

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Evolution of Harare as Zimbabwe's Capital City and a major Central Place in Southern Africa in the context of Byland's model of settlement evolution.**

**Tongayi Muronda**

MA Final, Center for the Study of Regional Development, Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi-67, India.  
E-mail: [tongayij@yahoo.com](mailto:tongayij@yahoo.com).

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Settlement evolution of most global cities follows certain settlement patterns and by land's Model is one model that explains the general evolution of such settlements. Harare is no exception in this general pattern of settlement evolution, yet to a greater extent by land's Model is rather too simplistic to fully account for the evolution of this city. It should be noted that as a Model, it lacks universality and the historical attributes of Zimbabwe characterized by a prolonged colonial era between 1890 and 1980 creates a certain uniqueness which forces a need for manipulation of by land's model. Although by land's model is descriptive, it can be equated to several other models and theories of city evolution, urbanization and urban growth. Fourastie's Schema is a basic socio-economic model which explains evolution of settlement structures of city regions from the Pre-industrial to Post-industrial period (Jacobson et al., 1998). There is a marked increase in literature concerning urbanization, urban and city studies in recent times and this is due to the urgent need by Planners and Public Administrators to maintain a balance between economic development and modernization on one hand and the reduction of the social and environmental ill effects of rapid modernization on the other, more so in developing nations. (Ibid). By land's model spans over an extensive historical time scale and there is no doubt that stages 4 and 5 which respectively represent the industrial and post-industrial periods are major global concerns in the modern times. A universal theory that explains city dynamics and integrates historical, economic, social, demographic and spatial aspects is absent. In fact, the technical limitation of systematized urban studies at macro-level lay mainly in the heterogeneity and diversity of micro or macro regions in as far as these components are concerned. In view of these aspects, By land's model is tested on Harare and shows relevance in its much later stages. His model is ample testimony to the fact that unanimous classification of world cities is impossible.

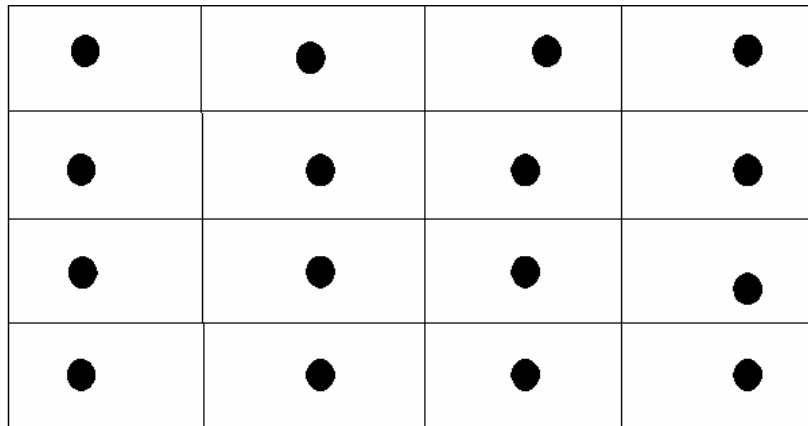
**Key words:** Settlement evolution, settlement patterns, settlement expansion, slums, Byland's model.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Harare, formerly Salisbury has an estimated population of 2,800,000 with 1,600,000 in its metropolitan area (USAID, 2006). It is Zimbabwe's largest city and its administrative, commercial, and communications centre. It is a trade centre for tobacco ([www.measuredhs.com](http://www.measuredhs.com)), maize ([www.bat.co.zw](http://www.bat.co.zw)), cotton ([www.cottco.co.zw](http://www.cottco.co.zw)), and citrus fruits ([www.ifpri.org/divs/tmd/dp/papers/tmdp84.pdf](http://www.ifpri.org/divs/tmd/dp/papers/tmdp84.pdf)). Manufactures include steel ([www.herald.co.zw](http://www.herald.co.zw)), textiles ([www.fingaz.co.zw](http://www.fingaz.co.zw)) and chemicals ([www.chronicle.co.zw](http://www.chronicle.co.zw)). Harare is situated at an elevation of 1,483 m. The topography of the city is hilly in rocky

areas, flatter in the south, and undulating in the north (Rakodi, 1995). The city lies on a watershed plateau between two major rivers, the Limpopo and the Zambezi. Some of the country's best agricultural soils are in this area; hence peri-urban agriculture is controversially practiced.

