Review

Adapting to pressure? Social capital dynamics in Greendale Harare

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The paper maps the different intra- and inter-grouping social capital strategies for survival by the cosmopolitan neighbourhoods of Greendale, a 'dry' suburb in Harare, Zimbabwe. Since the turn of the twenty-first century Zimbabwe underwent several challenges primarily due to its controversial national policies leading to international isolation. This isolation saw a general paralysis of the country's economy along income groupings. Greendale is a residential area traditionally known for housing principally high and middle income groups of Harare. But, particularly the year 2005 saw wide and huge influx of low-income groups in the residential area. The major reason for this development was the push due to the controversial Operation Murambatsvina by the government in the same year. Subsequently, this thrust saw the relegated populations finding new accommodation in especially former servant quarters in the suburbs now predominantly occupied by the 'petty African bourgeoisie' class. The original white land occupiers should have mostly evacuated their homes due to the general unfavourable and hostile economic and political situation in the country. The thrust of this discourse is to chronicle the adversity of experience of the 'new look' neighbourhood, in the context of the broader national and geo-political tumult and jerks including but not limited to power faults, water cuts, cash shortages and empty shelves in shops. It underlines some of the functional networks and strategies for survival adopted by the social groupings in the neighbourhood.

Keywords: Neighbourhood, social capital, economic policy, constraints, trust

INTRODUCTION

Overview

In this paper a number of concepts are put to context of the situation of parts of Greendale, a suburb east of the central business district of Harare. Concepts examined include: social capital, economic challenges and strife, neighbourhood safety, trade and entrepreneurial innovations and urban farming. The main theme is on social capital formation and the neighbourhood coexistence. The concept of neighbourhood and how it is

influences or is influenced by the process of social capital formation is quintessential in understanding urban viability, vibrancy and sustainability (Lin, 2001; Forrest and Kearns, 2001; Blunden, 2004; Crawford, 2006; Power and Willmot, 2007; Smith, 2008). This chapter maps how common challenges among urban neighbourhoods in urban Zimbabwe have been able forces in lubricating relationships among households for sustenance and continuity. It draws lessons from among the Harare's different income groups in Greendale at the peak of socio-economic challenges in the years 2005 to 2009. It has been noted that the challenges were a product of the controversial national policies (particularly the fast track land resettlement progamme, allegations for

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human rights abuses, for example under Operation Restore Order)which saw the country ostracised and being in no position to self-sustain itself (Mushimbo, 2005; cf. Pollak, 1975).

As the national economy plunged into oblivion so did service delivery in almost all the sectors including education, health, water and sanitation and energy sectors, to name but a few. In the excruciating pain and challenge experienced by the citizens, walls of income level, race, ethnicity and other socio-economic dividing lines gradually fell (cf, Market, 2009). Everyone seemed now to be in solicit of some favour even form the formerly perceived as underdogs of society (cf. Laleye and Ayeni, 2005): the gardener, the lodger, the housemaid, blue collared employee of any class including the till operator, the security guard, the nurse aid, and needless to say the neighbour who could give water from his or her borehole in case of the water crisis. The challenges became the enforcing agent for neighbourhoods' solidarity (cf. Power and Willmot, 2007). This was, in overall essence, a new dimension of urban social capital formation built on the struggles by the citizens of a battered economy in the context of international contestation and national upheaval.

This chapter dissects these various dimensions of social capital formation and enhancement in urban neighbourhoods with particular reference to those areas that have been historically known for separatist attitudes and class intolerances, and in this case Greendale, a gated community in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. The principal questions to be discoursed in this article are: In the face of imminent challenges of commonality do urban cosmopolitan groupings really matter? (cf. Young, Diep and Drabble, 2006). What are the favourable conditions for social capital formation for the good of urban neighbourhoods? How does social capital manifests itself in 'gated communities', and, with what outcomes? To gather this information, the authors made use of observations as evidenced by the photographs they took and which are in the chapter. In addition, they got information from key informants which they conveniently selected being church members, lodgers, landlords and domestic workers within the neighbourhood. Overall, the study was entreprevistic in nature hence little, if any of quantitative figures and numbers. Literature was also consulted to theoretically buttress certain emerging patterns of data.

