe (HPZ) visited a number of income projects that were being supported by ZWB since it had been working already in the area. HPZ asked ZWB to mobilize families that were interested in a housing improvement scheme. By 1999 five housing cooperatives had been established in the area including Tangenhamo which had 15 members, Kushinga, 18 members, Tichaedza, 13 members, Chiremba, 15 members and Shungu which had 16 members. All these cooperatives had to invest in the money market through the Housing Cooperative Fund managed by HPZ. By mid-1999, two cooperatives had invested Z$42,000 earning up to Z$1,300 interest per month. Mututu shows further that in a bid to build affordable houses appropriate materials like the stabilised soil blocks (SSB) were recommended and housing cooperative members were taken to an exhibition of housing in Epworth built by a local NGO, Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) using SSB. The cooperative members approved this technology and some of these members were trained to train others. Habitat for Humanity, according to Mututu, was providing finance for buying windows and door frames, roofing sheets, glazing and other materials; local builders who had undergone training by HPZ and ITDG did the construction.

All the above projects indicate the commitment that the Government and other players had in assisting Epworth out of its quagmire. One can say this was a big stewardship enterprise, albeit done in the spirit of welfare developmentalism. With the collapse of the welfare state in Zimbabwe as elsewhere, efforts by citizens become so important. ELB has had a greater challenge of more and more homeless and the poor coming to its place. How then should the local authority cope? In literature, innovative responses for housing the poor centre around finding alternatives to eviction; regulation; strategic use of planning tools to influence development actors and partnerships between public agencies and informal businesses to manage public space and provide services (Tannerfeldt and Ljung, 2006; Muzvidziwa, 2005; UN-

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HABITAT, 2009). This is because the responding to informality by conventional approaches to land administration and regulation has proved futile in many countries, Zimbabwe included (ibid.). What then are some of the options available for a place as organic as Epworth?

6. TOWARDS INNOVATIVE THINKING FOR HOUSING THE POOR

To enhance stewardship by Epworth residents and also the ELB there is an overall need to redefine land tenure in the town, perhaps to give forty nine year leases to the residents. This will probably help in revenue generation hence financial planning by the local authority. Residents must feel to be 'responsible citizens' with positive values of habitats and respective attitudes to their protection for the benefit of future generations. The poor have a right to the city. In this respect, urban planning approaches that allow for regularization in situ are required as alternatives to eviction. Typical to this is the use of accommodative planning. The global trend has been that of accepting and accommodating informality. Accommodative urban planning is a very critical ingredient for the health of emerging and existing peri-urban towns like Epworth. It offers a better platform for which different stakeholders are channelled in managing the affairs of their plots, neighbourhoods and towns. Accommodative planning recognises that informal activities are vital to the urban economy and livelihoods of many urban residents, especially when governments cannot provide safety nets to sustain households above the poverty line.

Regulation and upgrading of informally developed areas is preferable to neglect or demolition. Nyamvura and Brown (1999 asserts that regularisation implies recognition and provision of secure tenure, while upgrading focuses on the provision or improvement of basic services, though it may involve re-planning and redevelopment to ensure compliance with planning and building regulations. Regulation and upgrading allows for formalisation of tenure, through provision of title to individual plots. This is addresses housing needs to the poor because titles give land owners rights and political voice, are guaranteed by the state. Furthermore, this approach may enable owners to borrow using the property as collateral, and therefore are expected to encourage investment. Title registration accompanied by cadastre is expected to facilitate planning by providing decision-makers with relevant information and accurate maps.

Working with informal economic actors to manage public space and provide services. Informal economic actors include those engaged in retail trade and related services, manufacturing and repair services, as well as providers of transport, water and other services. The focus should thus aim at developing coherent policies that can guide the planning, regulation and day-to-day management of informal economic enterprises and actors. As noted from the Epworth experience a host of NGOs have been operating for years now, with some having close to a decade. However, little has been done to foster widespread upgrading of the settlement. Hence if the poor are to be housed and if Epworth is to be successfully integrated into Harare, there is need for coordination of resources from the civic society, for development to be visible. The

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other way could be to adopt housing as a community building agenda and not as walls and roofs over people's heads. Housing as community building agenda sees governing authorities and the people working together; through labour-based housing schemes which address the need of the poor and in a way promote solidarity among residents. Housing development ought to be viewed through the lens of environmental stewardship if a place's sustainability is to be ensured; stakeholders (both hidden and natural) are the principal players to the functionality of that place.

7. CONCLUSION

Over the years, the peri-urban settlement of Epworth have been growing is terms of spatial extension. The massive land uptake has been that of residential development. Epworth has continued to experience a huge influx of in-migrants of chiefly the poor background hence the growth of numerous informal dwellers in the area. The haphazard nature of Epworth the settlement makes it very difficult to tell the spatial organization in terms of residential differentiation. Overall, it is a mosaic of mixed densities in space that one sees in Epworth. Epworth has had new informal settlements growing outside the upgraded zone. There is a growing need to address the plight of the urban poor basing on rights-based approaches that does not put the poor's plight peripheral. Emerging from this discourse in favvpour of the sustainable growth of Epworth is the need to accommodate the zero-to-low income groups so as to create inclusivity. Inclusive cities promote the livelihood, at the same time providing sustainable habitation to both the poor and the rich. These are cities based on responsiveness and the respect of the fundamental principles of equity and justice.

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