

Linking Time Use to Implementation of Spatial Plans: What Explains the Dysfunctional Urban Landscapes in Zimbabwe?

Innocent CHIRISA¹

¹ University of Zimbabwe, Department of Rural and Urban Planning, Harare, ZIMBABWE

E-mail: chirisa.innocent@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The planning of towns and cities in most developing countries is beset by inertia reflected in the scarcity of implemented plans while they gather dust in office drawers and on the walls. As a result, the development of physical infrastructure lags behind beyond expectations thus leading to the emergence of undesirable outcomes. These outcomes usually feature illegal structures and settlements in the interstitial areas of the built environment. This paper examines the use of time and related resources in spatial planning enquiring on how different types of plans have resulted in dysfunctional urban landscapes. The paper explores the dissimilar perspectives, attitudes and practices of different planners regarding this 'time-space development gap'. The paper argues that this gap is sometimes widened by the prevalence of conflicting interests, values and priorities between planners (trying as much as possible to be 'professional') and politicians driven by populist and selfish agendas. The paper draws on case studies of urban planning experiences in Zimbabwe to illustrate this alarming trend. These case studies are reflected through the in-depth interviews performed to gather information from practicing planners in the public and private sector agencies. The findings of the investigation portray time as a contested concept in spatial planning whose multiple and contrasting variables are the determinants of the so-called 'planning failure'.

1. INTRODUCTION

The paper examines the importance of time and related resources in spatial planning in order to explain how different types of plans have resulted in amorphous urban landscapes in Zimbabwe. It draws on the different perspectives, attitudes and practices of planners regarding the 'time-spatial development gap' [1]. There is a void in the studies that draws from similar perspectives in other African cities for enhanced spatial planning policy and practice. A study by Todes, Karam, Klug and Malaza (2010) has indicated the shortcomings of master planning and justified the adoption of new approaches to spatial planning in

South Africa [23]. However, little could be seen as different from what master planning has been offering to development. To researchers, the story is just a question of semantics rather than of substance. The study came about as an investigation to decipher the reason for the so-called non-popularity of master planning in different circles of spatial and built environment field. Indeed, the gap in the non-implementation of these important tools for spatial development has been a contentious issue of concern.

This gap is sometimes widened by the existence of contrasting interests, values and priorities between planners (technocrats, trying as much as possible to be 'professional') and politicians (being

driven by populist and selfish agendas). The case studies demonstrating this trend were carried out in the urban centres of Zimbabwe. The narratives captured in these case studies were synthesised from the interviews with planners practicing in both government and the private sector. The study argues that time is a loaded concept in spatial planning, whose multiple and contested variables are the determinants of the so-called 'planning failure' [2].

2. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Zimbabwe is emerging from its deep economic depression, which gripped the country from 1997 to 2008. This is more than a lost decade in terms of both production and productivity of the country's economy [3]. Despite its paltry economic recovery since 2009, the lost ground can only be regained through far reaching political and economic reforms that the country desperately needs. The Government of National Unity (GNU) that emerged from the Global Political Agreement (GPA) comprising the former ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front) – ZANU (PF) – and the two opposition party formations of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) – MDC – Tsvangirai and MDC – Mutambara, has floundered through political bickering since September 15, 2008 [4]. This squabbling has stifled a lot of the progress that could have been achieved by now, being the fourth year after the signing of the GPA. It has been a 'shaky' GNU managing a ramshackle economy. The controversial indigenisation and empowerment programme, championed by ZANU, has scared off foreign investors. The flight of foreign capital has seen industry underperforming with little investment in the infrastructure development sector. Meanwhile, the ZANU dominated GNU has laid emphasis on the promotion of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) – designed to reward those with political connections - which can only thrive on linkages with large enterprises.

The paradox of it all is that every year the country's institutions of higher education are churning out large numbers of graduates whereas the economy is not generating any new employment opportunities while, at the same time, government expects them to start and run their own businesses. The chances of starting new businesses – let alone their viability – are forlorn where there is scarcely any capital formation. The paradox of increased urbanisation and stagnating economic development is common in most sub-Saharan Africa and Zimbabwe is hardly an exception. Meanwhile, the growing informal economy has come to the rescue of many unemployed. In the face of the recurrent economic crises triggered by restructuring

since the mid-1990s development, planners groomed in the formalistic approach to development are redundant. Indeed this is a problem across Africa where there has been no break with the past colonial functionalist practices of planned towns. In the same manner, the economy is running informally so is 'informal politics' shaping urban spaces with the inevitable result that informality has become a strategy of planning. This informal politics is intrepid and influential to spatial development and change. It is driven by populism, defying the norms and standards of rational and formal planning. For instance, where prohibition or enforcement orders should just apply without any problem, politicians normally interfere with the processes and tell the populace not to bother [1].