The policy process and neighbourhoods: An analysis

Neighbourhood development and sustenance are critical issue in urban sustainability. Indeed, households and families are the building blocks of any community (Power and Willmot, 2007). Whereas family is often defined in terms of kinship ties, households are usually in the form of individuality or a group of individuals that live under one roof and share in every aspect of the home economy including sharing food from the same pot. In urban spheres, neighbourhoods are founded on the roots of the aspect of households (cf. Power and Willmot, 2007). While intra-household aspects are important in consolidating or breaking household solidarity and accord, inter-household relations are of critical value in the manner of how neighbourhoods are shaped. Equally important in shaping neighbourhoods are the processes of governance, governmentality and regional and national policies (cf. Smith, 2008; Crawford, 2006; McNulty, 2005).

National policies, as opposed from values and norms asserted by a neighbourhood, tend to have an overriding effect on the way regions and sub-regions in society are administered. Whereas in a neighbourhood members can implore each other through the assets of trust, reciprocity, networking and norms (through intrinsic mechanisms), the state tends to act from outside and with some extrusive impulsion. If what the state does and has elements of benefaction, then its policies are deemed as an asset; when they bring some pain and are unfavourable, they are a liability. Sometimes, how the state acts may have a splitting effect to neighbourhoods especially if that neighbourhood has plural and cosmopolitan elements, which in most cases is the norm (McNulty, 2005).

If the challenges negatively affect everybody, members may think of mass protest against the state, at least in a liberal and democratic society. But when the state is autocratic and repressive, everyone may decide to act in subservience. This may involve adopting some resilient mechanisms, and endure the pressure. This is a 'soft approach' and is adaptive in style. In this aspect, one sees the manner through which subjects or participants act with respect to vertical networks of information in which there are superiors and subordinates. Government is a policy maker and implementer is a principal in the vertical network. On the contrary, community based management systems follow the horizontal system of governance and democratic norms reign. Borrowing from Putnam (1993:174), vertical flows of information, "…are often less reliable than horizontal flows, in part because subordinate husbands information as a hedge against exploitation. [There are] sanctions that support norms of reciprocity against the threat of opportunism are less likely to be imposed upwards and less likely to be acceded to, if imposed."

Public policies, social capital and neighbourhoods in urban Zimbabwe

We discuss the influence of shifting public policies in the country under the headings of rural challenges vis-à-vis urban opportunities, the delusion of the one-city concept and Operation Murambatsvina at its the corollary. This is

by no means exhaustive of the issues under this heading.

Rural Challenges vis-à-vis Urban Opportunities

Land reform, in Zimbabwe at the turn of the new millennium, was conducted in a rather radical and revolutionist manner (Mushimbo, 2005; Hoogeveen and Kinsey, 2001) becoming a rural process with both rural and urban overtones. But, from another angle, it had international nuances of controversy in that it triggered, first the 'mass exodus' of whites who were the dominant owners of land in the country and, second, the ostracism of the country by other countries in protestation of the controversial government policy (Bond, 2008). This protestation against Zimbabwe is the one that ushered in a number of socio-economic challenges that were to mark the country for almost twelve years, taking 1997 as the year of the 'inception of trouble, and 2008 as the zenith of the trying times.

In the trying times, politically, economically and socially were other natural induced challenges including excessive flooding resulting in the destruction of infrastructure (dams, roads, bridges and buildings) due cyclones especially Cyclone Eline in the year 2000 (cf. Reason and Keibel, 2004). There were a number of droughts which impelled many rural households to divide between rural and urban centres (cf. Brockerhoff and Eu, 1993). Cities proved to provide better opportunities for survival through informal sector operations of which the expanding urban households engaged in as a coping strategy against the vagaries of the increasing urban poverty (Potts, 2006; Chirisa, 2007; 2008; 2009; Bond, 2008). It must be underscored that it was the discomfiture characterising rural areas which pushed a number of households into urban centres.

Under the Growth with Equity policy propounded by the socialist government it had been envisioned of a possibility of striking a balance between rural and urban areas in the country (Hoogeveen and Kinsey, 2001). This position was strengthened by the establishment of growth points which would ensure retention of the rural folks within rural bounds. But as rural growth centres rather tended towards stagnation and non-growth, and also the non-productivity in the general rural sector, populations were, en mass, drawn to urban centres (cf. Kay, 1981). A state of over-urbanisation became quite conspicuous. In no time some counter-urbanisation process was brewing.

