

Full Length Research Paper

Planning conflicts at the border: Interrogating Umguza-Bulawayo peri-urban survival strategies by large and small plot-holder farmers in Zimbabwe

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This paper explores and examines the different perceptions, attitudes and practices by the large and small plot-holder farmers in the Umguza-Bulawayo peri-urban. The study emanates from the fact that there is lack in the uniformitarian approach in increasing subdivisions of plots in the Umguza-Bulawayo boundary. Some plot-holders, who are commercial-biased, are ready to subdivide their pieces of land while others are resisting it. The resisters have their strong reasons for not letting go their land. The reasons include title and livelihoods. Such resistance is expected yet little remains understood in both literature and practice of clinging to land at the city-edge as the urban boundary shifts into rural space. The paper has been written on the basis of the land speculation theory which postulates that farmers will try as much as possible to keep the land they have always held until the speculative prices are offered to them yet the social and psychological attachments to pieces of properties and assets are often downplayed. It seeks to map the other arguments for or against this theory, in a bid to advocate for a midway approach to urban expansion processes that respect the rights of landholders. Landholders have planning rights. The paper makes use of data gathered via in-depth interviews with the landholders between June and November 2011.

Key words: Urban expansion, peri-urban, subdivision, livelihoods, planning conflicts.

INTRODUCTION

The policy debate about urban expansion and its implications is not new. The main issue has been whether to resist or allow this expansion. In this urban expansion policy debate, Angel et al. (2005) have discussed Urban Growth Management Initiative whose central objective is to examine the available policy options for confronting the projected urban expansion in the cities of developing countries where the initiative seeks an answer to the question of what can and should be done about it. It is therefore of paramount importance to first understand the key dimensions of this expansion as it encroach the rural neighbourhoods. Urban expansion can assume different forms. Two of the most

common forms include the star-shaped or elongated cities which result from the expansion taking place along corridors. Secondly, cities may expand to peripheral areas which are closest to the city centre, resulting in a more-or-less circular city. This study seeks to generate new data for the dimensions of peri-urban land uses under the conflicting interests between small and relatively large plot holders under the circumstances of expanding cities of the developing-country and the forces shaping this.

This paper explores and examines the different perceptions, attitudes and practices by the large and small plot-holder farmers in the Umguza-Bulawayo peri-urban which

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will explain the inevitable lack of uniformity in the nature and character of the increasing subdivisions of plots in the Umguza-Bulawayo boundary. The planning implications of this lack of uniformity will be highlighted. It is noted that a number of plot-holders commercial-biased, are ready to subdivide their pieces of land while others are resisting it. Central to the resistance are issues of title, which smallholders have and are subject to statutorily submitting applications for subdivision to the local authority, and livelihoods. The landholders have planning rights, to hold or release their land so long they abide by the planning regulatory procedures.

Bulawayo's peri-urban area of Rangemore is used as a case reference of the study. This area was initially designated for both residential as well as agricultural purposes. Practicing of agriculture was not the key economic activity in the area since most of the coloureds who resided there were working in the city. In general terms, peri-urban simply refers to the urban fringe and the geographic edge of cities as a place. It also refers to the interface between rural and urban activities, institutions and perspectives (Marshall et al., 2009). Specific feature that has been identified as characterizing peri-urban is agricultural activities. Indeed, as typified by many African cities, households closest to the city practice intensive agriculture and it is the greater part of their livelihoods. Overall, the peri-urban is still conceptualised as a heterogeneous mix of urban and rural features (Marshall et al., 2009). These mixed features are dominated by a whole range of high, and often increasing, population density, small landholdings, rich countryside homes, poor slums, diverse sources of income, a lack of regulation, contested land tenure rights, uncoordinated conversion of farmland to housing, pollution, environmental problems, intensified resource exploitation, considerable economic dynamism and a widespread lack of service provision (Simon et al., 2003). One conceptualisation of peri-urban is that it is an area outside existing urban agglomeration where major changes are taking place over space and time (Dupont, 2005). Picking up on the notion of change and time in peri-urban areas, urban expansion is the critical cause as the need for space for housing development intensifies.

The paper makes use of data gathered via in-depth interviews with the landholders between June and November 2011. For this study, Upper Rangemore was purposively selected among other peri-urban areas of the city of Bulawayo such as Aisleby, Lower Rangemore and Good Hope which are still used for agricultural purposes. Subdivision is only taking place in Upper Rangemore as of yet, hence it fits answering research questions of this study. Primary data was gathered from questionnaire surveys, guided interviews, and unstructured, photograph shooting and direct observation. Secondary data was gathered through desk study of documentary sources such as electronic publications, old newspapers, and library sources. This study adopted a descriptive and

analytical approach in unearthing survival strategies by large and small plot-holder farmers in Rangemore in Bulawayo. Data collection was done between June and November 2011. By using a qualitative structured interview approach, the respondents explained and shared their experiences about varying survival strategies in the urban fringes of the city of Bulawayo. Use of open-ended questions helped in achieving this (cf. Baker, 1994) as the research required some private and classified information as well as perceptions.

