

# **Chapter 1: Growing from a Point Outwards: Introductory Overview on Rural-Urban Land Dynamics**

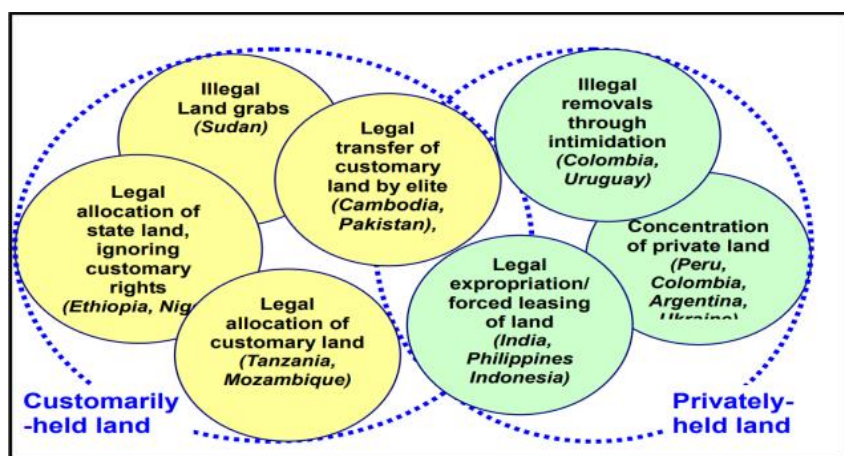
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Land acquisition for urban expansion purposes is an overarching issue that is gaining traction in many urban settlements especially in developing countries. Adam (2014) posits that the rapid growth of the urban population in Africa and other parts of the developing globe is driving up an acute demand for urban land at an unprecedented rate that is met primarily through conversion of peri-urban land at the periphery of existing built-up areas. Areas affected by contestations in land acquisition and urban expansion are known to experience negative repercussions in their economic, social and physical development paths (Ansah & Chigbu, 2020). The land acquisition problem is compounded by the fact that there are dual landownership models in most African countries, that is, communal or customary landownership and statutory landownership (Mends, 2006). Communal landownership is administered by traditional leaders who are vested with powers and prerogatives to allocate land and the land itself is inherited from one generation to another. Statutory landownership is obtained from local authorities that are municipalities and the state. However, communal land is regarded as state land that can be compulsorily acquired for urban expansion and development projects (Mends, 2006; Adam, 2014).

The conversion of communal land to urban land has, however, always been characterised by a lot of problems, strife, conflicts and disputes. Many authors have made their contributions to the communal peri-urban land acquisition discourse, some looking at land rights issues (Mends, 2006), infrastructure provision challenges (Chirisa, 2010) and challenges in the process of land acquisition (Vengesai & Schmidt, 2018). However, the causes and the effects of the contestations to urban growth and expansion have not been exhaustively explored in Zimbabwe. The purpose of this study is thus, to investigate the contestations in acquisition of communal land for urban expansion in a bid to promote proper growth of urban centres using the case of Guruve Growth Point expansion. The question that arises in this instance is how urbanisation can take place without being hampered by these contestations. The study is set to examine the conflicts prevailing between communities and local authorities over land for

urban expansion, to review the legal framework governing land issues in urban and peri-urban areas and to analyse the effects of the conflicts prevailing in urban centres and peri-urban areas. The results of this study will serve to provide the basis for addressing the planning for urban expansion into rural areas. A critical review of the experiences from other countries and regions will help to explain and understand the problem.

The contestations in acquisition of rural land or farming land for urban expansion and development projects are a global developmental problem especially manifesting itself within the situatedness of the Global South. There are various types of land acquisitions used by different countries and these are also sources of conflicts in land acquisitions.



**Figure 1.1:** Typologies of land acquisition (*Bending & Taylor, 2009:8*)

As illustrated on figure 1, illegal land grabs, legal allocation of state land ignoring customary rights, forced leasing and illegal removal and intimidation are some of the typologies of land acquisition globally and this prove the fact that land acquisition is a topical global problem. In Asia, Europe and America, conflicts relating to land acquisitions are rampant. In these regions, land acquisition is meant for large scale commercial agricultural plots, Export Processing Zones, bio-fuel projects and residential and commercial development to cater for high

demand for land emanating from rapid urbanization (Ravanera & Gorah, 2011). A recent study by Vengesai & Schmidt (2018) has brought to the fore the fact that in China, seventy million people were displaced between 1950-2000 while fifty million people were affected in India due to peri-urban and industrial expansion and developmental projects such as dams and road construction. Farmers whose land was disposed in Pakistan, Nepal and India reacted in different ways and some of them violently (Ravanera & Gorah, 2011).