A recent development in Zimbabwe has been the police blitz against the proliferation of illegal car sales yards and car wash enclaves in Harare which have seen the demolition of the structures by the municipality albeit such interventions have been perceived as movements against the government policy of indigenisation and economic empowerment. As if that was not enough, government deployed police and military contingents to rid the city centre of the informal taxi rank marshals and touts who had assumed control of the congested bus termini. These termini serve as the main source of income for the disparaged youth. The informal evolution of the commuter omnibus transport networks countrywide, propelled by political patronage continues to bolster the cumulative loss of revenue to central government and all local authorities. Such control means a major leakage of the finances that could have been accruing to the city coffers. Yet the money gets into the 'wrong pockets' of a few largely unemployed young people who are actively empowering themselves in the informal spaces of the urban public transport system. Mostly, Zimbabwe is faced with a major problem in its somewhat stalemated political and economic situation. The planners have a huge task to recast their relevance to the new and emerging forms of managing urban public transport prevailing in most cities of developing countries. The reality on the ground is contrary to the modernist planning philosophies of spatial growth, order and amenity. The time frames of certain urban development plans have often been overtaken by events [5].

The development of physical infrastructure and related artefacts like houses, bridges, classrooms and clinics takes longer than anticipated, leading to the emergence of incoherent urban landscapes. The study noted that urban planners engaged in the private planning firms are better placed than their counterparts in the government if that private sector development plans are implemented on target.

The study, on which the paper is based, used case studies and individual narratives to examine the deployment of time as a resource in urban plan formulation and implementation citing examples from the public and private sector in which spatial planners are employed. While the initial intention of the study was to use a quantitative approach to discuss the issues of time and use of time during and after work, especially in mapping the attitudes and practices of individual planners [6], the response rate of the survey of the 'planner's diary' was low, so it was better to analyse these qualitatively than quantitatively.

Sixty two (62) planners at various levels of urban planning practice, from interns to senior planners in private, public and voluntary organisations responded. This is perhaps explained by the fact that 24 of them could not easily access, let alone be able to download, the questionnaire I sent them by email. A few indicated that they were too busy at the moment and that they could only respond once they found time to do so. I administered the questionnaire to 86 planners.

The paper presents a literature review and theoretical framework of this discourse in which time, the use of time, productivity and efficiency are discussed both in general and in relation to urban spatial development. Following this, there is a section on spatial planning in the developing countries in which the paper argues that developing countries continue to grapple with the challenges of implementing urban development plans.

The commonest challenge these countries face is the lack of reliable information and accurate statistical baseline data essential for the preparation of realistic development plans [7]. Next to this, there is a section on the planning practice and implementation of plans in Zimbabwe in which we used case studies of the public and private institutions in planning. The paper navigates the current physical planning practices in vogue in the country, as well as the stakeholder agencies and traces planners' behaviour and attitudes. The paper concludes with a consolidation of the meanings and implications of the time-use trajectories and associated practices investigated by the study.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Time-use data are quantitative summaries of what women and men do over the course of a day, a week, and across seasons over a year; the basic building blocks of time-use data are the activities and time bundles carrying the activities in specific places at specific moments in time [8].

Examples of time-use statistics include the average number of hours a day spent travelling, the total number of hours a week spent working in a paid job and the average number of hours a day spent in unpaid domestic work [9]. In a much broader sense, time use is defined as the time spent on simultaneous activities. Daily activities are grouped as either paid or unpaid work. Time use data can constitute categories of primary and secondary activities where primary activities relate to time specified for care work, personal care and leisure [10].

The International Classification of Activities for Time Use Statistics (ICATUS) classifies non-productive activities to include learning, recreational activities, mass media use, personal, and maintenance. Productive activities include household maintenance, care work for the sick, for the disabled, and for the elderly. Motivated by the desire for human progress and change, time-use data have been collected through household surveys since the 1920s.

Perceptions on time and work vary from individual to individual. Omolayo and Oluwafemi (2012) have posited that "Different people may judge an identical length of time quite differently. Time can 'fly', that is, a long period of time can seem to go by very quickly. Likewise, time can seem to 'drag', especially when one performs a boring task. Therefore, people develop different kinds of attitudes towards time and work in one way or another, but the problem lies where a greater number of people develop an unfavourable attitude towards time and work in an organization" [11].

As highlighted earlier on, Zimbabwe experienced serious recession that lasted for more than a decade. This may be considered 'lost time' in which aspects of efficiency and productivity in time lost lustre. Time lost during a recession is allocated to other activities and refer to the opportunity cost of the time forgone on the work related activities [12]. Using data generated through the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) conducted by the Bureau of Labour Statistics gathered at a macro-level like provincial or federal level. Aguiar, Hurst and Karabarbounis (2012) analyse the times in the USA as non-recession (2003-05), pre-recessionary (2006-8) and during recession (2009-2010) [12]. Seven categories of activities including time spent on formal work activities, care work, leisure time and other non-work related activities are detailed in 24-hour diaries to report on the activities done by each individual starting from the previous day. Respondents were between 18 and 65 years old. The results show a decrease in the market working hours by 6.68 between 2008 and 2010 resulting in a 6.9% decrease in the Bureau of Economic Analysis series, thus indicating that the economic productive capacity was positively

affected. Thirty percent (30%) of the time forgone is allocated to increased non-market work, 5% to childcare and 50% to leisure activities. The findings reveal that men spend more time on leisure than women and this is attributed to the time spent by women on care work. Since the analyses by Aguiar, Hurst and Karabarbounis (2012) are done at a macro-level, distorted information due to inaccuracies of human error may have occurred in the process. The way entrepreneurs or people in the private sector operate is likely to differ significantly from those in the public sector. Work in the private sector, especially if it is planning, is mostly project-based. Routine or project-based work has a huge bearing on the manner in which time is used. Certain working groups always do 'business as usual' because there is little if any to change the way in which they work. In capitalist enterprises, the profit motive is a great incentive for working 'beyond the usual 24 hour clock'.