Light in Crowley ed. (2004:387) has described contemporary migration to major cities as a process leading to over-urbanisation in which migrants first saturate "…mainstream urban labour markets that governments supervised, regulated and counted; thereafter, migrants poured into the informal sectors, which expanded to accommodate them….This process created a two-tier economy consisting of a regulated mainstream and an unregulated informal sector". The two strands of formality and informality continue to spiral into vibrancy in urban spheres and urban Zimbabwe has not been exclusive.

Operation Murambatsvina: The corollary

In May 2005, the government embarked on large scale of informal housing structures and business stalls (including flea markets and tuckshops). This mass destructive crusade resulted in more than seven hundred households adversely affected, without accommodation, means of several, in emotional agony and the majority displaced. The most affected areas were those inhabited by the low profile classes of society (Chirisa, 2007; Zimbabwean Times, 21 July 2005; Fontein, 2009). In effect, contrary to the initial thinking by government whereby destruction of illegal structures was supposed to be done indiscriminately across urban centres of the country, the government latter had to make some recourse in the process (Potts, 2006). First, in fear of litigation by the middle and high-income urban real estate owners, it stopped going to their places of habitation. Second and in maximising on the 'favour' it had granted to these households, it then stressed 'regularisation' of the illegal structures in the rich and middle class residential areas. In this vein, those who had illegal structures could pay processing fees for the regularisation. This money was targeted towards financing government-constructed houses under a social housing programme that was meant to remedy and appease those affected by Operation Murambatsvina.

However, the number of the adversely affected was just too huge to satisfy the majority whose largest numbers were, *ipso facto*, left out. This counter-Operation Murambatsvina housing programme was termed 'Operation Garikayi/Hlahlani Kule. In its approach, it was fordist but at the same time it was born out of panic as the international audience and spectatorship grew in bitter disfavour of the government's Operation Murambatsvina. As middle-income and rich class suburbs got the reprieve, many of their irregular structures remained in situ. These were to exert a pull on the homeless poor from the over-urbanised low-income suburbs (cf. Kamete, 2005; Fontein, 2009). It may be seen as philanthropic of the landlords in the rich and middle-income suburbs but the profundity of the matter was that the poor were to be a source of income for the majority of them as the economic cake began to shrink the more over the next three or so years hence the emergence of a petty bourgeois class of African landlords. This diffusionist process had some equilibrating overtones in that it allowed for a mixegenation of the formerly polarised urban social classes. This was in a way a development to the notion propounded during they heyday of independence in the

1980s; the 'one-city' concept.

The Delusion of the One City Concept

In essence the notion of the one-city was postulated by some pro-African scholars who desired to see the black independence ironing out the white racist philosophy of separate development which saw the creation of urban human habitats designed along racial lines. Thus, under colonial legislation and policy, there were three basic areas in cities: the part for Europeans and all whites only; places for Asians and coloureds; and places for Africans. This kind of city was racialist and exclusive (cf. Wekwete, 2006; Davison, 2002). The 'one city concept' was pronounced, though not, *in toto*, backed by some explicit legislative instrument, to pull down the walls of racial divide (Kay, 1981). It had somewhat a populist appeal (Wekwete, 2006). Over time, racial tensions have been noted to have been watered down. This may be partly explained by the fact that a number of whites indeed pulled out of the country, in the first place because the loathed being ruled by a black government but secondarily on the basis of socio-economic nuisances inflicted by the same government.

Gradually, quite a number of blacks by some upward social mobility climbed the economic and political ladder to qualify to be in the middle-income or rich bracket. This has seen quite a number of them buying houses in the formerly white only suburbs. This has also created a social division in urban space, now pronounced along wealth lines (Kay, 1981). Whether by some fraternising appreciation of fellow Africans or by a desire to earn some livelihood and sustain a high class status in society, the number of the poor coming into rich neighbourhoods to live in now rented accommodation in the former servants' quarters increased immensely as from 2005 after the destruction of the poor's homes in low-income residential areas. In general terms middle income or rich occupied areas are very expensive to live in. The space is taxed in rateable charges called rates while low-income residential pay supplementary charges. As a matter of principle when one rents out space in high- and middle class residential areas, it is a way of raising additional income to supplement that portion of the income that go towards property tax. Yet, in the times of intense economic challenges in the country (particularly 2005 to 2008), this money became an essential income to source day-to-day necessities including grocery, transport fares and school fees. This created neighbourhoods with a lot of on-plot interdependences between landlords and tenants, some kind of altruistic reciprocity.