The respondent classes included large and small plot-holders, subdividing and non subdividing plot-holders. To get fairly representative views and attitudes of non subdividing plot owners, 10 plots were purposively selected to be interviewed. In addition, five subdivided plots with current housing developments were also purposively selected for the interviews. On these five, the plot owners and 8 households from each (selected through a random sampling system) were interviewed. Thus, a total of 47 individual respondents, excluding key informants, were interviewed in Upper Rangemore. Quantitative methods were used to estimate the levels of particular attributes such as those involving financial transactions and determination of the sizes of all selected plot holdings in the area, while qualitative methods were used to explain such levels. To analyze gathered data Microsoft Excel, and coding methods and comparative analysis were used. Triangulation process was done to cater for data in both quantitative and qualitative formats. In cases where responses were noted down by the researcher, narratology was used to report these speeches.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The land speculation theory postulates that farmers will try as much as possible to keep the land they have always held until speculative prices are offered to them yet the social and psychological attachments to pieces of properties and assets are often downplayed. Land speculation was identified by the Forth National Development Plan of Nigeria (1981-85) as a barrier to the realization of an organized land market (Rikko and Dung-Gwom, 2006). Important to note is the fact that land speculation in town boundaries increases with leap-frogging city expansion. Peri-urban farmers who are also land conservationists are seriously disturbed by city expansion tendencies and they are more likely to resist release of land to urbanization forces regardless of land speculation with lucrative land prices. On the other note, when speculative prices are offered, some small-scale land holders may opt to sell or subdivide their plots with the hope to insulate themselves from the urban expansion wave which definitely destabilizes peri-urban farming.

Urban expansion is not immune from undesirable consequences. When regarded as a place, the peri-urban often becomes a site of expulsion with poor people being expelled or pushed out of the city (Marshall et al., 2009). This rapid growth of peri-urban has outstripped the city authorities' ability to cope with pressure (Simon et al., 2003), especially where the peripheral region is not under the jurisdictions of the municipality in question (as that of Bulawayo's Rangemore) but of the adjacent rural councils. Of importance to note is the fact that there is no precedence for the city of Bulawayo to collaborate with its rural outskirts (which are under Umguza District) for a common cause. Because of food shortage in Bulawayo metropolitan region, peri-urban farming has been encouraged alongside urban agriculture. The hope was to address food needs for both urban and peri-urban residents. Unlike other peri-urban areas such as those of Epworth in Harare, Rangemore does not have much informal settlement eruptions. The key characteristics of the area are the dilapidating roads, buildings, and lack of water sources. It is of paramount importance to note that small-scale land holders own title deeds. Thus, the city of Bulawayo will have to compensate these if it is to acquire land for city development.

According to Angel et al. (2005), most blame is directed at expansive, leapfrogging "greenfield" development which goes on to reduce both access and view of open space; it encroaches on sensitive environments and on prized farmland; and it increases alienation, social fragmentation, and both economic and racial segregation. However, some of these claims are highly contextual. Racial and economic segregation was demonstrable in Rangemore since it was occupied by the coloureds who were of the middleclass socio-economically. In Bulawayo for example, peri-urban farming has been faced with serious water shortage which is the common problem of the whole region.

Peri-urban conflicts

Peri-urban land-use conflicts are a common cause of concern for landscape planners in today cities. It is thus crucial that city fathers and land use planners better equip themselves with close understanding of these conflicts in order to make optimal decisions on land-use allocations as well as on conflict management. The most common conflicts in the peri-urban areas are as a result of differing interests. As cities expand, different opportunities arise for different classes of peri-urban residents leading to conflicting interests. For instance, failing peri-urban farmers will see plot acquisition by city authorities as beneficial if they are to be compensated, yet passionate and improvising peri-urban farmers will see this move as a great disturbance of their agro business. Pressure groups representing respective interests outlined above will always clutch. Another type of peri-

urban conflict is when local authorities and involved stakeholders do not see with the same eye. Taking it from Rangemore scenario, the rural district under which Rangemore falls under have conflicting interests with the city of Bulawayo especially considering the fact that the city needs land to accommodate expansion yet the district is worried about loss of revenue base if Rangemore plots are taken away. Conflicts of this nature require dialogue by the relevant stakeholders to discuss and agree on the compromises to be incurred. Von der Dunk et al. (2011) note that such conflicts, however, are complex entities and as such, a common approach for better understanding complex entities is to categorize them into a limited number of types. Table 1 shows six conflict types described with main issues and examples adapted from Von der Dunk et al. (2011).

