

An Analysis of the Environmental Stewardship Concept and Its Applicability in Peri-Urban Towns: Lessons from Epworth In Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the theory and concept of environmental stewardship in light of the development and management of the peri-urban space drawing some striking lessons for urban governance and management in Epworth, a peri-urban town, satellite to Harare, the capital city of Harare. Different thematic dimensions embedded in stewardship are elucidated. Key aspects in the discourse show that different stakeholders in place stewardship espouse different values, philosophies and attitudes with regards to the way they perceive the place of their dwelling (habitat), professional inclination, livelihoods development as well as traditionalism. It is recommended that each constituency should be treated in disparate and distinct theoretical analysis yet fostering consensus building among all the actors for the betterment of the place in question. This is critical in the making of germane ground for place stewardship whose making is by nothing but consensus, nurturing collective values and fostering unity of purpose by strategic visioning. By so doing it is hoped that sustainability of the place in terms the ecological health, effective resource pooling and utilization as well as strengthening of the socio-political dimensions of development will be advanced in the unstable and rickety peri-urban areas.

Keywords: peri-urbanity, stewardship, governance, management, sustainability, actors

INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

Simply put, stewardship refers to the philosophy and practice of management for or on behalf of others (Hernandez, 2007). Unlike advocacy which has somewhat intercessory overtones, in stewardship the steward makes decisions and benefit directly for the resources pooled and actions exercised but, in simultaneity, fighting for the right for future generations (heirs) to also benefit from the proceeds. The term is derived from the theoretical belief that mankind was created by the Creator of the whole universe to dwell and improve the earth on behalf Him (God) (Sheng, 2008). Though it is applicable to a host of resources (estates, finances, and other material assets), it is usually used with geo-referenced matter hence regional, place and environmental stewardship. It must be underscored at the very outset that, stewardship goes hand-in-glove with the concept of sustainable development (Baker 2007; Manjengwa, 2007) defined by the Brundtland Commission as "...development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED], 1987, p.43). Focus in stewardship is strongly placed at the future generations. Manjengwa observes that implementation of the sustainable development agenda is, in many localities, often

marred by implementation challenges. In this observation alone is an insight that place stewardship (as represented by such items as the Agenda 21) is quite a taxing involvement for local actors in their respective capacities as stewards in the locality (cf. Bekessy & Gordon, 2006). This is because place stewardship as a management practice involves such activities as administration, direction, control, budgeting and organization of territorial affairs on behalf of the residing citizens of that space (McVicker & Bryan, 2002; Hernandez, 2007). Peri-urban settlements viewed through the lens of place stewardship are a critical place of concern given their volatile nature as their boundaries are ever-changing with corresponding challenges on the populations sitting on the boundaries (Buxton, Goodman & Tieman, 2006; Ecotrust and Resource Innovations, 2008; Muzvidziwa, 2005; United Nations Human Settlements Programme [UNHABITAT], 2008). Unless the place stewardship concept is explained and critiqued with its various dimensions explored its applicability as a sustainable development cutting edge will be difficult and the peri-urban areas offer a sound context for this diagnostic venture. Peri-urban settlements are places of action with critical evidence for urban development, management and governance.

The principle of stewardship is rooted in the tenets of participatory democracy (Munzwa, Chirisa & Madzivanzira, 2007; Saito, 2008; World Bank, 2004) through decentralized governance practices and the agency theory. It is about intermediation. There exists a principal, somewhere in the invisible sphere and the steward makes somewhat arbitrary decisions, *prima facie*. Yet, in actuality, institutions laid down by the latent 'master owner' are the real or supposed to be source of actions and decisions made by the steward. It should be underscored that the steward occupies, at face value, a seat of superiority yet relative to the invisible principal, it is seat of inferiority (Hernandez, 2007). There are many reasons why the steward should act with supremacy and informed decision-making. These will be examined in latter sections but basic and underlying factor for the actions by the steward is the trust and legitimacy in his or her support from the principal (behind) as well as the confidence that he or she enjoys from the people receiving his or her services. Travis, Egger, Davies and Mechbal (2002) define six domains / sub-functions of stewardship as: generation of intelligence, formulation of strategic policy direction, ensuring tools for implementation (powers, incentives and sanctions), building coalitions / building partnerships, ensuring a fit between policy objectives and organizational structure and culture, and ensuring accountability.

Stewardship is defined by Hernandez (2007) as "...the attitudes and behaviors that place the long-term best interests of a group ahead of personal goals that serve an individual's self-interests" (p. 2). This definition speaks of interests; stakeholders have interests as well. Exposing stakeholders to a given place is a critical aspect of place stewardship. The major questions linked to the stewardship concept are, for example: Why manage on the behalf of others (Why the concern)? Who qualifies to be a steward and by what criteria? What are the major factors influencing the practice of place stewardship? What requisites harmonize with place stewardship, and in this particular case, peri-urban settlements? To try and answer these questions is the thrust of this discourse such that at the end of it the reader should be able to appreciate and actively respond to these questions which have successively been reduced to the following specific objectives, namely to:

- Identify the justificatory factors for place stewardship in the sustainable development debate and with reference to peri-urban areas,

- Assess qualities, qualifications, capacities and different roles played by stewards (criteria for place stewardship), which can be reduced to an outline of influencing factors and explanation for the practice of place stewardship in peri-urban settlements, and
- Map different challenges experienced in the practice of place stewardship in peri-urban settlements.