Across plots, landlords in the neighbourhoods found solace in discussing common matters including discussing the rent levels they had to charge to bit the inflation that was wreaking havoc; tenants whispered one to another of the kind of treatment they were getting from their landlords as well as where to find 'better homes' within or without the neighbourhood. It is also in this period that movies particularly African (especially Nigerian) got popularised in the urban territory; households enhanced their relationships by borrowing from and lending to each other compact disks (CDs), video compact disks (VCDs) and DVDs. In this way the neighbourhood spirit got strengthened thus loosening the former norm of rigid household privacy among households. It must be observed that Statutory Instrument (SI) 216 of 1994 allowed for certain economic activities on-plot (Davison, 2002). Apart from making business out of providing accommodation to the homeless, some households became of 'petty African bourgeoisie' class by marketing products and services homemade or exported from across the borders.

Common challenges and status of the social asset in Greendale

Greendale is a residential area traditionally known for housing principally high and middle income groups of Harare. The area is bounded by Samora Machel Road to the south, Arcturus Road to the north, Harare Drive to the east and Glenara Avenue to the west (refer to Figure 1). The suburb is located in the north eastern side, some nine kilometres from the city centre of Harare.

But, particularly the year 2005 saw wide huge influx of low-income groups in the residential area. According to one key informant, neighbourhood enhancers in Greendale are built around five principal pillars: religion, education, entertainment, trade (as in a business line venture), the quest for safety, as well as politics. These, he stressed, have a tendency to bring certain groups of people together. Though, he made it clear that the solidarity outcomes could not be likened to those in rural areas which he categorized as uniquely more solidified and rooted. In line with this thinking, is Toffler (1970)'s notion of transient relationships, to be characteristic of the twenty first century in which people meet, establish some relationships, which are then discarded as soon as members change places (neighbourhoods) in which they live and establish other relationships. It is prudent to unpack the different features of each of the neighbourhood enhancers mentioned above and also to show how they feature in the social capital framework. Smith (1975) identified four different dimensions of cohesion are discussed: use of local facilities, personal identification, social interaction, and value consensus. These four are implicit in this discourse as shown by this shortlist.

Religion and Fellowships

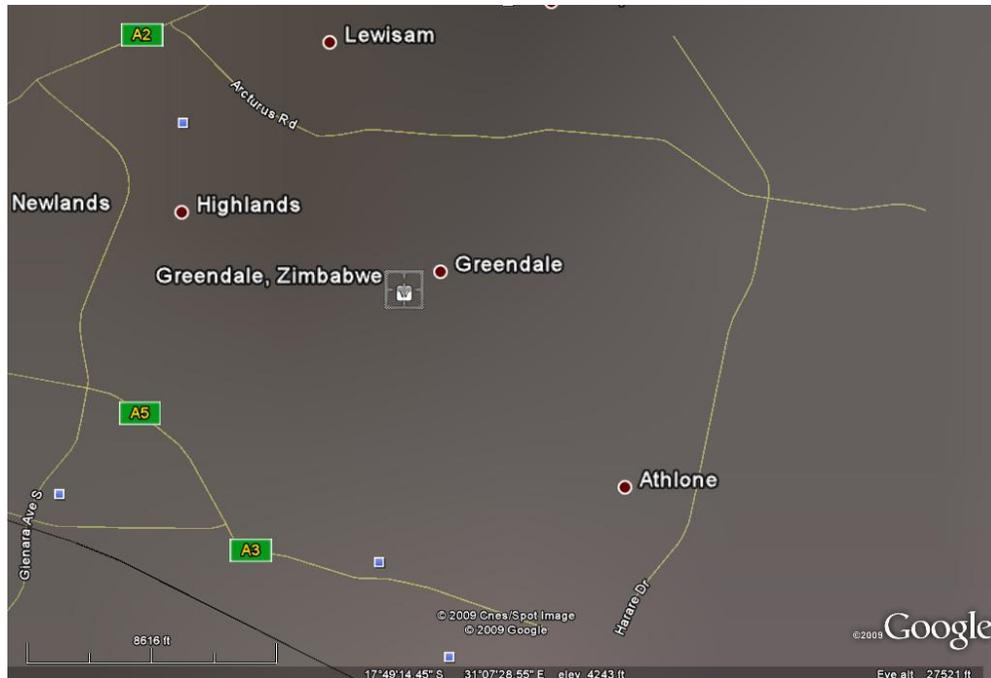Although, there are a number of religious groupings and