The city was founded in 1890 as a fort by the Pioneer Column, a mercenary force organized by Cecil Rhodes, the head of the invading Pioneer column. The city was originally named Fort Salisbury and it later became known as Salisbury. It was declared to be a municipality in 1897 and it became a city in 1935. Salisbury was the



Isolated Households with distinct production units

**Figure 1.** Isolated Households with Modest Technology.

capital of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland from 1953 to 1963 (Kay, 1974). Harare is more of a generic city than a parasitic city and it has witnessed a heterogeneity transformation rather than an orthogenetic one.

Therefore the evolution of Harare is based more on Economic and Geo-political factors than on physical and socio-cultural reasons as propounded in Byland’s model. In other words there was a ready-made plan by the Imperialists to make Harare the Central Place, a shift from Stage 1 of Byland’s Model where isolated households with limited production units would gradually amalgamate for various reasons. It is from Stage 3 that the Model gets more relevance to Harare’s evolution. Given such a unique background of the evolution of Harare, it becomes slightly complex to give an account of the city’s evolution within the Framework of Byland’s Model.

**Research question**

Two broad questions are crucial in this paper,

1. Can one trace the processes involved in the evolution of Harare? What are the dynamics of the physical and the socio-economic landscape, over time?
2. How can the evolution of Harare be Compared and Contrasted to Byland’s Model of Settlement evolution? What is the level of applicability?

Although there are certain limitations to address these issues, such as unavailability of convincingly reliable quantified data, the qualitative data based on Historical facts should do justice to the question.

**Objectives**

The main aim is to give a detailed account of the evolu-

tion of Harare as Zimbabwe’s capital city from the time the Pioneer column set up the first Post Office in 1890 in the then Salisbury. One intends to give a clear-cut presentation in view of Byland’s Model.

**METHODOLOGY**

Where quantitative data is available, cartographic techniques such as maps, histograms and charts will be used. However to a large extent, qualitative data, much of it based on historical facts and one’s experience and knowledge of the region will be exclusively crucial. The print media of Zimbabwe, to include The Herald ([www.herald.co.zw](http://www.herald.co.zw)), The Financial Gazette ([www.fingaz.co.zw](http://www.fingaz.co.zw)) and the Chronicle [[www.chronicle.co.zw](http://www.chronicle.co.zw)] have been used to substantiate and justify some aspects of the processes involved in the city’s evolution, especially in providing current information about the urban crises haunting Harare due to a rapid and uncontrolled rural-urban migration.

**Simplified Byland’s Model**

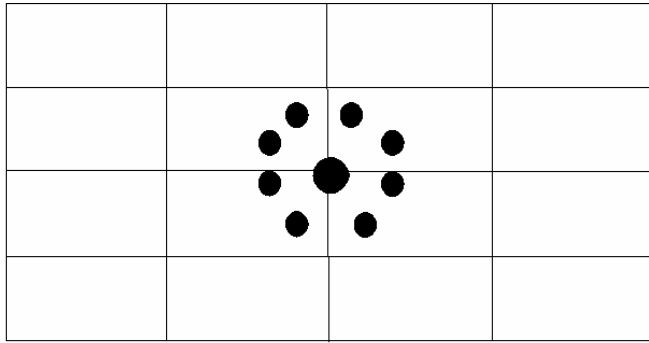
This model denotes the several stages through which a small village develops into an urban conurbation. It is a behavioral model which has five stages of settlement development.

**First stage**

The first stage (Figure 1) is composed of isolated households characterized by limited production based on subsistence farming. Plenty of land is readily available but since technology is not developed these areas cannot be exploited.