It is expected that by responding to the above set of objectives, the different dimensions of place stewardship will be explored and adequately addressed as already noted that the stewardship approach to the development and management of places is of particular importance in the sphere of sustainable development (Manjengwa, 2007; UNHABITAT, 2008). Actuating sustainable development in peri-urban settlements as places in dynamic transformation requires careful examination of the stakeholders, correct positioning of them and directing their views, interests and motives in the wealth and health of the place. The issue of ecological care is critical in the environmental and place stewardship debate (Chirisa, 2008; Ecotrust and Resource Innovations, 2008; Franks & McGloin, 2006; McKinney, Parr, & Seltzer, 2004; Parr, Walesh & Nguyen 2002; Rees, 1996). Yet with peri-urban rapid changes actors are often left exposed, outlawed and confused and the unfolding developmental processes pose nothing but threats, calamities and losses, hence labeling peri-urban areas as “risky societies” (Adams, 2001) is not much of a wayward departure from the truth. Ways ought to be found to address the challenges experienced by societies in these places in volatility and dynamism with the hope of gaining stability and perhaps to treat the whole exercise as disaster management task requiring mitigation, recovery, preparedness and response (Warfield, 2003; World Health Organization [WHO], 2002). In the stewardship paradigm, guiding institutions are identified, established and capacitated to care for the place of focus of their interest. Institutions are nothing but repeated or systematized behavioral tendencies by actors in a place, and sometimes the term is used interchangeably with the term ‘organization’ (PricewaterhouseCoopers [PwC], 2005; Vartianen, 2003). Normally, institutions give way to predictability of procedures and processes.

The paper is organized as follows:

- Part One is the introductory overview;
- Part Two deals with the theoretical underpinnings of the subject of stewardship and peri-urbanity;
- Part Three touches on the stakeholders in peri-urban stewardship;
- Part Four examines the rationale for the different behaviors, values, attitudes and actions of the actors in peri-urban places;
- Part Five highlights the different challenges that are found in the practice of peri-urban stewardship; and
- Part Six looks at the methodological instrumentation for effective place stewardship and sustainable peri-urban development.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF STEWARDSHIP AND PERI-URBANITY

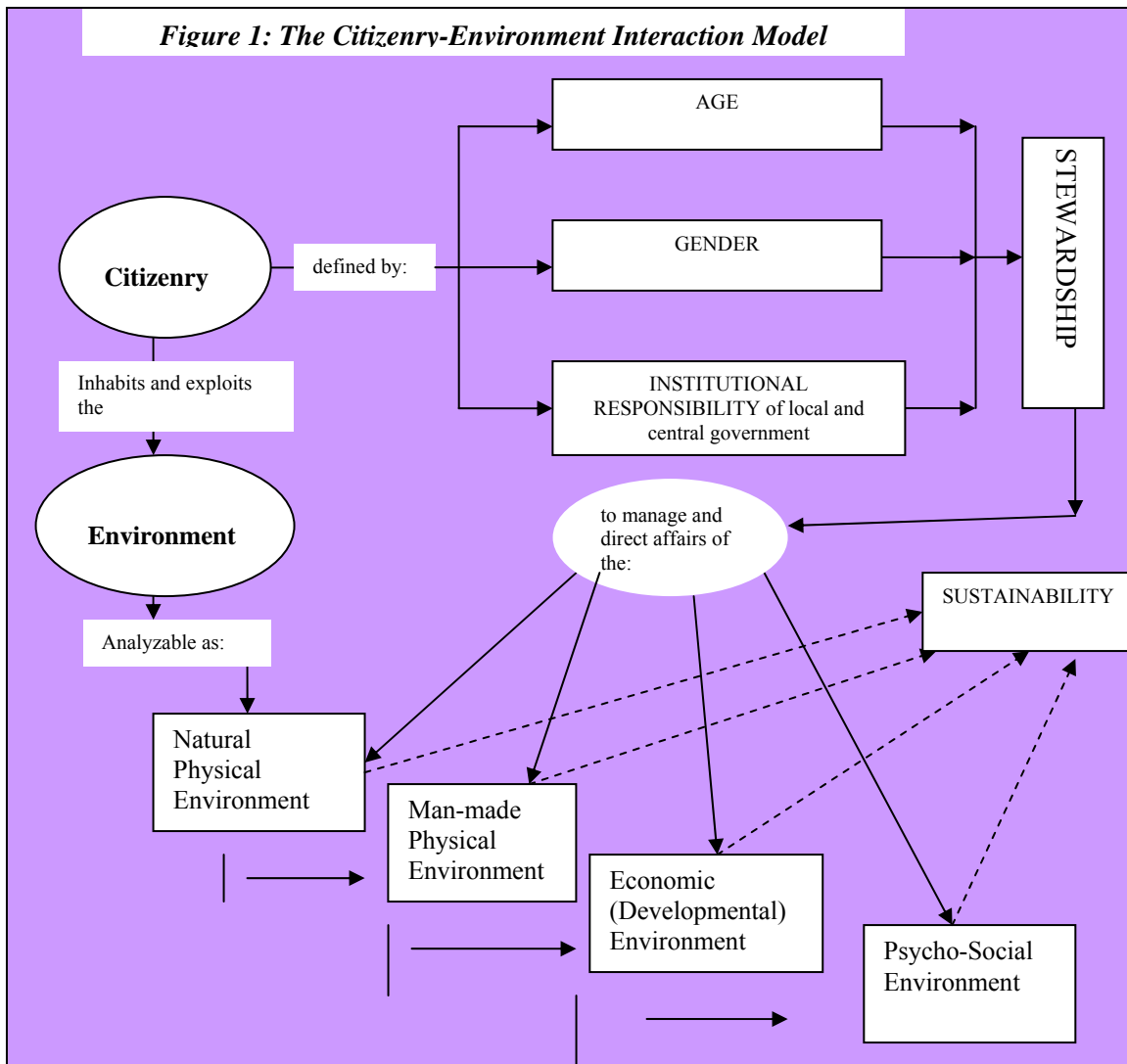
Situating Stewardship in the Different Environmental Contexts