3.1. Time, worker performance and productivity

Perlow (1999) has coined the term 'time famine' defining it as the state of how certain working groups (for example corporate lawyers, investment bankers and computer programmers) have a "feeling of having too much to do and not enough time to do it" [13]. Perlow's work focuses on the effective use of time in boosting a person's productive capacity and improved performance at work. This also explains why most people fail to meet targets at work and end up solving 'critical' problems. To illustrate these dynamics, Perlow (1999) studied a software engineering group given the pressure it succumbs to in delivering its final product. The thrust of his study was to understand how people spend their time at work and how time is allocated across various activities of which managers were taught how to respect other people's time in order to improve production. His study collected data through participant observation, interviews, shadowing, log taking, debriefing interviews and performance data, hence an integrated approach for efficacy. Results indicated that quiet time, alongside other factors, resulted in increased production hence the success of business. Quiet time refers to that time in which an individual works without being disturbed; interaction time is that in which a person experiences some disturbances from others. According to Perlow (1999), quiet and interruptive times are critical in the productive capacity of workers, in this case, engineers. Perlow also argues that interaction time among workers reduces the incidence of mistakes hence is time saving [13].

An average workday for employed people in the 25 to 54 year age group, allocates time in a diagrammatic form [14]. Much attention is directed to

households with children below 18 years old. The 24 hours of a day are allocated across various activities in a day, the time for sleeping being of 7.6 hours on average and that for work-related activities of 8.6 hours. It is noted that caring for others and the leisure and sporting ate up 1.2 and 2.6 hours, respectively. Time allocated for eating and drinking was of 1.1 hours, which was similar to that for household activities. The time left for the other 'undefined' performed activities took the remaining 1.8 hours of the day. Thus, the working people valued their leisure time more than the time they set aside to care for others. These data, however, are not indicative of whether some of the activities are done simultaneously or not, for instance, time allocated to leisure, if done in the presence of children may partly contribute to care work. In this paper, emphasis was placed on the time the workers spent at work and not at home or in other places.

The main thrust of the study was to map out how planners used their time at work and how exogenous factors affected their plans, for instance, resources' availability or other activities in time, and how these affected their attitude towards their work. Perhaps, this is part of the broader meta-planning question. Meta-planning, overall, refers to the manner in which planning is done – the planning of planning.

Two basic objects of focus – space and time, inform the planner's matrix of work. Space is that ingredient of the natural environment in which the planner moulds to produce a desired and functional built environment which, by some monitoring mechanisms like development control, that same planner continuously manages for sustainability [1]. On the other hand, time is an aspatial resource serving as a yardstick that a planner can use to set milestones in an action plan for progress monitoring. Literally, the planner learns from the past, manipulates the present to produce a more desirable future for human community or society. However, the human often introduces other changes that the planner is fighting to exclude. In most cases, the question is on whether or not the plans produced by planners are bringing the desired change over time or not.

3.2. Time and space: The' implementation' puzzle

Spatial planning ought to put into cognizance different types of plans (master, local, subdivision, consolidation and structure to name but a few) time and related factors to avoid asynchronous urban landscapes. GTZ has put it stalwartly that "... [*Land use planning*] *LUP without implementation is a waste of time and energy*" [15]. In its manual, the GTZ suggests the key indicators and determinants of successful land use

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planning. Most contemporary research has glossed over time-space in urban change placing more emphasis on the spatial element. This, in turn, has been the explanation for the existence of an urban theory projecting socio-spatial relations ignoring the time-space interaction. Of course, one major reason has been the general belief that urban planning is evolutionary (gradual and slow) rather than revolutionary [16].

Urban modelling becomes realistic without spatial information [17]. The term ‘action space’ can be useful in spatial planning in a fast-changing world and environment. In a network society such as this, the significance of physical distance decreases whereas the importance of available time increases. In other words, accessibility outweighs proximity [18].

This means that advancement in transportation technologies - associated with the compression of space over time has paved the way for surplus time, which could otherwise have been consumed by travelling. In turn, this created more

action spaces or “areas within which persons can undertake activities” [18, p. 165]. Three types of such spaces are identified - potential, actual, and perceived. In this context, the atomistic behaviour of individuals is instrumental to the formulation of sustainable human settlements. Choices by individuals are the key determinant in plan formulation and implementation. For example, the Model of Action Space in Time Intervals and Clusters (MASTIC) can be used to determine “... whether or not a person can carry out a desired activity programme within a specified time-space matrix” [18, p. 174].

