GEOGRAPHICAL EDUCATION MAGAZINE

GEOGRAPHICAL
ASSOCIATION
of ZIMBABWE

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CONTENTS

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The first stage is to define what is meant by the term 'housing problem'. The 'problem' is that of the groups living in urban areas who are commonly identified as the urban poor. Hence, the stress will be laid upon the housing problems faced by the urban poor. The important distinction then is **whose** housing problem?'.

Thus, before looking at the 'problem' and it's solution it is necessary first to look at how governments and policy makers have perceived 'their' housing problem.

The most common housing problem faced by governments in the Third World in the 1950's and 1960's (though it didn't end there) was not really concerned with identifying and overcoming the housing shortage or backlog for the urban poor. The 'problem' i.e. 'their' problem was how to cope with what have been variously called bustees, barriadas, spontaneous settlements and shanty towns; in short squatter settlements. Indeed they have certainly had their work cut out if we look at the following figures.

Table 1

City	Population (millions) 1975	Squatter population %
Blantyre	0.2	56
Dar es Salaam	0.6	50
Lusaka	0.5	27
Calcutta	7.7	33
Kuala Lumpur	1.0	37
Manila	4.3	35
Caracas	2.6	40
Lima	3.8	40
Mexico City	12.1	46

Adapted from Drakakis-Smith (1981)

They were seen as a problem for different reasons depending on the group consulted. Town planners and architects saw them as a nightmare where the ideal was often a Garden City modelled on European lines. The view of middle and upper class groups was that they were centres of disease which could spread; social workers saw them as areas of deprivation; newspapers as centres of crime and governments as a threat to their political existence.

The unanimous conclusion was then that these areas should be eradicated. This indeed became the policy in many Third World countries. The only housing policies which tended to exist were the provision of housing which was out of the reach of low-income groups.

Here, it is necessary to consider the perceptions regarding squatter settlements and the urban poor in general, in more detail. The most dangerous aspect of squatter settlements was identified as being that of 'invasion'. Especially in Latin America, the policy of eradication led to a realisation amongst the urban poor that together they could be more effective in obtaining accommodation as a group 'en masse'. The result was massive land invasion in urban areas which presented governments with a fait accompli. Many of these invasions were highly sophisticated in their degree of organisation. Hence, areas of land would be identified usually as belonging to government bodies which would put the government in a difficult situation as it would be forced to provide an alternative of some kind or face political embarassment. The land was often marked out by professional surveyors at night and within a matter of days some 20,000 people could move into an area. In the case of immediate attempts at eviction, friendly newspapers were told in advance and thus could lead to unfavourable comment and reflect badly upon the government.

The scale and swiftness of these movements was thus seen as a threat to many governments especially as the land was illegally occupied. It was often felt that the movements might represent a radical mass, intent on overthrowing the government, having already rejected the existing rule of law.

Numerous authors however, have indicated that these groups were more open to manipulation by existing political groups than able to pose any real threat to established political and economic structures. Collier (1976) for example, looked at Peruvian government attitudes to squatter settlements in the 1950's when they were actively courted for political support by the government of the day. Drakakis-Smith (1981) has similarly pointed out that, with regard to the Turkish Gekekondu, there was an increase in the number of land rights given before elections in the hope of soliciting political support.

The idea that the groups occupying these areas were alienated and similarly disaffected and as a result radicalised has likewise been shown to be a misconception. Janice Perlman (1979) has shown that the desires of the dwellers of the Brazilian 'favelas' very much reflected middle class aspirations. As a result, rather than being separated from urban society's values they are essentially shared. Similarly, with regard to the solidarity of the community, Joan Nelson (1979) has argued that any internal cohesion which exists at the time of the invasion disappears soon afterwards, especially when the settlement has become legitimate in the form of obtaining legal title.

It was these misconceptions of squatter settlements held by many people, that lead to much detailed study of these areas and of the urban poor in general. Much of the literature produced an over simplistic view such as Stokes (1962) analysis of 'slums of hope and despair' which gave no acknowledgement to the different levels of mobility available. Similarly, Oscar Lewis' 'Culture of Poverty', is an incredibly pessimistic piece of work, in which he argued that the Culture of Poverty was imbued by the age of 5 or 6. Again he made little of the possible escapes from this condition and indeed argued that the 'Culture' would be far more difficult to eradicate than the

poverty itself, because of the total alienation of these groups from society.

It was reaction to this 'critical' literature and the policies of government that saw the emergence of more sympathetic views and the identification of these areas as 'self-help' solutions to housing problems. The result was seen in the works of William Mangin (1967) and John Turner (1972, 1976, 1979). It was Mangin who highlighted the sophistication of the invasions and pointed to the admirable qualities exhibited by the poor in their ability to provide housing for themselves. Hence, he stated;

> 'Although poor, they do not live the life of squalor and hopelessness characteristic of the "culture of poverty" depicted by Oscar Lewis: although bold and defiant in their seizure of land, they are not a revolutionary "lumpenproletariat"'. (Mangin 1967, p. 21)'

Turner carried this further and described the barriadas of Peru as 'self-improving suburbs' rather than slums. He went on to argue that the geographic stability that this self-help attitude provided would lead to social mobility. Since these early writings, Turner has developed his views into a concerted attempt at propagating self-help strategies as the only way in which the poor can be supplied with housing. This critique has been based on the views of the failure of virtually all governments to provide adequate housing for the urban poor. He has argued that the large heteronomous systems which characterised all countries, precluded them from providing housing of the right quality and quantity for the poor as their size and bureaucracy prevented any flexibility.