The term environment is very broad theoretically and in application. Yet, if one is to take the multiplier effect route, ones will discover the natural environment is the centerpiece of all the other kinds of environments. The natural environment comprises

climate and weather, water resources, rocks and mineral resources, flora and fauna, soil and land (Small & Witherick, 1986). Mankind, over time, as learnt to tap, harness and exploit these resources. It constitutes the green and brown agenda of society (Danish International Development Agency [DANIDA], 2000; Sheng, 2008). The processing and transformation into value-added products has helped mankind to establish man-made physical environments which include processing plants, roads and building infrastructure, as well as, utilities like power, communication, water and sewer reticulation conduits. Thus, the natural environment is a precondition for the establishment of a built environment. Housing and shelter provision require sizeable land parcels hence huge contributors to changes in the physical environment including climate, ecological and hydrological changes (see Figure 1).

Humankind lives in defined environments – rural or urban; human or natural; macrocosm or microcosm, to name but a few (Small & Witherick, 1986). While the immediate environment acts as the ‘envelope’ around them, the people have a corresponding and equal responsibility to take care of that envelope – to protect it from harm, to maintain it to be habitable, to keep its treasures and to preserve it for future generations. In other words, wherever people or communities are settled, they have the grand task and mandate to take full responsibility of their place in which they live and derive their livelihoods (Franks & McGloin, 2006). This can be taken as part of the environmental justice debate and social corporate responsibility (Carroll, 1998). A narrow definition of corporate social responsibility views organizations exploiting resources in a given place as having the sole responsibility of engendering the place stewardship agenda and to compensate for the defacement, pollution and hazards they cause in the place (Bekessy & Gordon 2006; DANIDA, 2000). A broader definition views the communities as having to share the responsibility, not as mere recipients of the compensatory proceeds but as co-partners in development (Franks & McGloin, 2006; Jones, Pollitt & Bek, 2006; Matovu, 2008). This is because the environment goes beyond a commodity of their ownership. Rather, it is a transferable possession to be enjoyed during a given individual or generation’s life time. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987) distinguishes between intra-generational equity (within the generation) and inter-generational equity (between the generations). This distinction is critical especially with reference to peri-urban centers where populations can be divided between original settlers and newcomers but with both having a share in caring for the environment inheritable to future generations.

Naturally and overall, there should be a mutual and symbiotic relationship between citizens and their territory (McVicker & Bryan, 2002; UNHABITAT, 2008). In order to understand the mutuality and symbiosis, a breakdown of what constitutes citizenship and territory is important for thematic and spatial reference. In the first analysis, citizens can be classified according to their age, gender and institutional responsibility.



According to age, humanity can be grouped as youth, the middle-aged and the aged. In the outliers of the normal distribution curve are the two invisible extremities of the ‘unborn’ – yet to come and constituting the future generations, and, the ‘dead’ – whose past actions are either a blessing or anathema to the present conditions of the environment. This means that whether or not the environment is degraded, blossoming or wilting, this is largely due to actions by present or past generations. Sustainable development is a wrestle against the expansion and extension of what is called the ‘ecological footprint’ (Bekessy & Gordon, 2006; Hyde, 2008; Rees, 1996) which simply refers to the amount of space development is taking, displacing and destabilizing the biophysical component of the environment (Franks & McGloin, 2006). United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UNHABITAT, 2008) has argued that harmony, which is enshrined highly in place stewardship of cities "...cannot be achieved if the price of urban living is paid by the environment" (p. ix). This perception also hints on the ephemeral disposition of humanity and the somewhat eternity of the environment. Institutional responsibility, in this context, refers to the conferment of ruling authority through some defined persona of leadership or management (Hernandez, 2007). Both leadership and management embrace the idea of guidance, organization, facilitation or control. In environmental stewardship institutional responsibility is critical as it defines the politics of space (McVicker &

Bryan, 2002). Some roles have to be conferred on identified individuals or established institutions or organizations like environmental co-operatives (Franks & McGloin, 2006) to ensure that there is proper governance in the resources in the environment – the land space, minerals, flora and fauna. Lack of institutional responsibility implies environmental anarchism and tragedy which are antithetical to the philosophy of sustainable livelihoods development.