Figure 1. Location Map for Greendale

arrangements, in Greendale, as in any other neighbourhoods in Harare, the study has established that Christianity is the dominant religion in the place. But in Christianity there are innumerable sects and denominations, so completely bound by different beliefs, which beliefs are a distinguishing factor of one from others. For instance, traditional church members (Catholics, Methodists, Anglicans, [Dutch] Reformed Church, Seventh Day) increasingly showed that they were different from the modern churches (most of which are protestant Pentecostals – e.g. Apostolic Faith Mission – AFM, Fountain Church of Life, Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa – ZAOGA, etc) and emerging including the African apostolic sects (Johane Masowe, Mugodhi, etc). In Greendale, this whole assortment of traditional, Pentecostal and apostolic (white garment) churches was established to be common (Plates 1a and b).

Rigid lines tended to be fixed at the boundary of each grouping, although one member of the white garment churches had this to comment: "Though some so-called Pentecostal churches claim to be so influential and spiritual powerful, we often receive their members, sometimes on early Sunday mornings. They will be in a hurry to go and attend their church services and we help them with our holy water and stones. Some come by night and they really know that we make a difference in their lives". This is a testimony of a case of 'crossing the boundary fence' and the chief reasons which force them to engage in this somewhat hypocritical activity include, according to the source: a quest for stability in marriages, a search to be secure in employment, peace with

relatives and neighbours, some chronic diseases, barrenness and the search for 'opening up the womb', *kutsvaga kuchinja ura* (a quest for babies of the opposite sex), to name but a few. It was noted that the predominance of women in the whole religious business was quite established.

There are also cases of certain churches (like Life Covenant, Bible Believing Church, Hear the Word, Faith Ministries, etc) which have some central location in the Central Business District (CBD) or in other neighbourhoods within the city. Members from these churches are made to know and relate to each other in a well-established way; they would contact each other for cell group sessions within the Greendale neighbourhood or to make arrangements for travel together to their main venue, say on Sundays or to a venue of a wedding or funeral for one of their members.

Although, religion is a neighbourhood enhancer in Greendale, it is by far incomparable to the pre-sixteenth century (before Martin Luther rebelled against Roman Catholicism) in which one Christian unitary movement controlled the conduct and affairs of neighbourhoods. In Greendale, there is multi-polar religionism, marked by somewhat loose religious democracy. In this arrangement obtaining in currency, basing neighbourhood enhancement on religion becomes an overstatement.

But at churches, a family-spirit is created and enhanced in which members are taught to help each other in not only matters of spiritual but also social life and some balanced religious life. For example at one assembly, the

Plate 1. Some of the churches in Greendale Neighbourhood
Plate a: A Seventh Day Church premise under construction, adjacent to Athlone Shopping Centre. Construction is financed by community church members hence a symbol of unity of purpose by people in a neighbourhood.

Plate 1b. In one of the open spaces, a white garment church group gathers for prayer and worship. Note a heap of rubbish thrown away be residents in the neighbourhood. What an environmental hazard!
Source: *Authors (2009)*

author once attended in looking for information to put together this paper, a Scripture in the Epistle of James was, read, re-read and preached: "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. " (James 2:15-17)".

Plate 2. Conversions of certain premises in Greendale: A case of positive need
Plate 2a: This is a church building under construction. The same is also used as private school.

The preacher was trying to be as practical to life as he could.

The researcher discerned a quest for neighbourhood enhancement, albeit parochial, selective and somewhat targeted, when certain of the members were in deprivation and had to look up to fellow members for assistance. As such there were noted some testimonies by some of the members of 'brethren' who had helped them get jobs, some who had invited them at the banks or shops where they worked and had assisted them in getting cash and buy scarce basic commodities, respectively, during the days of cash and foodstuff shortages, especially in 2008. "As long as we have one of our members where that which I want is there, why should I suffer? That brother or sister of mine has been placed there by divine appointment. When I get it through that can you call that corruption?" remarked one member of a church. Thus religious doctrine produces a one reference point upon which the community heeding to it is bound and expected to make some practical life out of it which then has a bearing on the norms in a neighbourhood, howbeit impliedly.