As a consequence of this reasoning he contended that governments should not attempt to provide housing for the poor. He argued that governments' role should be kept to the minimum by simply guaranteeing security of tenure and the provision of 'proscriptive' legislation rather than 'prescriptive' legislation. This he felt would minimise intervention by the State and by not defining standards, the dweller would be able to provide accommodation according to his own needs and resources. By developing an autonomous existence via self-help, the resident could meet his or her own needs.

One of the essential features he notes about the concept of housing, particularly squatter/self-help housing is that it's importance lies in what it 'does' for the dweller rather than what it 'is' i.e. it's simple physical structure. What it represents is a base from which the dweller can indulge in other economic activities and hence, the house itself is essential solely for the 'use-value' to which the dweller puts it.

This shift in attitude towards the urban poor and, specifically, towards the squatter settlement gradually lead to changes in government policies in which upgrading strategies were planned such as that in Lusaka outlined by Richard Martin (1982). He noted that, of 57,000 families requiring housing between 1964 and 1974, 27,000 found it in squatter settlements whereas the Lusaka City Council only managed to provide accommodation for 6,934. In his evaluation of the project he found that, by utilising and encouraging resident participation, the minimum standards that were set for house upgrading were in fact far exceeded. The initial aims of the project had been to provide security of tenure, the supply of piped water by providing one standpipe for every 25 houses, adequate access to roads, security lighting and refuse collection. Residents were also supplied with K150 to help upgrade their housing. Similar projects have been widely supported by International aid donors such as the World Bank throughout the Third World.

However, these policies and attitudes towards self-help housing as a solution have come in for severe criticism in recent years for a number of reasons. It has been contended that what writers like John Turner have failed to recognise or have confused, is that the 'freedom to build' (the title of one of his books), as expressed by self-help housing, is not a result of a conscious choice but based simply on the necessity to survive. So while it is appreciated that the writers have recognised these admirable qualities it should not then be argued that the urban poor want to live in such conditions. Similarly, Hans Harms (1982) contends that it is no solution to one's housing problem to know that there is a possibility in twenty years that one might have built a two storey house. This in itself is challenged by Peter Ward (1978) in his study of squatter settlements in Mexico City where he analysed three squatter settlements representing what he termed 'consolidated' 'consolidating' and 'incipient' settlements, all of which had been formed by invasion. These were defined in terms of the level of building that had taken place and were aged 26, 14 and 3 years respectively, at the time of the study. He found that even on the consolidated squatter settlement which had been established for 26 years almost a third of the plots still did not fall into his 'consolidated' category.

Ward goes on further to argue that the conditions which determine the level of consolidation are created as much by outside social and economic processes as by the inherent initiative and resourcefulness that Turner spoke about. For example 45% of the 'consolidators' had completed primary education or more whereas more than half of 'non-consolidators' had no education at all. This was seen as important as 'credentials' were seen as an important advantage in gaining access to jobs. As a result, more than three-quarters of the 'consolidators' earned more than the minimum wage whilst only 35% of 'non-improvers' attained this economic level. This then dispels Turner's similarly simplistic view that squatter settlements are occupied by a homogenous group. Ward goes on to contend that while these areas may provide an area for the amelioration of the poor's socio-economic position they don't provide a vehicle for upward socio-economic mobility as Turner had previously argued.

More fundamental criticisms of self-help housing have been raised by Rod Burgess (1979) in looking at the role self-help housing plays in the wider urban economy. Burgess particularly takes issue with Turner's interpretation of 'use-value'. He argues that it is naive of Turner to see housing as solely representing a use-value to it's owner. While acknowledging that it may only represent something 'useful' to the resident, it may represent many other things to other agencies in the city. Specifically he is concerned with the potential for the change of housing from a 'use-value' to an 'exchange value' and therefore the capability for it to be used for speculation and profiteering. He sees that the transforming of self-help housing into a commodity provides for possible further exploitation of the urban poor, for example by the acquisition of houses by 'slumlords'. Ward for example, indicates that on the oldest settlement only 39% of the residents were owner occupiers. The rest had been turned over to renters.

Harms' (1982) criticisms have looked at it from the point of view of the motives behind State involvement in squatter settlement upgrading policies. For example, he argues that the only reason why these approaches to a housing solution were adopted in Latin America was as a result of the Cuban Revolution. He notes that soon after this the United States and the Organisation of American States established the Alliance for Progress which, by promoting projects such as land reforms and housing projects, hoped to forestall any domino effect in the region. Self-help policies are seen as a

direct result of this, i.e. he sees them as a policy of integrating the poor into the system to stave off political opposition by providing the minimum amount of help to the urban poor.