Figure 1 demonstrates the normative-positive nexus of the planning and time-use matrix [19]. The reality of planning on the ground in most developing countries is greatly asymmetrical to the norms and expectations of the profession and practice in the developed world. Thus, in most developing countries, the planning and use of urban space has increasingly become informal.

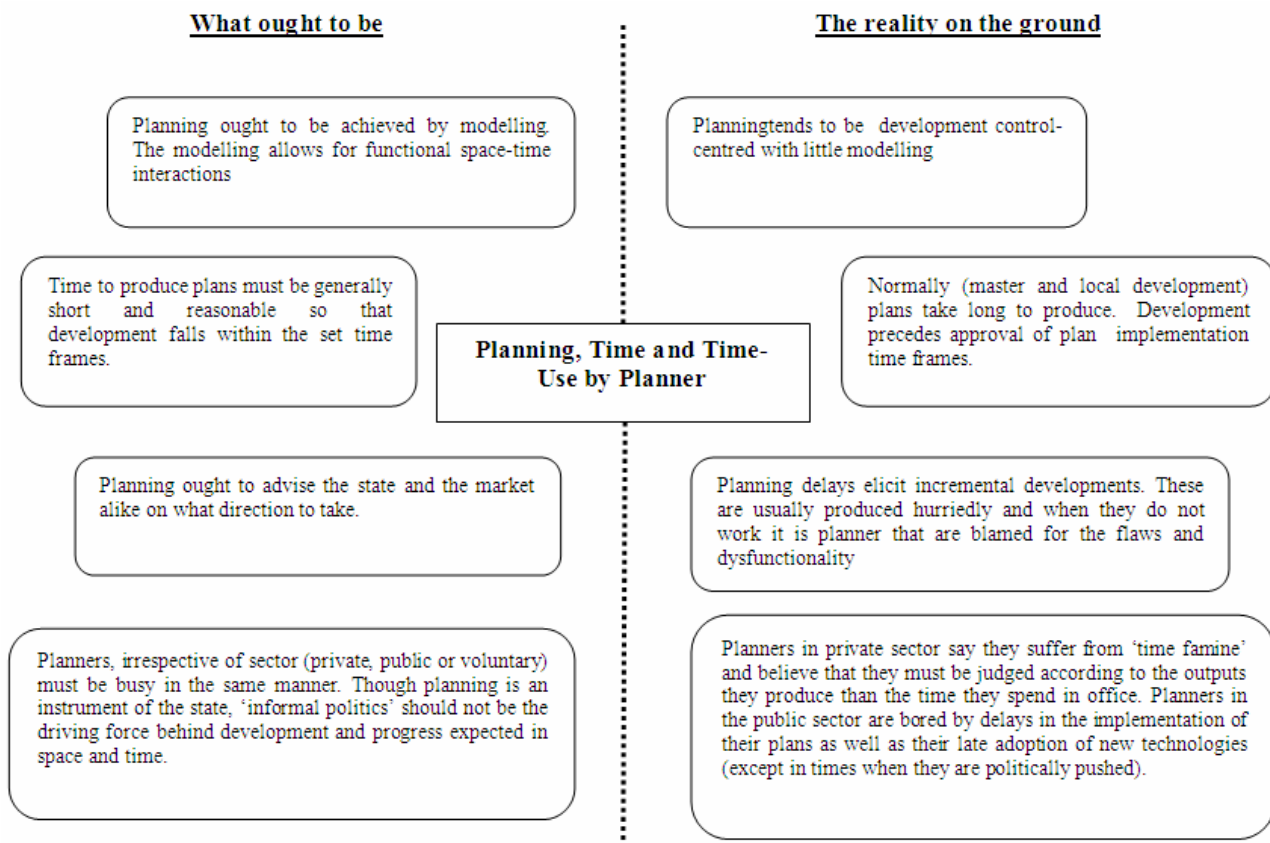


Fig. 1. The planning and time matrix – the normative-positive nexus.

Spatial-cycle time lags are critical in the formulation of urban policies and plans in lagging economies [19]. They put four countries to test by way of the Spatial Cycle Hypothesis (SCH) and the ROXY-index approach in gathering information for the study.

The Spatial Cycle Hypothesis approach has four stages, which deflect the spatial concentration of population from cities. This population concentration includes two major stages, which depict Accelerating Deceleration and Decelerating Concentration. The

ROXY value can either be positive, zero or negative. Indonesia experienced a period of decelerating concentration in the mid-1980s and accelerating de-concentration towards the end of the 1980s [19].

Japan experienced a period of accelerating de-concentration around 1970, and decelerating de-concentration at the end of 1980. During the second half of the 1960s, Swedish cities experienced accelerating de-concentration and in the mid-1980s, they underwent decelerating de-concentration.

The cities in the USA were already at the advanced stage of decelerating de-concentration in 1960s, but in the late 1970s they experienced a period of accelerating concentration. The 23 Japanese cities surveyed showed that the Japanese City system was behind that of USA (25 cities) by approximately 15 years, Indonesia was behind Japan by at least 20 years, Sweden was somewhere between Japan and USA. There was a 35 year time lag between the USA and the Japanese city system.