Peri-urban environments are a special kind of a geographical space with of academic and practical scrutiny (Bekessy & Gordon, 2006). The peri-urban belt is usually defined as a belt outside the city occupied both by farmers and commuting households. It may be viewed either as a rural area in the sense that the vast majority of its land is used for farming, or as an urban area with most of its working population commuting to the city where jobs are concentrated. Often, the peri-urban area is subjected to land-use conflicts because of the proximity between agricultural and urban areas. Indeed, agriculture is still here in the urban fringe but it has difficulties in remains near the cities: prices of land increase more quickly than farm prices.

Decentralization, Governance and Place Stewardship

With respect to place stewardship it should be noted that places as human habitats (villages, neighborhoods, town, cities and countries) are possessed by a plurality of dwellers. If it is a country, the national constitution is the basic but powerful tool in addressing the issues of inhabiting that country. Anything unconstitutional is subject to contestation, reprimand and sometimes complete proscription. It is a conventional expectation that in constitution making all the different country dwellers in their respective constitutions input their voice so that sustainability and stability in the nationhood are attained. Yet lower territorial units in a country are often prevented to see the applicability of the same principle with respect to their places (provinces, districts, wards, villages and neighborhood). These important fundamentals are entailed in the centralization-decentralization debate, whereby it is believed that places would be much better if bottom-up strategies that encourage community participation are buttressed by the top-down strategies espousing co-ordination of different efforts by local or sub-national units.

Decentralization is the handing down of powers to lower units of government (Cheema & Rondineli, 1983; Saito, 2008; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2004). The chief forms of decentralization are deconcentration (also known as, field administration whose thrust is the creation of sub-offices in territorial space to reduce congestion at the center or headquarters); delegation, the handing down of power to other agencies, for example, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and quasi-governmental units; devolution, the handing down of power plus the creation of autonomous and independent units (Cheema & Rondineli, 1983; UNDP, 2004;). There is also privatization whereby power is given to profit and market-driven units towards rationalization of scarce resources through the instrument of pricing. The most ideal and oft-desired form of decentralization is devolution (Matovu, 2008). With devolution, it would be very possible to create effective avenues for place stewardship. This is because in this thrust local stakeholders to effectively mobilize resources, efficiently manage and churn effective way forward in enhancing the community capital. The question is what stops central office giving up such powers to lower units? Politically, if they gave up such powers, they would create for themselves enclaves of differentiation which usually works against the uniformization of state interests (it would be one way towards killing the spirit of nationhood). Embedded in this view is the suspicion that some local units would outdo the center in delivery and

hence produce ‘rebels’ to the state or higher authority. It is also hoped that by keeping local units tied to the center, some it will be possible to enforce checks and balances against such vices and maladies like corruption and authoritarian tendencies.

Fundamentals for Place Stewardship

Overall, place stewardship is encapsulated in the following fundamentals outlined by Diego (2002):

- Sense of totality, as opposed to isolationism that describes individualism;
- Political sense, hailing ideological context and orientation of the actors;
- Sense of autonomy, espousing the idea of building capacities of the local communities;
- Sense of reality, superseding paternalistic and foreign values that ignore local realities;
- Sense of continuity, putting at the center of everything process-oriented innovations; and
- Sense of respect, eternising local people’s realities over and above actions by temporary actors like NGOs (p. 100).

To be noted in the above-laid points is the idea that places are incubators for sustainable change provided the capacities and orientations (Matovu, 2008); local processes and indigenous knowledge and experiences are respected, nurtured and directed (Bekessy & Gordon, 2006). As such stewardship of place hinges on the abilities by the stakeholders, (or ‘constituencies’ in keeping with Vartianen (2003)’s denotation of stakeholders in their broader picture), to discover their correct position and roles. Local communities are said to enjoy a greater tie and permanence in the place of their dwelling (World Bank, 2004) than certain organizations whose missions are transient and *ad hoc*, for instance to reverse the impacts of an adverse condition affecting the permanent dwellers. Even housing developers and related professions tend to have their role rarefied over time; local communities remain in their place, usual acquired for generational holder-ship.