It is not always the case that the conflicts discussed above will affect an area at the same time. Other sources of conflicts such as noise pollution from cars, trains and industrial compounds; visual blight by man-made landscape elements like overhead transmission lines; and health hazards where residents will be fearing negative impacts from non-ionizing radiation emitted by mobile phone antennas are most common in the developed-country cities. In the developing world's peri-urban lands, the common problems comprise of odour, dust and light pollution coming from farming activities and brickworks which emits dust. In addition, changes to the neighbourhood structure are a cause of concern. Long-term residents are either concerned with a high influx of new residents with different ethnical or religious background. Changes such as nature conservation may also cause peri-urban conflict. Nature conservationists protest against the construction of gravel pits, residential houses, or mountain-bike trails, yet peri-urban farmers are more concerned with expanding their farming land and they do not want to hear about city expansion lest their agric business become extinct.

Food security in both urban and peri-urban areas remains a crucial issue in the livelihoods conceptualization in most African cities. The livelihoods debate is encapsulate varying peri-urban farmers' lifestyles. Previous studies showed that peri-urban agriculture in Hyderabad plays an important role in the livelihoods of a diverse group of people from different castes, religions and social classes (Buechler and Devi, 2002). These livelihood activities are subject to transition and are influenced by the constant growth of the city, with resulting effects like increasing pollution, growth of urban poverty, food insecurity and malnutrition. To some farmers, such disturbances will lead to resistance to any proposed change. Conflict of interest becomes prevalent in the sense that some landholders see opportunities as cities encroach their properties. Thus, they are turned into urbanites since they will gain space for housing stands. However, peri-urban agriculture remains an important livelihood activity (FAO, 2008). It contributes food

Table 1. The six conflict types described with main issues and examples.

Conflict type	Main issues	Examples
Noise pollution	Noise nuisance Noise (cars) Noise (from recreational activities)	Residents are exposed to noise emissions from cars, trains, industrial compounds, or recreational activities like football matches
Visual blight	Negative visual impact Negative visual impact (buildings) Negative visual impact (energy facilities)	Reduction of the scenic beauty of the land- and townscape by man-made landscape elements like residential houses or overhead transmission lines
Health hazards	Health concerns Health concerns (radiation)	Residents fear negative health impacts from e.g. non-ionizing radiation emitted by mobile phone antennas
Nature conservation	Nature conservation Nature conservation (Disturbance of habitat) Nature conservation (Changes to natural environment)	Nature conservationists protest against the construction of gravel pits, residential houses, or mountain-bike trails
Preservation of the past	Changes to built environment Changes to the natural environment	Prominent landmarks like old buildings are altered or removed for the sake of development
Changes to the neighbourhood	Threat to quarter reputation Reduction of real estate	Long-term residents are either concerned with a high influx of new residents with different ethnical or religious background, or with the advent of urban land uses (e.g. contact bars) in formerly rural areas
Other	Odor Dust Light pollution	Hog farms emit odor; brickworks emit dust, advertisement signs cause light pollution

Source: Von der Dunk et al., 2011.

security and healthy nutrition for the urban population is probably its most important asset.

STUDY RESULTS: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This study has discovered that some of the commercial-biased plot-holders are ready to subdivide their pieces of land while others are resisting the move. Those in resistance have various reasons why they cannot let go their land including issues of title and livelihoods. Such resistance is expected yet little remains understood in both literature and practice of clinging to land at the city-edge as the urban boundary shifts into rural space. It turned out that the whole of Rangemore consisted of small-holdings save for one somewhat larger farm called Sunnydale. In some plots, residential settlements have now been established there through subdivision. After 1980 a process of racial succession took place with Blacks buying all the properties from the Colored owners. Figure 1 shows that most of the plots were bought during the eighties. Two thirds of the plots were purchased 26 to

30 years ago, while four bought 31 to 35 years ago.