These case studies reveal that the spatial cycle path time lags can assist developing nations in urban planning and can be used as benchmarks for preventing the planning mistakes that 'giant' economies made. The model assumes that the geographic, economic as well as political forces influencing the space economy cannot affect the planning process. This is, however, not true in reality. Policy makers may not merely change their countries' status, but follow the spatial-cycle path's process in their development process.

The usefulness of time lags in cities has perhaps been put across in modernist theories drawing on Rostov's 'Stages of Economic Growth', on the Demographic Transition and on related models [19]. For planners, an analysis of urban configuration over time-space should be embedded policies designed to improve human settlements and citizens' welfare. Most important to this discourse is a general understanding of planning in the developing countries.

3.3. Planning in the developing world

Most developing countries have experienced an 'unplanned urban revolution' [20] in recent decades marked by increased rates of urbanisation [21], [22]. In the process, the rigid master and local plans have been overtaken by events on the ground giving rise to planning deficits and spatial disharmony [1]. Traditionally, master plans have been hailed as the 'must-be' for order and amenity. However, in recent times, master plans have been blamed for their rigidity and failure to respond to the challenges of rapid urbanisation and of change in developing countries. Overall, in most cases, the production of the master plan took too much to happen with little attention to implementation. At the same time, master planning was not linked to sectoral departments, being separate from

development control, lacking in funding and institutional capacity to implement it and paying no attention to social diversity, being too technocratic. However, some scholars argue that despite these criticisms, new versions of planning to 'replace' it have been marked with much critical and residual elements (of master planning) [23]. Innovativeness as illustrated in the case of Ekurhuleni in South Africa has seen the integration of those often 'missing elements' of participation, maintaining relevance and robustness in the context of rapid change.

Central to the theme of plans and time, is the aspect of relevance and robustness. As long as plans are not simply 'overtaken by events', the field of planning is ascertained as an instrument of progress rather than the asphyxiation of it. Spatial information is at the centre stage of the creation and sustenance of sustainable human settlements [20]. This argument oscillates around the fact that: "*Spatial or geo-information in the form of maps, plans, aerial photographs, orthophotos has always formed the base for settlement planning and development. It has been noted that the ability of cities to manage urban growth is increasingly dependent on timely access to geodata/spatial information and the competence of turning these data into information to support decision-making*" [20].

The major problem, in traditional planning, has been that of divorcing planning from implementation. Plans have been prepared in the spirit of indicating just the direction of the overall intention without regard to resource budgeting. This somewhat contradicts GTZ's definition of land use planning (LUP) as "*...an iterative process based on the dialogue amongst all stakeholders aiming at the negotiation and decision for a sustainable form of land use (...) as well as initiating and monitoring its implementation*" [18]. In most cases, the planners' role has been that of simply producing the plans without implementation resource budgeting.

A discussion on time-use by planners is incomplete without re-examining the roles of planners. This is because planners wear many hats in practice. Some serve as technical experts in the public sector where they develop and direct the implementation of spatial planning policy. Another group of planners comprises researchers, theorists and academics. They normally analyse what practising planners do and suggest strategies for effective spatial policy implementation. A third group are the entrepreneurial planners engaged in consultancy work for profit. Time is a very critical resource for planning consultants. Normally these planners, like any other for-profit entities often suffer from 'time-famine' as to them, 'time is money'. They want, as much as possible, to have as many outputs and products as they can to maximise profit. Related to this group are also advocacy planners.

These are 'fighters' for the rights of minority and marginalised groups. In recent times, these have been advocating for such programmes as squatter upgrading programmes.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Planning practice and implementation of plans in Zimbabwe

Physical planning in contemporary Zimbabwe has been restricted to just 'urban management' where development control occupies the centre of urban development [24]. It puts less emphasis on the impact of urban change, an aspect that can be deduced by rigorous urban modelling harmonised urban landscapes and the different perspectives, attitudes and practices different planners have regarding this.

The 'time-spatial development gap' tends to widen the existence of contrasting interests, values and priorities between planners (technocrats, trying as much as possible to be 'professional') and politicians (being driven by populist and selfish agendas) [16], [25].

The case of Harare's replacement of local plan 17 with local plan 22 as an urban renewal strategy has not been as productive as expected. Indicative planning through these initiatives has failed to produce the desired landscapes. As indicative planning fails, sometimes, the state applies police power which, in essence, is about force and control.

A clear example of the excessive use of force with regard to urban development in Zimbabwe was Operation Murambatsvina in 2005. This was succeeded by Operation Garikayi/Hlalalni Kuhle (OGHK). Under Operation Murambatsvina, the state embarked on a massive destruction of informal settlements and business, which it had tolerated and just allowed to grow.

A number of households lost their houses and businesses, which were earning them livelihood. There was an international outcry against the ZANU (PF) government, the one that authorised the operation.