Both Burgess and Harms see self-help strategies as purely ideological responses. Harms particularly sees them as a regular policy to fall back upon whenever capitalism is in crisis, without really altering resource allocation or effecting structural changes.

The criticisms have not however, prevented the further development of institutionalised policies. These have developed from the original idea of merely upgrading squatter settlements. The principle forms which these policies have taken have been in the form of 'site and service' schemes, sometimes as an appendage to squatter settlements, and the provision of 'core' units. The former usually take the form of vacant plots of land where tenure is secure and facilities are restricted to the provision of a reticulated water and sewerage scheme and sometimes electricity. The core unit similarly, often consists of one or two built rooms and similar reticulated facilities. Both these types of scheme then require the resident to build a dwelling according to his abilities. These were seen as the halfway point between providing a full housing scheme, which had generally proved inaccessible to the urban poor, and simply leaving the poor to their own devices.

In acknowledging the forgoing criticisms these policies are doubly damned both by the Turner 'conservative anarchic' school and by Burgess' essentially marxist interpretation. By one because they introduce the highly complex and inflexible bureaucratic systems, and by the other because they represent a palliative without attacking structural causes of poverty. From Turner's point of view, involvement by the State undermines any autonomy or 'dweller control' which may develop as a result of the poor controlling development of squatter areas. We can see, for example, that the use of allocation systems based on waiting lists permits State agencies to control housing development. Hence, allocation within these schemes is seldom based primarily on need but on the ability to pay the rental charges. Indeed, 'affordability' criteria have represented a major shift for governments in their attempt to develop housing strategies for the poor. Previously housing was provided which was outside the reach of the poor. Site and service or core developments have attempted to address themselves towards what the poor can afford. For example, many governments have adopted the figure of 25% of income to be contributed towards housing by the poor and then worked backwards towards schemes that could meet this percentage. However, what many governments have failed to recognise is that at such low levels of income it is often necessary to spend a minimal amount on accommodation (many squatter settlements indeed were originally rent free), as at such low-levels, food purchases consume a very high percentage of income though the actual amount spent may be fairly constant. Here Steinberg (1982) (in work on Colombo in Sri Lanka) shows the proportions spent on rental and other forms of housing expenditure. (See Table 2.) As income rises, food purchases may comprise a smaller percentage, although a similar amount and once this minimum is fulfilled then more can be allocated to other expenditures such as shelter.

Hence, using income criteria and the requirement of stable employment, government authorities are able to control entry to these schemes and in that sense choose those most likely to succeed in self-help.

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Table 2: Structure of Expenditure

Items of Expenditure	Percentage spent on different items by Income Group (Rs=Rupees)			
	Rs 200	Rs200-399	Rs400-600	>Rs 600
Food, drink, liquor, tobacco	66.01	61.03	55.97	53.88
Clothing, textiles, footwear	7.28	7.42	8.13	7.87
Housing (rents, rates, etc.)	9.96	9.32	11.19	12.44
Fuel for cooking and lighting	4.65	4.11	2.98	4.65
Non-durable household goods	2.73	2.14	2.13	2.26
Personal care and health expenses	1.86	2.17	3.18	1.03
Transport and Communications	3.11	4.16	7.05	0.75
Education and Recreation	2.58	3.14	6.07	7.70
Consumer durables	0.13	0.30	0.99	2.61
Others	1.69	6.21	2.31	6.81
Total in %	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Adapted from Steinberg, F. (1982), p. 380.

Here, it may be useful to look briefly at policies that have so far deve-
loped in Zimbabwe, and specifically in Harare. Harare has seen two main
projects in recent years which are based on self-help ideas i.e. Glen View
and Warren Park. The first was a site and service development with the
provision of a wet core (toilet/shower) and the latter a core unit scheme.
Glen View in particular has seen reasonably fast development in terms of
construction. However there are two major notes of concern. First, the
high level of landlordism. A survey found that almost 71.9% of those inter-
viewed had lodgers also occupying the property. The second is that property
appears to be being occupied by people who differ from those for whom it was
originally planned i.e. low to middle income groups. If the number of
cessions which have taken place (the change of ownership from one owner
according to the Agreement of Sale, to another) are investigated, the pur-
chaser is increasingly found to be in an income group which is so high that
it would preclude him from gaining access in the latest housing scheme at
Kuwadzana. Hence, the low-income groups for whom the schemes were aimed
appear to be being displaced.

In conclusion there is a strange paradox in that self-help housing is a
'policy' which has been advocated with a strong ideological bias. Hence, we
see it being advocated by governments of all political persuasions, but
despite that they embody two different forms. Often the schemes have been
used merely as a palliative without any attempt to attack other structural
problems and have left the poor to their own meagre devices. It is con-
ceivable that, where the State is genuinely concerned with the position of
the poor, self-help can be used as an agent of social change and for real
development. But it must be accompanied by other development changes such
as attempts to increase real wage levels to really 'aid' construction by
the creation of an 'investment surplus' and, as a corrollary, by the
ensuring of access to educational facilities. The housing problems of the
poor cannot be solved in isolation.

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