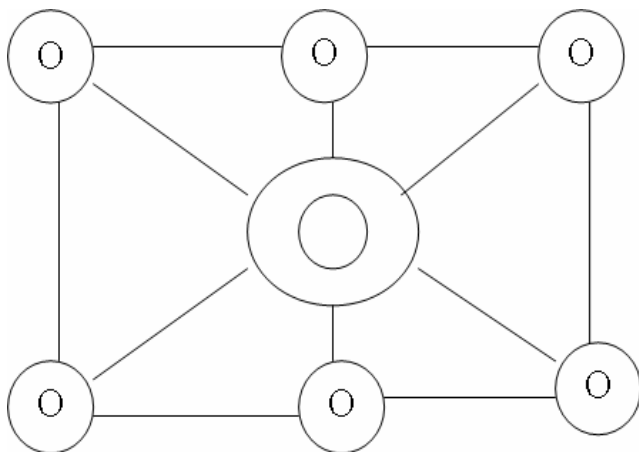
**Second stage**

In the second stage (Figure 2), these households form a central nucleus and as socio-economic interaction initiates. The chosen central place is equidistant from all directions and exchange of products initiates. In simpler terms, a village has emerged. The res-



Concentration of Households initiates leading to Village Formation

**Figure 2.** Emergence of a Village.



A Larger Central Place emerges and aspects of "Trickle down" and Polarisation initiate amongst the Settlements

**Figure 3.** Initialization of Diversification and Emergence of Transport Linkages.

ulting concentration of settlements may be due to,

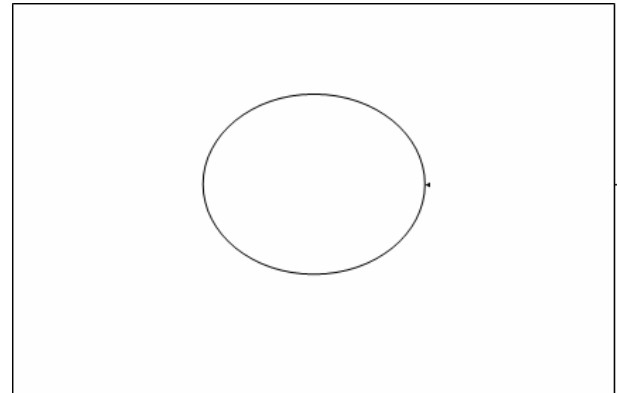
- The need for security
- Increase in socio-economic interaction, as exchange of subsistence goods initiates

**Third stage**

In stage 3, basic services become a requirement, there is need for specialization and highly skilled people become important. The concepts of 'range' and 'threshold' appear. Diversification of economic activities increases. As a result of increased interaction, transport networks develop. A multi-clan central place takes shape as shown in Figure 3

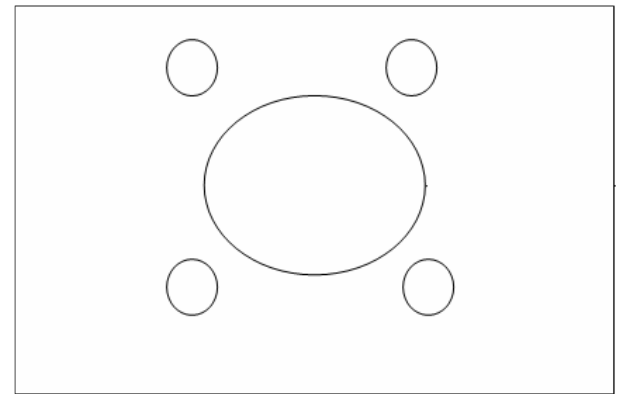
**Fourth stage**

In the 4<sup>th</sup> Stage (Figure 4), urban characteristics begin to show over time. Manufacturing of consumer goods begins and depending on resource availability, different types of Industries emerge. Highly skilled manpower and job-seekers enhance the rural-urban migration. Vertical expansion due to economies of scale as land values in this central place surge.