For planners, the Operation was a most welcome move as the informal developments that had characterized urban centres before its implementation were nothing more than a nuisance, producing asynchronous and asymmetrical landscapes, quite contrary to the ideal ones that the planner 'sweats' for all day to produce in the name of creating sustainable urban environments. To remedy its 'mistake' of destroying people's houses, the government quickly launched what it dubbed "Operation Garikai" (Operation Stay Well).

A number of sites like Whitecliffe in Zvimba were identified in the periphery of most existing urban

centres. Although infrastructure and support service provision were to be considered later, the major issue for inclusion was planning. Thus, urban planners in government were directly involved.

Contrary to popular thinking that housing development in most Operation Garikayi/Hlalalni Kuhle (OGHK) sites was implemented without any plans, a town planning officer with the DPP had this to say: "Those houses were built after planning. Size and comfort are the things that most people have criticized about those houses but as planners, we were fully engaged. I remember in those days, the AUTOCAD was still not very much popular. We were given a short period to produce the layout plans together with the house plans and we met the target dates. Of course, when one looks at it today and really asks the worth of all that effort we invested, one is in a position to see that it is as good as the plans were not that useful".

The arm-twisting of planners by politicians is discernible in this citation. Planning has always been an instrument used by the state [2]. In the process, the planners are pushed about. Because politicians are always moving from one programme and project to another, a lot of 'white elephants' and unfinished businesses trail behind this trajectory [2].

The following few paragraphs show the views, experiences and attitudes of planners operating in the public sector, notably, the Department of Physical Planning and Harare City Council as well as the private sector.

4.2. Department of Physical Planning (DPP)

Planning officers are involved in a wide range of activities daily. These include, but are not limited to coordinating the process of preparation of development plans and collection and analysing of spatial planning data for the purpose of policy formulation. In addition, they are involved in the preparation of development plans for growth points and rural service centres. Next, the preparations of layout plans and reports for the development of public, industrial, commercial and residential facilities especially low cost housing are part of their business. Moreover, they are responsible for carrying out site planning for the development of schools, clinics, processing subdivision and consolidation applications, preparing change of use and reservation application, and, advising local authorities on development control issues.

A three-year experienced planner with DPP, in responding to whether or not outputs in planning are related to the time invested in producing them, has this to say: "Mostly the kind of output will determine the time to be committed to a job being done. A case is in the process of designing a layout. The desire to produce a certain design in the expected time and the desire to

see the plan being implemented on the ground can push or drive one to work often the whole day designing the layout. However, in some cases it will not be the desire as in some cases we often work with little resources so that we strain ourselves. But because of, in some cases, political pressure, we end up overworking ourselves to meet the targets.” Box 1 provides the full details of the planning environment of planners in the Department of Physical Planning (DPP). Planners in this department state they value space-time interactions. To them, time-sensitivity is typical of what plans they produce and there are a number of guidelines in the Regional, Town and Country Planning Act (RTCPA). Much of the planner’ work is centred on producing plans.

Implementation normally rests on what households and community in general have to do in terms of complying with the provisions of the plans. In certain cases, the plans are overtaken by events given the prevailing macro-economic and related situations.

4.3. The city of Harare

Planners in the City of Harare, also see reliance on traditional planning methods, for example with an emphasis on paper work rather than new information and communication technologies, as a major hindrance to progress in space and time (see Box 2 for detail).

Box 1: Department of Physical Planning (DPP) – Planners’ Views [26]

The participants in the study rated ‘space-time’ interactions important in their work. This is because in their work, plans must be drawn within the stipulated time frame. The bulk of the DPP work revolves around processing subdivisions, change of use and reservation, which in their own right have to be guided by time as a basis for analysis. Participants in the study stressed the importance of time as stipulated by the Regional, Town and Country Planning Act (RTCPA). They pointed out that one could be taken to court if one does not complete specified planning tasks in time. The RTCPA specifies the following times for the completion of specific tasks:

- 2 weeks for subdivision,
- 4 months for deemed refusal notification, and
- 30 days notification on change of use.

Regarding time and plan implementation, the participants could not comment on the issue as “sensitive to the operations of the department”. However on failure or delay of implementing plans, the participants expressed the following remarks:

- I feel emotionally suppressed, *zvinobhowa* (it is boring).
- I feel like the public are saying we are just doing nothing and *hatisi serious* (we are not serious).
- Professionally, I feel like my efforts have been wasted given that I do not see them materialize on ground. It brings pride of competency if my work is implemented.
- I feel like we are not marketing the institution fully.