Earlier plot usage

Besides other agricultural practices, all of the plots were primarily used for residence as confirmed by the survey carried out. To find out how the other space (inside the plots) was being used by the earlier inhabitants of the area, the researcher asked the holders about the conditions in which they found their plots upon purchase and occupation. An in-depth interview of one smallholder who refused to be identified by name for ethical reasons revealed that aside residential, two more uses were identified as marketing gardening/horticulture and animal keeping. A total of seven plot owners pointed out that agriculture was a dominant activity as the previous owners used to practice it. Three plots were also used for both animal keeping and market gardening. One old man who kept cattle in his plot reiterated that,

“...being an old man as you witness it yourself, I cannot

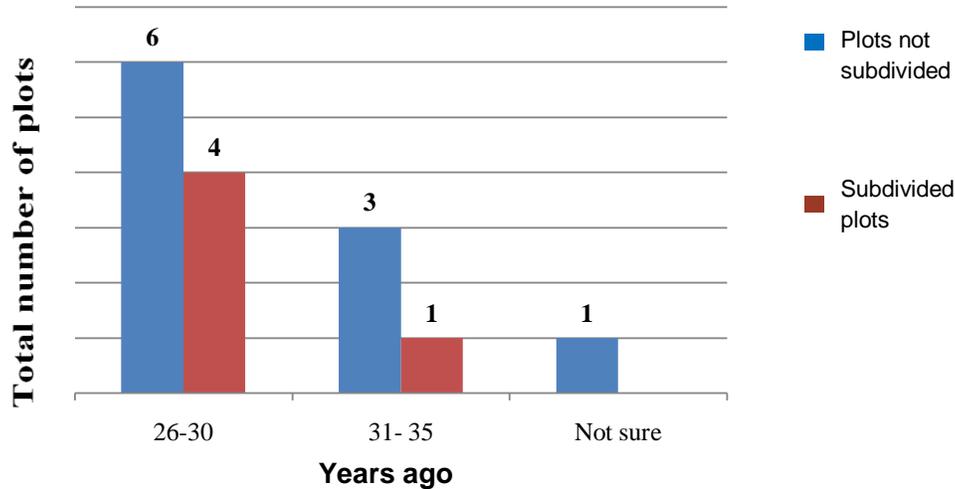


Figure 1. Years since plot was purchased.
Source: Fieldwork, 2011.

plough my plot anymore. I have no strength and the rains are erratic. So I have resorted to keeping my small herd of cattle which give me milk for consumption with my little grand children.”

Observation showed that besides being used as grazing land, such plots which lied idle would better be used to accommodate the expanding city which has got high demand for developable land.

Conditions of plot ownership

The discussions held with plot holders revealed that there are no conditions, be it for development or living, by which they are to abide as they continue residing there. Because Rangemore falls under Umguza Rural District Council, planning regulations and development conditions are not enforceable. So owners think they can do whatever they please on their own plots. One plot owner however remarked that they were told not to let their cattle wander onto other people’s property. Ownership of plots is ascertained by the holding of title deeds which means in order to subdivide, land holders will have to apply as provisioned in the Regional Town and County Planning Act of 1996. All owners of the larger plots said they had such deeds. However, new subdivisions occupiers claimed that they did not have such title. Instead they have only an ‘Agreement of Sale’ as proof of ownership which is provided upon purchase of stand.

Livelihood activities of small holdings

Livelihood activities of plot holders who have not yet and are resisting subdivision of their plots were captured. This

was done so as to figure out the justification and satisfaction of carrying on with farming. Knowing the livelihoods standing of these plot owners helps the researcher to know the capacity of utilization of the respective plots. It would also help map out the intensity of the need to subdivide the plots by the individual owners. Livelihoods source standing categories which were found to be existing in the field are 5 and these are farming (full time); self employed; unemployed; farmer and formally employed; and farmer and self employed of which the distribution is 5, 1, 1, 2 and 1, respectively. For the purpose of this study, employment refers to having a formal job in any organisation, industry, or sector in the city. The self employed pointed out to be getting income form services such as welding, car hire, and grinding mill among others. This data is presented in Figure 2. One case of ‘the unemployed’ did not do farming except small gardening for vegetables, since they had children working and they kept the property for residential purposes.

Important to note is a comment made by one old man (unemployed and not farming) who was bought the plot by his children and claims that he cannot subdivide his plot since his children would not permit him to do so. The old man expressed willingness to subdivide the plot. The reason being that the sons are heir of the property and they are already taking care of the old man. Thus, if permitted by his children, he said he would like to subdivide his 2.5 ha plot and accommodate at least 2 families to improve his income.