Emergence of a Conurbation with a high diversity of economic activities

**Figure 4.** Enhanced Diversification leading to a Conurbation



Dispersion Stage, emergence of suburbs away from the Central Place leading to agglomeration

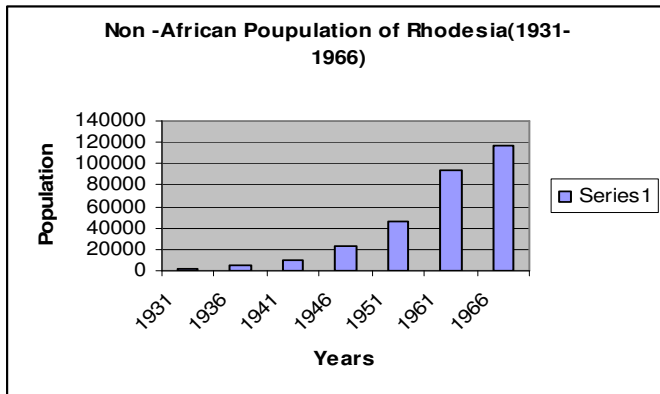
**Figure 5.** Suburbanization due to City Negatives

**Fifth stage**

In Stage 5, the central place has become congested and this leads to the development of suburbs around the urban center by Figure 5. However, this agglomeration in many countries has resulted in the reduction of agricultural land and government regulations have begun to declare these vacant areas as state or public property, hence prohibition of further development. Harare has lost much of this greenbelt in recent years, about 10% open spaces remain in Harare at present (USAID, 2006).

**The Harare Scenario**

The historical evolution of Harare, then Salisbury can be assessed in three stages, the years 1890-1946, 1946-1980 and the Post Independent Zimbabwe to present. The eras have been identified on the basis of population growth in the urban region which sharply rose from 23 107 in 1946 to 45 953 by 1951 (Kay, 1974), as indicated by Figure 6, a period signifying high levels of immigration



**Figure 6.** Growth of White Population in Harare (1931-1966). Source: Kay, .G. 'A Socio-Geographic Survey of Salisbury, Rhodesia', University College of Wales. (1974).



**Figure 8.** Diminishing of Space and Concentration of Infrastructure in Harare (1958). The photograph above shows Salisbury in 1958, note the increased infrastructure and gradual decline of empty space. (Source; Google Images).



**Figure 7.** More Space than Buildings in Harare (1921). The photograph below shows Salisbury in 1921. Note the isolated settlements and vast empty spaces. (Source: Google Images).

possibly triggered by the end of the Second World War. However, it is the last two decades of the post independence period that has seen major changes in the physical landscape of settlements and demographic characteristics. Influenced by the Colonial Administration and Planning, Harare has a formal gridiron layout, wide streets, a town square and public gardens, and has generally maintained its infrastructure (Gabel, 1999).

**1890 to 1946**

As indicated by Byland, Blovet and others in their initial Stages, Harare’s development during the period 1890 to 1946 was rather slow. It all began in 1890 when the pioneer column surveyed and reserved about 8 150 Ha of

land as town lands and provided a controlled zone between the township and the surrounding farmlands (Smout, 1976). There were several open spaces and the infrastructure was isolated and it consisted of residential buildings besides Salisbury Post Office, a few grocery stores, a single administration office, one main street (Mudimu, 1989) and 90% of the inhabitants were British migrants also known as the ‘Pioneer Column’ or ‘Settlers’. Gradually, they increased in number as more migrated from the United Kingdom, Portugal and India. Figure 7 shows vast empty spaces in Harare in 1921 before massive in-migration and construction began.

The increase in population witnessed an expansion of the town size and professionals from the colonial country and other European countries came in numbers to initiate the process of development. It should be noted that the colonialists came with a view of exploiting the mineral resources that were believed to be in abundance around Harare and after discovering that there were not in as much abundance as they had anticipated, they turned to agriculture. Therefore, during this period, Salisbury was an agrarian-based economy and the evolution of an urban centre was based upon the proceeds from Agriculture. The African people were used as laborers and were not permitted into the slowly developing urban center.