Education and Schooling

In terms of education, it was established that a number of private schools had emerged in the neighbourhood in the period between 2007 and 2009 when the study was carried out. These private schools were run mostly by former teachers who had moved away from the public education sector whose examination body is the Zimbabwe School Examination Council (ZIMSEC). The main reason for the departure from the public school body was noted as poor remuneration coupled with declining working conditions. For instance at the peak of 2008, teacher's salaries were packed at a mean of United States dollars equivalent of three or four dollars (before the dollarization in February 2009, when they were first entitled to a goods voucher of one hundred dollars a month. The voucher system worked only for a month after which they could now get one hundred dollars cash, which was then reviewed to one hundred and fifty dollars up to December 2009. At private schools, teachers could get other fringe benefits including groceries and transport allowances.

At one newly established school, Fountain of Life Church School, it was established the private school was registered under the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture and secondary and high school classes (Form One to Six) were in session; students were even in some blue uniforms to indicate genuine institutionalisation both with the education public regulator and the community, respectively. Apparently more than ninety percent of the pupilage was from Greendale. Among the reasons for joining the school cited by the pupils were: dissatisfaction with the performance of the public schools they were once enrolled in; the need to cut on transport costs hence join in a community school in which walking to school was feasible; and the general value for money which they perceived as teachers were more committed and determined to produce better results with them.

One quite interesting aspect to note has been that the school, a church building under construction, could accommodate all the classes and both the teachers and students were not worried about teaching and learning under a tent roof (see Plates 2a and b). To them it was a symbol of dedication and visioning.

Plate 2b. One residential stand was converted into a crèche
Source: Authors (2009)

Under the town planning regulations in the country, such kind of development (in this case a school within a neighbourhood), can be approved if it is an established that there is a "positive need", which is a very special requirement by members of that neighbourhood and they can not function without that good or service. When the authorities make provision for that need that constitutes a "special consent".

The same scenario also explains the special services with the Greendale neighbourhood including crèches and surgeries found in the suburb. Pupils in neighbourhood schools were noted to have been drawn from both the underperforming public schools as well as from the 'overcharging' private schools within and without the neighbourhood. At open and parents' meeting days, parents from across the economic divide (rich and poor) had an opportunity to interact and possible also establish certain relationships and friendships. Some pupils also were noted as sometimes visiting each other during vacation, holidays and weekends. The school becomes a rendezvous for relationship building, and quite on the downstream, community building.

Entertainment and Pastime

Although entertainment can be broadened to mean all kinds of functions and arrangements which make people to party, breakfast and dine together, in this discourse a narrow definition is adopted in which friends and relatives assemble occasionally for pastime drinking and enjoyment. Greendale has several shopping centres including Kamfinsa, Rhodesville, Athlone, Letombo, and paGomba, and Glenara. At all these centres people from within and without the neighbourhood come for a drink,

braai, and other matters "for joy". It was established entertainment is a male-dominated venture as most women are in the home or attending women-related functions including Thurday church meetings (*ruwadzano*, fellowship), kitchen parties, baby shower parties, to mention these three. This shows how largely the urban neighbourhood society in Zimbabwe still resembles the traditional rural arrangement where women and girls are associated with largely indoor activities while the males are associated with outdoor and venturous life. One woman had this to say: "It is African for women to be worried with the home. I don't mind if my husband comes back home as late as two in the morning. He must find time to enjoy and meet friends, though I sometimes worry about him contracting the HIV. That is dangerous and ruinous!"

Entertainment tends to be an inter-neighbourhood venture for men for certain places are more enjoyable than others. Some stated that occasionally they had to visit night clubs and bars in the CBD, say when their favourite music band was playing at that place. Others mentioned places like *kwaMereki* and *kwaMai Fafi*, which they visited for braai and "good women". Entertainment, in this study tended to seclude women and children who, one respondent stated "should spend more time at home given that we have brought them entertainment at home – some movies on CDs, VCDs and DVDs to watch and enjoy!" The age of majority being eighteen in Zimbabwe, some youths categorically stated that they hated being labelled as children and should, therefore, be given the liberty to enjoy themselves at will. Apparently, the entertainment question emerged as a threat to neighbourhood consolidation as most grown up children wanted to be treated as adults and no longer to be "apron-tied to the home or the mother's attention".

Figure 3. Advertising personal abilities and commodities for sale.
Plate 3a. Tree cutting is a very critical service in Greendale. Very big trees characterise the neighbourhood. They become an environmental hazard especially during stormy and rain seasons, when they can fall, block roads or break fences and durawalls.