Livelihood activities of plot holders prior and after occurrence of subdivisions

This research further explored the livelihood activities of the five subdivided plot owners prior and after they

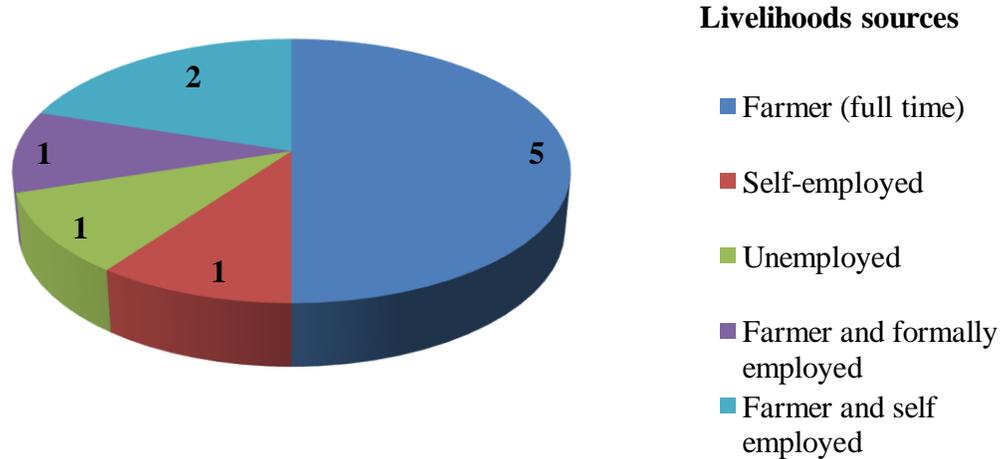


Figure 2. Livelihood activities of plot holders without subdivisions. Source: Fieldwork, 2011.

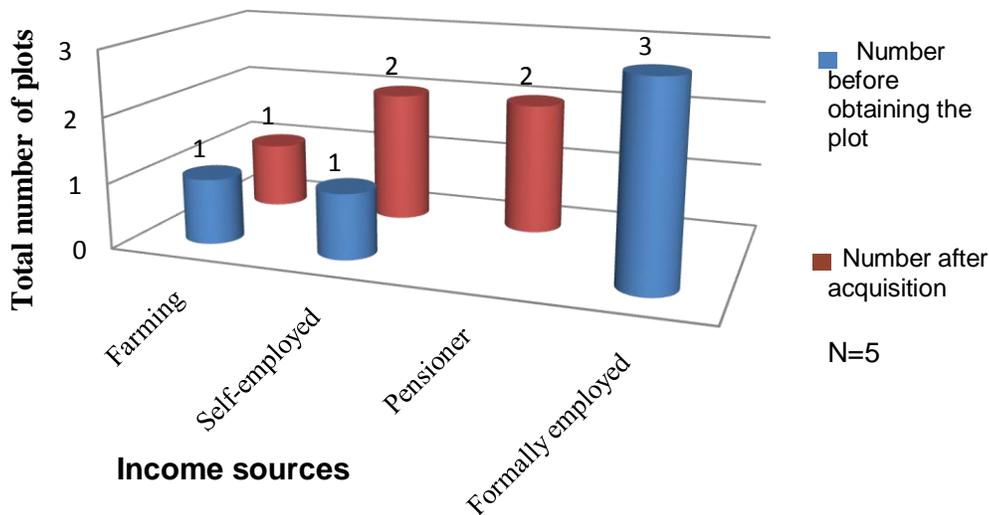


Figure 3. Source of income before and after obtaining the plot. Source: Fieldwork, 2011.

acquired their plots. This was done to map out factors or motive which led them to subdivide their plots. Asked what else were they doing besides farming, if ever they did and as shown in Figure 3, four subdivided plot owners were employed in the City, one was self employed and that is why they managed to purchase the plots when they became available. They claimed that they also tried farming but it was not intensive. After they obtained plots, two went on to retire and another two became self employed. Only one plot owner was a fulltime farmer, which indicates that farming in the area was not the core source of income or livelihood as it needed to be complemented.

Constraints faced by the resisting plot holders

Among the interviewed plot owners who are still pursuing farming and are resisting to subdivide their plots, the major challenges they are facing are those of lack of inputs, high temperatures and lack of water. Inputs which are said to be in shortfall are seeds and pesticides. Some pointed out that they don't have the means to finance boreholes or irrigation. The other problem noted is that of lacking farming equipment. One old man showed the researcher his garden fork and said that it was his tractor metaphorically which emphasized that they had no ploughing implements to use. Manpower shortage was



Plate 1. Herd of cattle in Rangemore.
Source: Fieldwork, 2011.

also another challenge some plot holders cited as a drawback to their farming.

The following are so of the challenges faced by those who have not subdivided their plots owners.

- Lack of water
- Inadequate labor
- Lack of irrigation machinery
- Lack of input
- Lack of farming implements
- Poor or no government support

For those with more than one borehole, the inability to clear the electricity bills was a challenge. In a bid to lobby the government for assistance in the form of inputs, ploughing tractors, and bank loans, plot owners claimed that they had formed an association which has drastically failed to bring home any material assistance since it all ends in the name of 'promises'. As a result, they sounded desperate for NGO assistance to promote their farming.