The photograph shows Salisbury in 1921. Note the isolated settlements and vast empty spaces. (Source: Google Images)

**1946 to 1980**

After 1946, the isolation began to diminish, infrastructure was now concentrated in a recognizable central place Figure 8 and the functions became more diversified. The



**Figure 9.** A Modern Harare Resembling a Conurbation. Note the Vertical Expansion due to Economies of Scale. (Source: Embassy of Zimbabwe publication, New Delhi).

products of mining and agriculture arrived and were distributed in Harare and several government offices and buildings were constructed. The transport network improved as more roads were constructed making the city more accessible, thus increasing the mobility and facilitating the movement of raw materials. A railway line long constructed by the British South Africa Company in 1888 ([www.uz.ac.zw](http://www.uz.ac.zw)) had also increased its viability. By 1935 Salisbury obtained city status though it had a population of below 20 000. In 1951 the first International Airport was built in Salisbury ([www.ica.zw/CPI/cpi.htm](http://www.ica.zw/CPI/cpi.htm)) enhancing mobility of production factors. By the 1960's, there was full production of consumer goods as demand rose, there was no longer need to import these goods from beyond the border, manufacturing of capital goods had also began. Even economic sanctions passed by the international community on Ian Smith's government in the 1960's did not deter economic growth. An increase in trade fosters city development; while limited trade tends to limit cities (Korff, 1995). There was a growing need for semi-skilled labor from the marginalized black community who had been forcibly dispossessed from their land during the colonial occupation by the Pioneer column.

As a result, there was a marked increase of African workers in the city and the colonial regime set up high density locations or suburbs in Mbare and Highfields for their residence, the oldest black residential areas to date. More residential suburbs were created specifically for the white colonialists and these include Borrowdale, Hatfield, Mabelreign, Mt Pleasant and Marlborough among others. The people of mixed race also had their separate residential areas in Breaside, Arcadia and Cranborne

among others. Agglomeration was taking shape as Byland noted at the end of his Stage 4. He also talks of increased interaction of societies leading to a multi-clan; it is true to a limited extent in Harare's scenario given the fact that there was control over the entry of non-whites into the city.

The Figure shows Salisbury in 1958, note the increased infrastructure and gradual decline of empty space. (Source; Google Images)

### Post independence

Stage 5 of Byland's model was reached around 1980. By this time, an urban conurbation had emerged and there was a defined Central Business District. Economies of scale had been attained and vertical expansion of the city centre became more pronounced, as shown by Figure 9 Racism received less importance as knowledge and skill was given preference, it became a truly multi-racial society as the Africans were also having a share of the economy. New suburbs emerged away from the city as rich people who could afford to pay escaped the congested urban center. This, Byland's refers to as, 'The Dispersion Stage'. Despite Planning, the carrying capacity of Harare has been exceeded. The transport network has become stressed and the urban infrastructure and basic amenities supply have been overloaded causing maintenance problems for the city planners. The IMF and World Bank economic structural adjustment policies enforced in many developing countries in the 1990's have done more harm than good to the socio-economic development. While the West initially showed benevolence by providing financial aid, the fact that several states failed to repay loans incited the need for a new economic policy which was aimed to assert greater internal socio-political and economic influence and ensure loan repayments. Unemployment has gradually increased in Zimbabwe since the 1990's leading to the rise of the informal and non-formal sectors, ultimately leading to new disparities. Cumulative effects of poverty as enunciated by Myrdal and Hirschman (1957) and Polarization forces persisted strongly against spread effects and equitable economic growth and development.

Urbanization is defined differently by various social scientists to include sociologists, economists, demographers and geographers. The sociologists emphasize social change of traditional societies to modern societies; economists, structural change of primary industry to secondary or tertiary activities, while demographers and geographers assert the significance of population movement and concentration, and spatial changes respectively. However, "by whatever definition, urbanization is a phenomenon describing a process of change in the situs of populations due to changing conditions in society at large" (Leo Jacobson et al., 1996). It therefore should be viewed as a positive aspect of economic growth and development and a crucial phase of city evolution as it is