STAKEHOLDERS IN PERI-URBAN STEWARDSHIP: VALUES, ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS

Rationale for Environmental Stewardship and the Evolution of the Stakeholders in Human Settlements

In many cases the establishment of built environments, with the infrastructure they house (World Bank, 2004) act as drivers for the economic environment which is the sum total of the production and consumption behaviour in space. According the economic base theory, a place will develop and grow in accordance to the natural factor endowments that it possesses (Chorley & Haggett, 1968; McElfish, 2008). When these factor endowments are tapped, and in most cases, value-added, they can be exported and the profits are ploughed back into the territory for its economic expansion which, in turn are virtuous for the citizens – the virtuous cycle of resourcefulness. The quality of life of the citizens will be enhanced as manifested through sound education, health, security, recreation and leisure, to name these few. Ultimately the whole psycho-social environment of the citizens will be positively affected such that they are highly attached to their environment. They owe their identity to it. They are not akin to the idea of seeing that environment, one day, fall into abyss and get forgotten (Bekessy & Gordon, 2006). It is inadequate for one individual or a few individuals to care for the environment. Instead, communities and the society at large should place their environment at the center of all their development thinking. Where social corporate responsibility there environmental stewardship has been achieved. That, in essence, is a pointer to the evolution of the practice of stewardship and the bearing it has on the sectors which represent the type of stakeholders for place stewardship.

It must also be underscored that a human habitat is nothing less than a defined living space for a household, family or community and the basic unit for human habitation can be taken as a dwelling unit like a conventional house, a shack or any kind of roof over someone's head (cf. Bekessy & Gordon, 2006). That dwelling is characterized by indoor space as well as outdoor space (Hyde, 2008; Thomas, 2002). The indoor space allows occupants to, among things, cook, dine, relax, entertain and sleep in comfort while protected against the elements. It constitutes reproductive space, by and large, and also offers protection to household goods. Indoor space is largely defined by the manner in which the house design is drawn by the architect. On the contrary, the outdoor space is a product of urban layout design – a town planner's product. By extension, it is defined by the planner and urban designer according to stipulated standards that try, by and large, to harmonize human needs for housing with the natural and physical conditions that define that place in keeping with regulations and bye-laws (Hyde, 2008; Thomas, 2002). In outdoor space, production of commodities, circulation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and distribution of goods and services take place. This space is largely held in common as compared to indoor space which is highly private usually controlled by individual households or families.

Landowners, Land Buyers and Place Dwellers

In the first place, there are landowners who can be private landowners, or public, or government. These sell, donate or exchange the land to prospective developers or occupiers. The developers will determine the kind of use they want to put the acquired land; it can be farming, conservancy, housing, and commercial, to name but these few. In terms of residential land use, a distinction can be made between formal residents, who are perceived to be more caring to their environment than colonists, who are informal dwellers or occupiers to land subject to state evictions. The general observation made is that formal residents tend to wield pride in leaving a legacy and heritage to their children, while colonists enjoy a 'hit and run' approach in the manner they treat their environment. The immediate use and abuse of the environment preoccupy colonists; hence the immediate environment is subject to 'tragedy of the commons.' However, peri-urban sustainable development is put at stake when occupiers act in the prisoner's dilemma approach in utilization of the natural resources in the peri-urban areas (Buxton et al., 2006; Murray, n.d.; Ozaki & Uršič, 2005). A distinction is also important in the nature of communities found in peri-urban areas. There are the people who have always been in a locality before the place transformations became patent. In the African context, such communities are guided by the traditional values of agrarianism – hunting, gathering, and small-scale farming. These are typical of rural practices. In most cases, these original dwellers try as much as they can to resist the change posed by urbanization. They so desire to maintain the status quo. Another category is that of new arrivals. The composite of new arrivals are those who have bought plots, lots or stands in the area or have been allocated such by existing state apparatus.

Hogrewe, Joyce and Perez (1993) argue that people living in peri-urban areas are not illegal, their houses are. Further, they state that even though these residents are not illegal residents per se, they are mostly economically poor, marginalized, and uneducated, who, historically have held limited political power. Residents in formal urban areas, on the other hand, enjoy the status of being recognized as constituents, to whose needs politicians must respond in order to stay in office. Nonetheless, a political change is beginning to occur in peri-urban areas.

Peri-urban Producers (Farmers and Foresters)

Peri-urban market producers are often specialized farmers who usually secure land around cities and tend to produce vegetables of higher value (tomatoes, onions, cabbages, eggplants, peppers). If facilities allow their marketing before spoilage they might also grow leafy vegetables. Given the complexity of peri-urbanity, farmers in this zone are heterogeneous in terms of characterization. They can be:

- normal subsistence farmers (for example, women who are trying to keep the household going with increased vegetable farming in a situation of reduced plot sizes and decreasing soil fertility),
- young men or young couples (who are able to react flexibly to changing demands and who can form an ideal target group for innovative, participatory research), and
- poor young men with short tenure agreements (who try to get as much as they can out of the land). These three groups of farmers are referred by Drechsel, Quansah, and De Vries (1999) as 'hit and run' farmers usually posing serious implications for soil mining.