Despite these challenges, 9 out of 10 plot owners insisted that they are not willing to subdivide their plots to sell stands as they said the process of subdividing is even more expensive in financial and other terms. They said they cannot afford to fund surveying, pegging and servicing of stands as well as advertising as part of the process. One plot owner expressed fear and insecurity about the ongoing process of land subdivision done by their neighbors. The fear was that they may also be forced into subdivision in a near future. As a livelihood strategy and income generating activity, of the ten plots that have not been subdivided, three were renting out accommodation to other families. One was charging \$25 per month to a single tenant while two plot-holders had

three families each, who were charged \$30 per month.

Developments surrounding subdivisions

In determining the developments and records surrounding occurred subdivisions in Rangemore, the researcher saw it imperative to find out the sizes of the subdivided plots so as to justify the subdivision act in terms of a number of stands produced. The following is an outline of subdivided plot sizes. Only three out of five plot owners provided exact information on how big their plots were before they subdivided or sold some portion. The researcher could not identify the actual sizes of two other subdivided plots since the owners could not recall how big the plots were as stated in the title deeds. Among the identified sizes, the smallest plot is 7.5 ha while the biggest is 49.4382 ha which show the sharp contrast in size. From the biggest plot, which is 49.4382 ha, it should be noted that not all of it was subdivided, but only a portion was sold to a private developer who then produced 900 stands which form Mbundane Township.

Justification of plot subdivisions

Divergent reasons were noted to justify why the selected older plot holders subdivided their land and then sold small housing stands to owners. Among identified reasons, one plot owner sold the whole of their land to a developer to improve their financial gains. However, they did this during the time when Zimbabwean Dollar was still the only currency and was at its weakest point, which is in 2008, and thus they regret having sold since the money lost its value due to hyper-inflation. The owner felt that they have lost financially as compared to those who will subdivide or sell in the present time.

Current utilization of plot holdings and subdivisions

There is a sharp contrast as far as current plot utilizations are concerned. A comparison of subdivided and undivided plot owners' views in justifying how they used their individual plots showed very diverse inclinations towards favourable individual plot usage. The ones without subdivisions claimed to be up for agriculture. Holding of title deeds was revealed as a stepping stone for security of ownership of their respective lands despite the wave of urban expansion or subdividing neighbours. Plate 1 and 2 show how some plot owners make a living in Rangemore out of animal (cattle) keeping and vegetable production for commercial purposes as well as for self consumption.

Interviewee as shown in Plate 1 said they have 15 cows and 10 were for milking when asked how many cattle they were having and for what purpose they kept them. He pointed out that they sold the milk especially to



Plate 2. Vegetable production on a plot in Rangemore.
Source: Fieldwork, 2011.

some neighbouring plots. Even though, those who claim to be farmers in the area are very troubled about the ongoing land subdivisions, they think the resultant land use mix (that is farming and residential) is incongruent. The argument put forward is that subdivisions are likely to prevail and inevitably, farming is going to be subdued hence disappointments to them.

On a different note, plot owners, as revealed by one who has subdivided his/her plot, support their move with the justification that they subdivided their land because they don't want to lose it to BCC by the time it is taken over. Thus, subdividing will enable them to gain financially. When asked to comment on how they viewed the issue of compensation of their plots, the same plot owner posited that the properties of Rangemore are too old (Plate 3) to attract a valuable financial compensation. "People (in Rangemore) should not bank on compensation for they will lose completely" he claims. One BCC official interviewed also said that there is a time, around 2002, when BCC undertook valuation of all properties in Rangemore. He claims that it was concluded that there is only one farm which had valuable asserts which possibly deserved compensation.

The study also established that all plots or farms that are getting subdivided in Rangemore are used for residential purposes as confirmed from 40 households drawn from 5 subdivided plots. Despite being developed for residential purposes, it is borne out, through observation and an interview with Mbundane resident's association committee member, that no space is purposefully designated for shopping activity or any social amenities in the area. This reveals uncoordinated nature of development of land subdivisions in Rangemore where operating private land developers are only concerned about their respective private business at the expense of common

social demands or amenities such as crèches, shops, schools and open green spaces in the area.

DISCUSSION

From the facts about initial plot usage by the Coloureds community in Rangemore, it was revealed that small-holder plots were used for residential purposes. On the contrary, research also showed that some small holdings were used for agriculture aside residential purposes. The example of this scenario is Sunnysdale farm which is 49.4382 ha in size. It means that Rangemore was largely a residential community whose individual land properties were large enough to accommodate agricultural practices in order for holders to supplement their incomes. The prime reason to resist subdivision by some farmers is fourfold. The first one being that the current plot holders found the properties big enough to practice commercial market gardening. Space availability raised hopes for the unemployed plot holders who envisaged improved livelihoods through selling agricultural produce. However climatic challenges have emptied these hopes as agricultural business cannot thrive anyhow. Secondly, social and psychological attachments to pieces of properties, assets and agricultural practices in the urban borders explain resistance to release land for any other usage which has to do with succumbing to urban expansion. Last but not least, smallholders have a strong belief that by the virtue of holding title deeds for their properties, they are insulated from any land seizure by any authority.