Besides trying to be sensitive to time, the participants pointed to other factors that determine plan implementation. Specifically they pointed to issues of:

- Resource constraints which they explained as causing most plans become white elephants.
- The rigidity of procedures characterized by bureaucracy.
- ‘Borrowed’ planning tools, mainly Eurocentric, defying local planning aspirations and goals of the public.
- The disjunction between capacity to design a plan and having the implementation authority of that plan; the DPP has no such capacity to implement. Local authorities have that power to implement. Some local authorities end up ‘selling’ plots that are on layout as a means to raise funds, because they are financially constrained. Some of the buyers are mere land speculators. Sometimes housing development cannot take shape on the ground because there is no one who has invested in bulk and offsite infrastructure to make the settlement functional.
- Motivational issues among employees (low staff morale) “*ndingashanda sei nemwoyosemunhu achinjirwa date repay* (how can I work wholeheartedly as someone whose pay date has been changed without notice)”.
- Political interference in planning endeavours.
- Economic factors such as inflation, for instance, during the period of economic meltdown a number of plans had just to be shelved.
- Lack of qualified personnel, for instance, some provinces have no qualified planners and engineers.
- Technological handicap; Most of DPP offices have not yet ‘modernised’. For instance, the application of tools like GIS has not been fully embraced. “If you want to access information from another province you have to wait for a week for the hardcopies to be dispatched by swift.”

The participants could not mention specific cases in which they were involved. They said it was too sensitive to be said and was antithetical to the code of conduct. “*Zvinodzingisa mushando*” (You get expelled from work), they said. Due to the problems that they encountered in their work, they suggested the adoption of new technologies “... such as the introduction of e-governance where we will be online rather than being in line”. In addition, they suggested that local authorities should only be given approval to “second plans after the first one is implemented since they raise funds by just selling plans on paper.” Moreover, this saw the adoption of the private public partnership (PPP) as a critical means to boost implementation resources.

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Box 2: City of Harare – Planners' Views [27]

Participants put it forward that, without observing deadlines in implementation, “our plans will lose the value’ that they have. They mentioned that most of the issues they address are short-term, with a bid to minimize the time between plan implementation and plan design. Moreover, they said: “Since we deal with the public, time should be monitored well. Especially on press notices we publish to public on change of use and subdivision of land the public may respond negatively if we don’t observe deadlines.” Regarding specific cases, there was refusal to disclose information. The same applied to issues on delayed implementation of plans as it was perceived to have a bearing on presenting the image of the local authority. On other factors influencing plan implementation, the participants mentioned that: “The main factor is resource constraints since most of our plans make dust in the shelves due to resources shortages to implement the plans which explain why the public criticise the local authority. In addition, shortage of qualified staff to carry out implementation duties in our districts limits the implementation capacity, hence most of our plan will remain on paper.” Furthermore, they blamed the legislative framework that they said is a hindrance to effective plan implementation “since most of our policies are not backed by strong legislation.” They also pointed to political hindrances, bureaucratic red tape and technology”. Technology affects business and information flow especially to and from the city’s districts. The participants remarked “progress takes a long time due to reliance on traditional communication methods There is too much paper work; there are so many plans in the city planner’s office”. Another setback in plan implementation was the public itself. One officer remarked: “Sometimes the public ...resist, hence implementation in collaboration with them fails.” The participants suggested the following:

- Mobilizing resources to enhance viable implementation (e.g. by private public partnerships);
- Improving staff morale and skills to enhance efficiency and better performance in plan implementation;
- Adopting new technologies;
- Reconciling planning guidelines to minimize bureaucratic impediments in planning approvals;
- Revising planning policies and legislation to guide the planning of activities to address current challenges;
- Strengthening research so as to produce realistic plans and prevent further development of white elephants.

Box 3: Private Planning Firm – Planners' Views [28]

Private firms operate as agency firms and deal with a range of clients who value time in terms of efficiency. The ability of a firm to submit plans on or before deadlines is a way up towards marketing the organization. Regarding time and plan implementation, most organisations remarked that they had always fared well in this respect “...since we work according to clients’ deadlines for their work; we try by all means possible to work according to time. We usually strive to maintain the stipulated times”. On how they felt when a plan is delayed in implementation or has failed, the participants remarked:

- I feel I am not doing enough. What I need is to see my work taking off on the ground.
- Professionally, I feel incompetent among other planners even though delays in plan implementation are rare. Sometimes it is simply because one of our clients’ has simply failed to put his/her materials together on time.
- Institutionally, failure or delay turns to tarnish the image of the firm. This can be demoralising.

Yet the other factors determining plan implementation include:

- Resource availability: Clients may run short of resources to implement a project even though the plans have been completed on time.
- Economic factors may hinder plan implementation, for example “some projects were literally suspended or cancelled during the 2008 crisis.”

At ARUP (after Sir Ove Arup, the visionary founder of the organization), participants gave an example of one case in which plan implementation was delayed. The client was Spar Athenitis. The owner had applied for a development permit for the extension of the shop which took a long time to obtain from the local planning authority. The client had decided to wait implementing the project because it was the period of the economic downturn of Zimbabwe. The suggestions by participants in this sector were general and universal like ensuring the provision of resource availability and adopting new technologies in the planning activities of an organization, specifically shifting from the ‘hard space’ of the manual drafting to the ‘soft space’ of computer aided design for easy transfer of information and layout plans.

Although both the Department of Physical Planning and Harare municipality fall under public planning, the municipality is better equipped for the speedy implementation of its plans. The municipality has the capacity to mobilise plan implementation resources from various sources including rates and public-private partnerships. However, bureaucracy, either within the city structure or without it (mainly seeking permission with the parent ministry of local government, for instance in the annual budget

approval) tends to stifle progress in the implementation of plans.