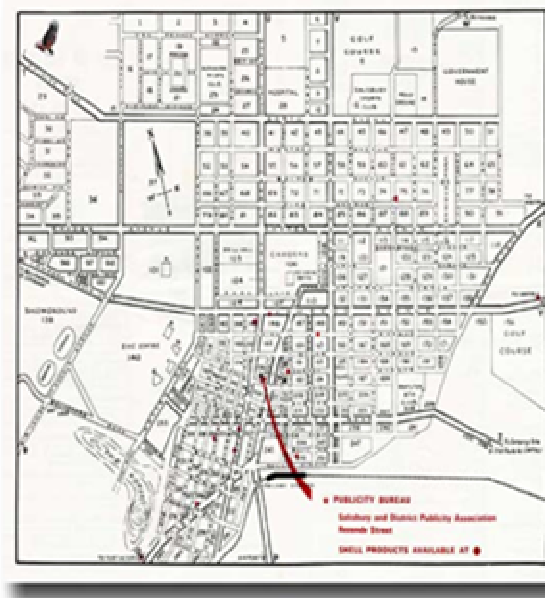


**Figure 10.** Eradication of Slum Areas by the Government of Zimbabwe in 2005. (Source: USAID).

closely associated with industrialization and modernization. However its ill-effects to include environmental degradation and slum emergence have outweighed the expected positives. These 'slums of despair' and of 'hope' as opined by Stoke (1970's) emerged after the implementation of the discussed economic structural adjustment programs. The urbanization levels in Zimbabwe increased from 23% in the 1980's to 30 percent by 1990's (www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/2005/issue3/0305p30.html).

The Government of Zimbabwe instituted the controversial "Operation Murambatsvina"<sup>1</sup> to regulate the high rate of urbanization by clearing all slums and squalors that had emerged around the capital. The spatial impact is noted in Figure 10. Illegal infrastructures and social evils had become rampant and this had negative effects on the socio-economic development of the country. Hoarding of basic goods and food-stuffs, illegal exchange of scarce foreign currency, prostitution, organized and petty crimes, visible poverty resulting in increased disparities between rich and poor had manifested itself and become well established. It should be noted that prior to this urban chaos, the government had in the early 1990's adopted the concept of Decentralization. The regional development strategy involves the "equitable" distribution of residential sectors of economy, administration and social institutions to the less developed regions of the country leading to the emergence of several "Growth Points" across the country. Therefore,

<sup>1</sup> "Operation Murambatsvina": the adjective is a Shona word which means 'away with filth'; the Zimbabwean government operationalised this campaign to clear all slum areas across the country's urban areas in June 2005. The objective was to get rid of illegal socio-economic activities and reduce the spread of contaminable diseases. Although Harare looked clean, the illegal structures and their allied activities have slowly re-emerged.



**Figure 11.** Harare Districts (1974). The Grid-Iron Structure shows Harare was a Planned City. (Source: Government of the Federation of Rhodesia).

you may ask why there was a huge rural urban movement a decade later despite the implementation of the Decentralization Policy. Climate changes due to a combination of global warming and the Northward movement of the ITCZ particularly since the mid 1980s have affected agricultural efficiency and output in the rural areas, marginal productivity in the rural areas declined sharply, and disposable income dried up, hence movement of prospective labor to a city which was already facing a high natural population increase.

### Conclusion

Settlement Models are applicable in some regions and particularly the regions where the scholars originate or have done their research. Urbanization is closely linked to industrialization and modernization and is a key process in the later stages of Byland's model. The grid-iron pattern noted in Figure 11 and the sectoral land-use pattern shown by Figure 12 qualify the fact that evolution of Harare was a result of a well orchestrated plan by the colonizers. However, One can neither discard the relevance of these models given their simplistic nature and order, nor can one accept them in totality. Historical, social, political and economic factors of the region concerned are crucial factors. The timeframe at which the evolving process initiates is also crucial in the assessment of applicability. Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Bangkok, Dubai, Jakarta and many other cities have a short evolution period and they have all recently emerged.



**Figure 11.** Harare Districts (1974). The Grid-Iron Structure shows Harare was a Planned City. (Source: Government of the Federation of Rhodesia).



**Figure 12.** Shape of Harare. Source: Adapted from Zinyama (1993, p10).

This is because of International Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank through whose policies, mainly based on the modernist paradigm of regional economic development, these cities have been planned and emerged in a short time-period. In contrast, these policies did not yield much benefit to

Zimbabwe and several other African cities. Therefore, they are several factors denoting city evolution which makes it impossible for these models to be universal. However, they are crucial as a basic framework for Settlement evolution studies, including urbanization and urban dynamics.

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