Applying the views of Akrofi and Whittal (2011) the peri-urban interface in customary areas is characterized by an institutional vacuum that makes it difficult to manage the challenges of urban expansion. This is exacerbated by weak municipal authority and uncoordinated mandates of public, private, and civil society role players. In Rangemore, Bulawayo city has no authority over the subdivisions since it is only involved during the consultations by URDC on planning matters. One common challenge of peri-urban subdivisions, as indicated in literature review, is that the subdivisions are not related to the wider regional plans that incorporate impacts resulting from the process. As such, they are developed in a regional planning vacuum and the impacts on development of infrastructure for water provision and sanitation are not considered. It is taken for granted by the new residents that services will be delivered by extending the existing urban infrastructure. This is the case in Rangemore where BCC is expected, through perpetual push by the residents' association or developers with particular reference to Mbundane Township, to extend its existing service provisions to cater for newly settled residents in the subdivisions.

The issue of service provision at large is still a challenge to occupants of the subdivisions. As things stand now, the solution lies on the issue of incorporation of the area



Plate 3. Poorly maintained house in Rangemore.
Source: Fieldwork, 2011-11-22.

which is not known when it is going to take place.

Service provision in any urban settlement should not be compromised if habitability of residential place is to be achieved. According to the findings of this study, new housing developments/subdivisions are facing a serious problem of life supporting urban services including water challenges. As commonly known, the 'urban way of life' compulsorily requires complete services in order for it to move smoothly without any occurrence of urban ills which normally result in health hazards. The available temporary water sources such as boreholes do not suffice for the whole area. Without water, sewer transportation cannot be effected. Thus, despite laying of sewerage in all subdivisions, none of the households can obviously use flush system toilets. Health wise, it is not good to use bushes for defecation for purposes of avoiding spreading diseases or contaminating open water sources. As revealed by this study, some households would request to use neighbors' toilets and sometimes resort to nearby bushes. This out rightly reduce lucrativeness of plot subdivision business since no reasonable person will go for unserviced land for immediate occupation thereby diluting the zeal by other plot holders to assume the same avenue.

Another challenge seen in Rangemore, as noticed by an official from BCC's planning division, is that of uncoordinated development. This means each housing scheme, regardless of size and nearness to others, is developed independent of others since they all are done by different private land developers. This, according to

the interview, is going to be a challenge when regularization after takeover is to take place.

Regarding livelihood strategies, it is very clear for the subdividing land holders (whether voluntary or not) that the motive is to gain financially to improve household's welfare. The resisting plot holders or "commercial peri-urban farmers" are in a difficult situation. Yet the cloud of fear to lose land due to urban expansion- as revealed by the study- engulfs these conservative small-scale land holders, their survival strategies are seriously unpromising. To make matters worse, the interviewed farmers revealed that they did not have formal employment. So poorly performing crop production is the only survival strategy they have. This is purely subsistence agricultural activity. The obvious implication is that the farmers under this category have a serious challenge in generating any form of income. As a result sending children to school, financing health care services and other life support requirements proves to be an uphill task to all households of this category. Perennial water shortage and poorly performing crop production in Bulawayo region due to poor rains with the annual average below 600 ml, and high temperatures discourage these peri-urban farmers. For the conservative farmers renting out some rooms in their dilapidated housing (Plate 3), the amount charged which ranges from \$25 to \$30 per month is not enough to sustain the poverty stricken peri-urban homes which rely on the city of Bulawayo for life support services. From a generalized viewpoint, one can conclude that the subdividing plot holders are now better off financially, that

is if they manage to get buyers of their subdivided housing stands. A closer analysis will show that such source of income is a one off benefit. It is not a survival strategy at all. With shrunken plot sizes due to subdivision plot holders under this category, especially if they have no employment, are left with very minimal if not none chances of income generating activities regarding the foregone primarily agricultural land. Finances permitting, the subdividing plot holders could build houses in some of the stands they offer for sale, that is if multiple stand ownership is permissible by URDC. Letting the other housing properties could be a viable and constant income source which boosts their livelihood status. However, as a matter of policy, multiple stand ownership is now allowed by BCC. This means when it happens that incorporation of Rangemore to BCC takes place, those farmers who would have built homes-to-let, which is multiple stand ownership, will be affected. Their income generating or survival strategy would have failed in such a case.