There are also smallholders (who have a genuine long-term commercial plan), or capitalist farmers relying mainly on hired labour (who are buying land in peri-urban areas, usually along major roads, to supply urban food markets). In addition there are also livestock keepers who are usually not comfortable with suburban development as it takes away grazing land and subjects the stocks to a great variety of hazards like loss due to vehicular flows (Ben-Ami & Ramp, 2005). Sène (1993) has observed that urban and peri-urban foresters are increasingly being taken as an important stakeholder component in the peri-urban areas given a growing awareness in Africa of the need for peri-urban woodlands and parks to satisfy physical and material needs and for leisure and recreation (Sheng, 2008). This need is changing in accordance with African urbanization, which from a modest 18 to 21 percent between 1950 and 1970, jumped to 32 percent in 1984. It has been suggested that the limitations on forest management and sustainability still prevent maximum leisure and recreational use but the situation is rapidly improving, as is forestry's capacity to provide urban populations with products, employment and income.

Community Leadership

Stakeholders may be defined by their ability to fall within an organizational framework (Hernandez, 2007), usually of civil society nature, for example, as community based organizations (CBOs) like housing or income-generating co-operatives or associations, burial societies, residents associations; non-governmental organizations; and local government structures like villages, wards and district run under the headship of respective development committees. There is a wide recognition that peri-urban residents can represent an enormous voting block and can have a major influence on elections. Yet, after elections, their political clout becomes limited because they do not know how to use the system by organizing into political pressure groups. Furthermore, given the heterogeneous nature of most peri-urban settlements, the united strength and community organizing around local issues that are visible in many rural and formal urban areas are not as apparent in peri-urban areas (Hogrewe et al., 1993). Peri-urban residents in most places are less visible and vocal to municipal leaders. In theory, decentralization and democratization should give informal settlements greater leverage and visibility. Also, in theory, once the urban poor have voting rights and representation, they will keep in office those politicians who manage resources wisely and respond to their needs. The divided voice is often torn between modernity and tradition. Those who feel more urban than

rural may resist traditional institutions like chiefs, headmen and kraalheads, while those who are more rural than urban will follow modern institutions, including councillors or mayors.

Administrators and Technocrats

Land surveyors, urban planners and civil engineers are often more involved in the peri-urban settlements occupied by high-income settlements than those of low-income settlers. For latter group, these professionals become active in the regularization and upgrading processes.

Business People

Informal businesses play a significant role in the construction and urbanization of peri-urban settlements, whereas in rural areas, the community provides self-help (free or donated labour) for construction - for example, the digging of latrine pits (Hogrewe et al., 1993). Then sometimes, a local nongovernmental organization (NGO) is hired to do the construction, or a local formal sector contractor is hired (Hogrewe et al., 1993). Thus, the existing practice is that most sanitation infrastructure is built by local private builders or manufacturers in the informal sectors. A local manufacturer might produce toilet seats in the family's backyard workshop, and local carpenters or masons might be hired to construct latrines. Peri-urban areas, as commuting zones are marked by both private and public commuter transporters in action. Conventional, midi- and mini-buses are involved as well as commuter trains. In the high-income areas the use of private taxis is rife.

TOWARDS EFFECTIVE PLACE STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABLE PERI-URBAN DEVELOPMENT: CASE OF EPWORTH, ZIMBABWE

Description and Location of the Case Study Areas

Epworth consists of seven wards and is a place known as harboring a majority of the poorest of the poor, at least in urban Zimbabwe. Epworth grew mostly as a squatter settlement and was rescinded by the Methodist church who owned the farm to the government in 1982 which earmarked it for slum upgrading, though very little progress has been registered on the ground to date. In fact the settlement, now managed by a government-instituted and directed Epworth Local Board, has continued to attract more populations. This has been militating against the squatter upgrading efforts. Epworth, then and today, is divided into four sections: Muguta Village, Makomo Village, Chinamano Village and Zinyengere Village. Epworth dates back to 1892 when the British South Africa Company [BSAC], authority at that time, granted the Methodist Wesleyan Mission the Epworth farm. In 1908, the mission purchased two adjoining farms to cover what is now known as Epworth. The area grew informally and on non-economical basis under the Methodist Church. At first about 5,000 homesteads constituted the settlement; now it has around 20,000 informal settlers, concentrated in Gada and with a 'political blessing' of the ruling party. In 2007, the population of colonists alone was estimated at 20,000 households (Munzwa et al., 2007). Because the town had not been planned as an urban residential area, this rapid increase in population occurring on land without any water supply and sanitation facilities produced a nightmare experience for the communities. The majority of the people were self-employed largely as street vendors and cobblers. There are no street names in Epworth meaning that most of the houses have no addresses. Since most the houses found in the town are built from sunburnt bricks, the houses are prone to fall during heavy rains that are wont to lash the area (Butcher, 1993; Gandidzanwa, 2003; Matekaire, 2008).