4.4. The private sector

The activities taking up most of the town planner’s day in a private planning firm involve the processing of subdivisions, consolidation and change of use, research and preparation of local development plans. These duties normally entail the design of

layouts, report writing, site planning, and planning consultation with local authorities. Sometimes the planner has to apply for development permits on behalf of clients and give professional planning advice to clients.

Town planners employed in the private sector are usually exposed to the use of the latest technology. Resources to work are usually readily available and the pride of coming across new challenges everyday makes them feel relevant and motivated. Planners in the private sector believe they are in a position to have quick-wins and see the impact of their input in the communities they work in (see Box 3). Besides, this gives them a 'feeling' of importance.

One respondent notes in ARUP: *"I have amassed a lot of experience and exposure as we have been working. We work on different issues all the time; we go for meetings, do local plans and go for field trips."* Another (a one-year experienced) town planner says, regarding time, productivity and spending time in office: *"At work is where we spend most of the time and much of the productive part of the day. So our outputs are determined by how we spend much of our productive time, which is during the day and at work. If you have a productive day at work, the outputs are most likely to be good (sic)".* A six month intern also says: *"It's just a matter of coming to work on time, even though there is not work to do, we still spend all those hours in our offices. Many times we spend time because it's like a norm to spend it that way not even thinking of outputs."* One planner with experience from both the public sector and now in the private sector, says, *"I think spending lots of time at work doesn't necessarily mean greater output as the majority of people produce the best results when working under pressure than under normal circumstances."*

5. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing views of practising planners operating in different sectors – public, private and voluntary, it is evident that most of them are involved in different activities which include drafting of layout plans, consultation meetings with stakeholder agencies and plan assessments. Thus, the planner's day involves diverse engagements. In most cases, resource availability is an issue of concern to the planner as it has a bearing on the individual planner's performance and outputs. Yet business does not automatically mean desired or targeted outputs. Most planners are frustrated by the enduring delays in plan implementation since they are anxious to see the results of their contributions quickly translate into reality. In most cases, planning recommendations are diverted or distorted by design of political expediency and serendipity. The findings of the study examined in this paper reveal that most town planners engaged in both

the private and public institutions in Zimbabwe are disgruntled. Defiance to planning provisions and hence non-implementation of the plan seems to be the main source of inertia for most town planners in the country. They tend to be used as scapegoats because of the double standards. In most cases, however, there are inadequate, if any resources, to support the implementation of grandiose plans. This stands in sharp contrast to urban development in the advanced countries, where spatial planning is reliably supported with adequate resources for plan implementation.

The paralysed political economy of Zimbabwe beginning from the early 2009 has had serious ramifications on the work ethic of the employees generally and on their productivity levels in their various work stations – public, private or in the voluntary sector. In the public sector largely, productivity has suffered immensely given the low returns to the workers mainly in the form of income. Income levels and payment of workers remain shifting, but in the negative direction. In the private sector, the environment is largely driven by the for-profit motive. The workers are better paid than in the public sector. Besides, the higher the profitability a firm has over the developments it plans, the higher the likely commissions that accrue to the workers. Planners in Zimbabwe have not been spared from the conundrums of what has and is transpiring the wide economy. This paper has indicated how planners can like routinised work provided they get meaningful returns from it. Narratives by the planners across the sectors pointed to this. It is probably unfortunate that the work ethic can be a base for discontent that then reduces the quality of service to the clients or public in general much to the detriment of 'public interest'. In addition, it can be a breeding ground for incompetency and related vices like corruption.

When planners see their plans 'gather dust' because of non-implementation (largely because there are no resources to implement them) and also that the political processes are overruling the rationality of planning, this tends to send a contrary message to planners and urban designers. This study has shown how most of the planners get discouraged. The whole idea of planning is to see development taking shape according to plan. Development has often been dictated by forces outside the rationality of planning; such has worked against the 'conscience' and professional ethics of the field. It must be clearly outlined though that planning is never politically neutral or apolitical. Planning departments in the public sector domain have often been so under-resourced that they then fail to put time as a critical factor in spatial modelling let alone critical research for the making of critical decisions on spatial development. Speaking of time-use, the basics like provision for scientific research for planning has been more of a phantasm than a requirement, not only

in Zimbabwe but in other countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Planning has tended to attract public resentment more due to its control-centricism than to development promotion. This partly explains why informality has taken root in Africa because development outpaces the plans which in most cases are never adequately financed to see that development they purport to bring to the populace. Control-centricism is rooted in urban managerialism which tends to suggest that time is a non-factor in development.

I conclude that the exclusion of the time factor in spatial planning and development in Zimbabwe in particular and in Africa and in the developing world at large, is a critical factor that explains the urban and regional mess that characterises the region. There must be serious effort to rectify ills in the political economy and to take a system's approach to development in which the attitudes and perceptions of the workers must be tuned towards creating a right work ethic that in turn works towards the creation of sanitised urban and regional environments.

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