WAY FORWARD: OPTIONS FOR ACTION TO ADVANCE DEVELOPMENT IN FUTURE

Rangemore scenario is a complex one in that it involves plot holders themselves and two local authorities with different individual interests. Each one of the local authorities needs to preserve its developed lands or acquire more so that revenue base broadens as well. In other sense, once URDC hands over Rangemore to BCC, it has also lost its revenue base. Still, it is unfortunate that URDC has no capacity at all to provide either water or sewer reticulation plants, thus it is not in the position to gain anyhow as far as revenue collection in the form of rates is concerned. This is the reason why the district council seeks to bargain over the compensation issue prior to handing over the area to BCC. More so, as learnt from URDC, Rangemore plot holders pay US\$240-00 per annum to the local authority. Thus, the council feels it cannot just let go of such revenue source. In a broader sense, options for action to advance future development of Rangemore as a whole rests with willingness of URDC to compromise by engaging BCC, the sole capacitated public service provider of the needs of new housing developments. However, this complication now leaves plot holders in a highly speculative environment with inadequate information to make voluntary decisions. Any decision they take as of yet is based on chancing or risk taking. They are victims of undefined urban expansion process which lacks clarity. They are engulfed with high uncertainty and fear. More so, although the researcher explained that the research project is not meant to bring in or facilitate agricultural development, interviewees earnestly asked if the researcher could go to World Vision offices and find out how they could get assistance from this NGO. The way

forward is left for recommendations in the foregoing.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Research, in the development field, seeks to inform policy. It is through recommendations that possible way forward is suggested. Regarding the conclusions of this study, following recommendations were made:

- First and foremost, the two authorities, that are BCC and URDC, should clarify their duties in the whole process of subdivision. Thus transparency and openness should be ensured as far as their mandates are concerned for the sake of residents of developed settlements and plot holders to eliminate unfounded fears and speculations.
- Incorporation is seen as the only way that could bring about solution to problems faced by new settlements occupying the subdivisions. For the sake of people and with respect to the problem of lack of services, the stakeholders should work together and push the responsible authority, which is URDC, to hand over the area to BCC. This, they can do through lobbying the council to realize the urgency of the need of service provision and the risk of eruption of health hazards if the present situation continues.
- BCC should indicate to URDC what are its plans and intentions about its peri-urban region. Residents occupying these areas should also be given a copy of these plans and intentions of the City. With enough and relevant information, residents and plot holders are likely to make informed decisions about their properties.
- URDC should find a way of helping BCC to take over the land. This is because the district does not have the capacity to provide services and hence it should just succumb to the demands of the developed settlements by involving BCC.

Conclusion

The analysis has shown that the inhabitants of peri-urban Rangemore small holder plots in Bulawayo are portraying varying and sharply contrasting survival strategies in the face of looming agriculture. The key contrasting developments taking place under the same setting are the subdivision of plots and conservative agricultural practice which is failing and is not productive enough for households' livelihoods and the city's micro economy. Rangemore's plot subdivision process is occurring under the highly speculative peri-urban setting due to the inevitable wave of urban expansion of the city of Bulawayo which aims to extend its radius to the distance of 40 km yet Rangemore is merely 17 km from the city center. This communicates something to the conservative farmers who are resisting and are not prepared to accept the new

development. To some of the subdividing farmers, the dwindling agricultural business is the prime factor leading to conversion of land into housing units. To some, in addition to poorly performing agriculture, their plot sizes can result into a significant number of housing stands which is deemed profitable. The sad story lies with the ones whose plot sizes, of about 2.5 ha, do not permit them to subdivide incurring all the financial costs and hoping to recover after selling the stands since they can only produce small number of stands. The resisting farmers feel like they are betrayed by those embarking on subdivision process. They are crying foul over their agricultural business which is getting compromised by the emerging mixed land usage, seemingly to be dominated by human habitation at the expense of the so-called agricultural lands, despite the challenges they are facing and are inherent to the region. Again, speculative tendencies on land value and the fear of the unknown, regarding the future of Rangemore plots due to the expanding city of Bulawayo, keep gripping the smallholder property owners. It is assumed that the availability of lucrative speculative prices on local land market may coerce the resisting farmers to subdivide too thereby downplaying the social and psychological attachments to their pieces of properties and assets as a result of uncertainty. Profit oriented speculative prices are favoured. However, it is apparent that the subdividing farmers have escaped the urban expansion wave which is inevitable. Nevertheless, no matter how long it may take for the areas to be engulfed, peri-urban areas of most African cities are reserves for expanding cities. For the subdivided plots, the question of service provision and infrastructure development should be looked into with a proactive approach which will reduce straining challenges at the end.

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