Resident citizens in this study refer to those peri-urbanites who are recognized by the formal institutions including the local authority in charge as residents (Government of Zimbabwe [GoZ], 1991; Wekwete, 1992). They occupy residential stands that are on the local authority register including their family members. On the contrary, colonists are informal dwellers who live in shanty houses built on invaded space in and around the peri-urban centers. Normally, these have evaded their cumbersome steps of acquiring urban land or have been impelled to house themselves by their own means because the formal institutions are too incapacitated to allow them that chance of formal accommodation.

Stewardship Challenges in Peri-urban Epworth

Peri-urban stewardship in Epworth is characterized by difficulties in the uniformization of needs between organizational needs and local community needs. Even within each of these two broad categories there are different types of stakeholders whose interests are equally different. Organizations tend to be guided by set procedures and standards hence satisfying these needs provides them with a firm ground to show that they have performed well. Planners interviewed indicated that as long as the legitimate standards of housing were not met, it would be very difficult to define Epworth as a formal town. This was particularly emphasized by planners within the Harare City Council who pointed out that this town was meant to be absorbed into the Harare urban system as and when it showed evidence of serious regularization and upgrading. Yet, in close to three decades, the settlement is still struggling to meet the mark. The Epworth Local Board cited many factors that underlie this rather retrogressive development summed by inadequate capacity in terms of resources, particularly, finance. This was further compounded by the political and financial meltdown in the country spanning for more than a decade from 1997 to 2009. Potential funding agencies, including the World Bank and other bilateral organizations, pulled out from the country in this period leaving most of the upgrading initiatives partially done. Indeed without resources planning becomes meaningless. Planners, as key spatial scientists in place making, were particularly frustrated by the standstill position of Epworth's upgrading. Other professionals in the built environment (civil engineers, architects and land surveyors) equally shared the same sentiments indicating how sometimes they had to improvise, yet with great difficulty, the development of sanitary living in the town. Evidence on the ground indicated more of the incompatibility between professionally-held standards to those the poor in the town could afford.

The incompatibility cited above was evidenced in the periphery of the town where disorder has been rife due to mushrooming slum developments. In this zone, a population of up to twenty thousand has invaded the land there and put up very substandard structures, not even meeting the minimum of the expected standards – without proper infrastructure. Some of the people interviewed from this section of the town indicated that they had not directly come from rural areas but had been staying in Epworth, others Chitungwiza and Harare. But, due to the high cost of living, they opted to find land where they would not be made to pay anything in the form of rent. Some indicated that sometimes when one looks closely at the so-called basic needs (food, shelter and clothing) one sees that food comes at the very first place. That is the reason they opted to choose meeting the basic food requirements for the household and do away with decent shelter for money. The Illegal dwellers were not on the local authority's register making it very difficult for it to accurately figure out their population numbers and to deliver the basic services directed to the formal dwellers.

UNHABITAT (2008) makes this important observation that: in many cities of the world, "...wealth and poverty coexist in close proximity: rich, well-serviced neighborhoods and gated residential communities are often situated near dense inner-city or peri-urban slum communities that lack even the most basic of services" (p. xii).

The peri-urban farmers bemoaned loss of agricultural land to urban development. Those involved in livestock rearing were worried over not only their loss of grazing land, but also livestock losses as they were often hit by vehicles along major roads (cf. Ben-Ami & Ramp, 2005). Overall there was noted a concern by various stakeholders that synchronizing urban space needs with rural needs was a mammoth task to grapple with. Environmentalists partly shared their concern over the care or stewardship of the biophysical sphere of the environment particularly loss of biodiversity, pollution, deforestation and sand poaching, some practices of which were induced by the increasing urban poverty (cf. DANIDA, 2000; Sheng, 2008).

The enterprising stakeholders both at formal and informal level bewailed the competition they faced among each other in grabbing the market for their various products many of them of a similar nature, as well as, the difficulty they have in adhering to set standards by the planners and police for organized marketing. To them the planned space was often unattractive, hence they chose to sell their commodities by the roadside, making it dangerous not only for them as marketers but also for their customers. The local authority could not make important estimations of those on the extra-legal sector. Though their 'taxes' were direly needed in the running of the local urban economy they were inaccessible to the local authority. Formal businesspeople cried foul with the informal ones who made free-riding on the small market of products and services in the town. They were also failing adequately to align their much desired business performance to the local needs given that the threshold was one mainly of the poorest of the poor making the cost of business maintenance stupendously high. Sometimes the police had to chase after the informal traders, in a way appeasing the formal business operators, subjecting the former to the harshness of operating in the unofficial sector. To survive they had to employ some surreptitious modalities.

Non-governmental organizations were convinced that correct targeting of the beneficiaries of their aid, brings meaningful impact to local communities. However, in practice the process is marked by a number of challenges including political victimization if deemed to be 'favoring' members of certain political affiliations and also the cheating mechanisms crafted by some community members. Politicians were noted to as experiencing challenges constituted by the fact of the variability in the constituencies of the town; some members of the community, especially at the town edge and those originals of the town, still regarded themselves as being in the rural sector, and hence not governed by urban diktats

Table 2 summarizes the above noted challenges linking them to the different stewards typologies in the town, their specific stake/interests, values, attitudes and actions, and the expected or normative impact in place should all the requisites have been in place. Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA, 2000) has emphasized the need for poor cities to be innovative in the development of locally-driven environmental initiatives with respect to brown and green agendas. These are wholly in the place stewardship sphere. This is said to bring issues of governance to center stage (McVicker & Bryan, 2002).