Plate 3b. Although Greendale is a 'seasoned' and old suburb, construction and reconstruction of buildings including houses in still big business in the area. In the stone advertisements in the two clips, one can note that the tree cutter might also be the building materials' trader given that the phone number is the same.

Trade and Business Operations

The study revealed that people of the same trade and professions in Greendale, as in most other places elsewhere, tended to work and even group together. Sometimes there were very strong forward, backwards, upward and downward linkages. Street traders tended to move together, say when going to get goods from the wholesale market, say Mbare. Going to Mbare involved the traders getting up very early (as early as four o'clock or five in the morning) so as to get quality stuff for sale. One lady said:

We have to move in groups because sometimes it is not very safe during these early hours of the day. There is strength in numbers.

The trade arrangement was also noted to be a threshold for commodity price setting. There were certain trades which can be labelled as 'briefcase trades' in which the operators had to depend on advertising their services either at notice boards in or at certain supermarkets like TM, Spar, and Savemor or at durawalls or rocks along public pathways (see Plates 3a and b).

But there were noted some poor folks who have also been noted to move door to door making offers to sell

Plate 4. The Story of Small Lots for Urban Farming
Residents in the neighbourhood have resorted to on-plot and off-plot farming. This is a portion of an open space which has been converted into small lots for growing different kinds of crops. In this picture, the owners decided to partition their lots by leaving some green between their small fields. The most used kind of labour is the hired labour, some of which is obtained from neighbouring places like Epworth or from within Greendale.

Plate 5. Transporters and Fruit and Vegetable Vendors
Street vendors sell their fruits and vegetables under a tree at Athlone Shopping Centre (this is at the corner of the car park for the shopping centre). Behind them are stones where two men sell roasted green mealies. Just behind them is a 'kombi' to transport commuters into the CBD. Across the road, by the corner, is a 'workshop' by two cobblers. This shows the sort of variety and choice residents have in the neighbourhood in accessing goods and services they may require.
Source: *Authors (2009)*

their labour either to wash clothes, clean houses, and prepare and cultivate land. Although, of this lot the majority, were for Epworth, a low-income suburb south east of Greendale, some were from within Greendale itself. These were indeed the majority of the tillers of the ground for urban farming as practiced in pockets passive open spaces in and around the neighbourhood.

One key informant indicated that the majority of the lot (off-plot) for urban farming were owned by the landlords within the neighbourhood (cf. Duchemin, Wegmuller and Legault, 2008). He remarked:

With lodgers and tenants it is quite impossible for them to hold on to some piece of land for farming given their transient nature. But the landlords mostly rely on hired labour. Only very few lodgers, like me, who have stayed for more than fifteen years can possess some field out there. In fact, have three plots, but not at the same spot

Plates 3, 4 and 5 show how individuals market their skills within the neighbourhoods and the city. They also embark on use of assets around them, like land for urban

farming.

Power faults and water shortage

As already highlighted, Greendale is located in the higher grounds of Harare and it has been labelled as a 'dry' part of the city due to perennial water challenges in the area (despite the fact that Letombo water reservoirs are found in this suburb). Some households and sections of the suburb, since 2007 have even gone for over two years without water (cf. Zimbabwean Times, August 6, 2009), at least the reticulated one from the city water works, especially in the period when the Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) was managing this important resource (cf. IRIN, 22 January 2007). In February 2009, ZINWA handed back water management to local authorities (Zimbabwean Times, January 30, 2009), though in rural areas some of the local authorities have not re-taken over citing viability challenges).

But how did Greendale cope under the water-stressing times? Quiet a number of landowners invested in borehole drilling on their plots. But given the fact that the suburb is on a relatively high ground, some of the boreholes could only contain water in months December to sometime in August. After that the water table suddenly dropped and only those near water streams or swampy points (lower portions of the suburb) then remained with water. Those from the water depleted areas would either have to source water from other places of the city as long as they could organise transport to go and fill their 'drums', or they had to negotiate with the 'water fortunate' households. Some of the benefactors would ask the water-seekers to come at some stipulated times and have water. For example, at the driest point in time in October and November 2008, queues were an order of the day at those houses where boreholes were still with water. Some households could only accept those members who were their church-mates.