With reference to Epworth, the greatest challenge still lies in building a mutually shared vision of the place among the various stakeholders in and around the town.

Table 2: Mapping Characteristics of Stewardship in Peri-urban Settlements: Types, Impact and Challenges

STEWARDS TYPOLOGIES	SPECIFIC STAKE/INTERESTS, ISSUES, ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS	IMPACT IN PLACE	COMMON CHALLENGES FACED BY STEWARDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peri-urban farmers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Livestock keepers ▪ Agronomists ▪ Mixed farmers ○ Town dwellers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Residents/formal ▪ Colonists/informal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitation, Permanence, Various <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productive and profitable farming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grazing space ○ Arable farming ○ Diversified farming • Habitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Permanent living ○ Relief housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space occupation and use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Food security ○ As above ○ As above ○ As above • Space occupation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As above ○ As above • Built environment enhancement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Order, aesthetics and amenity ○ Protection and aesthetics ○ Reduction of hazards of building collapse in the future ○ Employment creation ○ Efficient services ○ Efficient communication and governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniformization of needs by outsiders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Loss of land to urban development requirements ○ Loss of grazing land, livestock losses to vehicular traffic accidents ○ Satisfying the urban markets ○ Satisfying needs • Synchronizing urban space needs with rural needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cost of living ○ Legitimation and standards • Enforcing laid down standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disorder due to mushrooming slum developments. ○ Loss of biodiversity, pollution, deforestation and sand poaching ○ Enforcing building standards ○ Competition and adhering to set standards ○ Incompatibility of standards with reality ○ Communication barriers ○ Illegal dwellers not on the register ○ Estimations of those on the extra-legal sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technocrats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Urban planners ○ Environmentalists ○ Building inspectors ○ Local artisans (brick layers, painters, woodworkers, etc) ○ Civil engineers ○ Administrators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local administrators ▪ Central government administrators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionalism and standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spatial orderliness and co-ordinated development ○ Conservation, preservation ○ Adherence to set standards ○ Value for money and skills delivery ○ Co-ordinated infrastructure servicing ○ Record keeping, database management, communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local co-ordination ▪ National co-ordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • As above • As above • As above • As above • As above • As above • As above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above • As above • As above • As above • As above • As above • As above • As above

• Businesspeople	• Profit making	Services and goods availability to citizens	Aligning business performance to local needs
○ Estate Developers	○ Infrastructure and superstructure development and servicing	Housing of the home-seekers and homeless	Making local impact on the local populations
○ Shop owners	○ Selling of convenient goods	Availability of convenience goods	Business performance
○ Transporters	• Profit making	Making the place and other places accessible	Competition and cost of business maintenance
• Non-governmental organizations	• Providing relief to vulnerable sections of community; capacity building; advocacy	Stress and distress relief; skills building and enhancement; giving voice to the voiceless	Correct targeting that brings meaningful impact to local communities
○ Child focused	○ Relief, advocacy and capacity building	As above	As above
○ Youth focused	○ As above	As above	As above
○ Women-focused	○ As above	As above	As above
○ Elderly-focused	○ As above	As above	As above
○ HIV and AIDS focused	○ As above	As above	As above
○ Environment-focused	○ advocacy and capacity building	As above	As above
○ Other	○ As above	As above	As above
• Politicians	• Ideology, activism, self-interests	Making representative democracy work	Variability in the constituencies
○ Local e.g. ward councilors	○ activism, self-interests	As above	Effective delivery in the short time in office
○ Commissioner	○ Appointed	As above	As above
○ Member of Parliament	○ activism, self-interests	As above	As above
○ Provincial governor	○ Appointed	As above	As above
• Government Departments	• Guided by the mandate for establishment	Availing specific services to citizens	Capacity constraints
○ Health	○ Physical well-being of citizens	Preventative and curable medicine availability	As above
○ Education	○ Intellectual well-being of citizens	Knowledge transfer and reduction of illiteracy	As above
○ Social Welfare	○ Material well-being of citizens	Safety netting of vulnerable members of the community	As above
○ Police	○ Security well-being of citizens	Creation of a sphere where peace and order prevail	As above

CONCLUSION

The paper has analyzed the different stakeholders that are in the place stewardship, both in theory and in practice. Epworth, as a case, shows that the construction of the stewardship thesis and to make it work in an environment of conflicting interests may be a mammoth, yet doable task. Dimensions of place stewardship are encapsulated in business economic, ecological, social, institutional and political facets of the economy of any place. It is therefore, the role of policymakers, researchers and the local communities to foster a workable stewardship framework that ensures sustainable development in space.

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