But another challenge has been that of power faults, where sometimes, for instance during the rainy season, power in certain sections of the Greendale neighbourhood would go for more than two or three weeks. During the dark days, residents must rely on firewood, especially the poorer households without electricity generators. Sometimes, some households have nowhere to get any firewood but then should learn the art of negotiation with neighbours, especially those who are landlords and who can grant them some license

to come and pull down some dead branches in the trees that are on their plots. Again, such arrangements were noted to be more likely if the neighbours were 'friends' or claimed some kinship (fictive kinship) with the owners of the plot where firewood could be obtained. But, oftentimes residents had to be initiative enough so that electricians could come and fix their problems.

Even when the electricians knew about the fault, they would still cite other challenges, for example, having no transport to come for a physical inspection of the challenge and fix it. In this case, residents in the affected area had, not only to look for the transport, but also to organise some kind of payment to than the electricians for 'sacrificing their time' and fix the problem. This latter arrangement included organising meetings for which all the members of the 'no lights' area could assembly, discuss what needed to be done, delegate a team to go and approach the electricians, and also contribute the money. In all this, not all members would contribute; they were those who chose to go nicodemously on their own and sometimes solicit being connected on a line with lights (but also pay more), then there were those who would contribute and seek the greater good for the greater number, but there were also those who never contributed citing that either way, their houses would just one day be lighted (See Plate 6).

Although there were other 'neighbourhood-cementing factors', there were others which were not stressed those they were mentioned. These include a quest for neighbourhood safety and political affiliation. Regarding the former, residents never quite stressed the need for street public lighting and establishment of strong neighbourhood watch teams although incidences of housebreaking, mugging and armed robberies were sometimes noted as compromising the neighbourhood safety.

It emerged that those tenants and landlords who had guns could fire them up during the night to try and scare aware thieves. Accruing from this act was the positive externality that the whole neighbourhood would at least gain some tranquil night from one or several gunshots. Some of the respondents indicated that whenever and wherever housebreakings had occurred, it often emerged that the guard or gardener at that house was in accomplice of the whole matter. "It is not easy for a stranger to easily access someone's property unless, he or she is working with an insider," he stressed. Regarding political affiliation, respondents were not very keen to comment although they generally dismissed it as far-fetched and not holding any water.

Plate 6. Community organisation and the curiosity to get results
Plate 6. In the Trinity sub-neighbourhood of Greendale, a ZESA truck loaded with transformers is parked at a power sub-station along this street (Trinity) as ZESA works talk to some community members. For three weeks residents in this sub-area were without electricity. One the day when the transformer which had been 'uprooted' for repair was returned, children, women and men of this sub-community were not too impatient to see the electricians do their work in their presence. Behind this scene, the affected members (more than forty-five homesteads, had organised themselves, contributed money (US$2 per plot/stand) which the representatives sent to ZESA offices had to present as a form of 'thanksgiving' to the electricians. However, some members who did not contribute anything were alleged to have paid more (perhaps more than US$50); they got connected to another line two days before the rest.   To pay as an individual or to get absorbed into community....that is the question!
Source: *Authors (2009)*

CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing paragraphs have shown how certain indiscriminate challenges affecting regions, cities and neighbourhoods can be turned into a force and asset for community building and neighbourhood enhancement. When residents group each other, they are often glued together but such cementing factors along the lines of religion, education, entertainment, trade, safety and sometimes politics. For Greendale, policy shifts at national level may be cited as the bedrock for the changes that have been noted in this neighbourhood. Not only have these shifts resulted in some class transformations but also some discontinuity in the manner in which networks are created and maintained.

The subsequent neighbourhood of new networks and fabric has been beaten left, centre and right due to increased power and water cuts, cash shortages and empty shelves in shops in the second half of the first decade of the twenty-first century. The common

challenges have contributed some functional networks and a platform for exercising strategies for survival by the residence including organising and managing space, dealing with energy and water crises, crime prevention and managing those transient problems including the cash shortages and dearth of commodities in shops. Above all the 'densification' of the neighbourhood has ushered in new strategies for survival among landlords, tenants and lodgers hence bringing in some new accommodation patterns in the neighbourhood. Apparently, it has emerged from this study that neighbourhood members when confronted by some common challenges will, in effect, find ways to organise themselves, make contributions both in the form of tangibles (like contributing money) and intangibles (like sharing in ideas, faith, fellowships or even the sound of a firing gun), communicated or not communicated. In this way, they become patterned in thought, perception and attitude bringing in some kind of camaraderie in which community sustainability is shaped.

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