The challenges being faced in the acquisition of land for urban expansion globally are emanating from various factors. Some of the most cited causes are poor compensation resulting in lack of livelihood reconstruction after compensation, inequalities in compensation, food insecurity and lack of effective participation by the communal landowners (Gorrah, 2011; Western *et al.*, 2015). For instance, in Pakistan, Philippines, India and Vietnam, conflicts in land acquisition and resistance to projects are in most cases a result of the above factors (Gorrah, 2011).

The resistance from communal landholders to the acquisition of their land for development projects and urbanisation is in most instances affecting the initiation and progress of development projects. For instance, a proposal to establish one-million-hectare project of hybrid cone in Philippines was forfeited after the communal occupants of the land resisted (Ravanera & Gorrah, 2011). This was even though the governments of these two countries had already signed agreements to start the projects.

Most of African countries are also reeling under the problems of land acquisition. For instance, in Ghana, Tanzania, South Africa, Ethiopia and Sudan, acquisition of communal land for expansion of urban settlements is a big problem (Mends, 2006; Kombe, 2010; Adam, 2014). Most of the problems of land acquisition in African countries owe much to the existence of dual landownership rights (formal and customary tenure) with the majority being communal. The formal land rights system was introduced to Africa by the European countries during the period of colonisation. In Ethiopia, as in several other African countries, urbanization is occurring at a more rapid rate, imposing an intense competition between agricultural and non-agricultural activities (Adam, 2014). The demand for urban

land in Ethiopia is met by expropriation and reallocation of peri-urban land. The highest rate of urbanization in the world occurs in developing countries and in Africa where about 87% of the population growth in the next two decades will occur in urban areas and thus, exerting more pressure on surrounding communal land for urban expansion (Mends, 2006). Similarly, in Accra township of Ghana, conflicts between urbanization and communal land uses have stalled development. In Tanzania, contestation in acquisition of communal land for urban growth is also a challenge (Kombe, 2010). The major causes of the contestations are delayed or inequitable compensation, a lack of consultation with landowners and bad governance. Thus, contestations for communal land for urban expansion are a regional problem (Kombe, 2010).

In Zimbabwe, land acquisition is guided by a repertoire of legal provisions, among others; the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment number 20, Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 20:10), Regional Town and Country Planning Act (29:12), Rural District Councils Act (29:13), Communal Lands Act (20:04). In some instances, these pieces of legislation give the President and other authorities the power to acquire land and other immovable property compulsorily. Despite the explicitness of the processes and procedures in these pieces of legislation, acquisition of communal land for urban expansion remains a challenge in urban centres of Zimbabwe. According to Vengesai & Schmidt (2018), expansion of towns, growth points and rural service centres in Zimbabwe has resulted in the displacement and relocation of communities to pave way for urban development. The displacement of people has triggered conflicts between local authorities and communities occupying the land earmarked for urban expansion. The conflicts in acquisition of land for urban expansion in Zimbabwe are mainly a result of weaknesses in the land tenure system and compensation policies and some other structural challenges (Vengesai & Schmidt, 2018). Zvishavane and Shurugwi are classic examples of urban settlements that experienced conflicts involving land acquisition when 30 and 40 households were relocated in 2013 and 2002 respectively.

Contestations in acquisition of communal land for urban expansion are a global topical problem. Due to rapid urbanisation and population growth, peri-urban areas are associated with a lot of activities and land use changes (Achamyeleh,

2014). Thus, globally the growth in urban population is increasing the demand for land and compelling local authorities to acquire peri-urban communal and customary land. The acquisition of communal rural land for urban expansion is resulting in many challenges and problems and conflict between the authorities acquiring the land and the communal land occupants. The conversion of customary land and the transformation of customary land tenure into urban formal tenure are at the centre of the land disputes and landownership conflicts (Mends, 2006). Earlier studies on problems in peri-urban areas have focused on how customary land tenure system is responding to the pressure of demand for urban lands (Mends, 20006; Achamyeleh, 2014), how peri-urban areas are possible disaster outbreaks in terms of diseases and other social hazards due to lack of planning and institutional integration (Chirisa, 2010) and challenges to relocation and compensation of rural communities displaced by development projects (Vengesai & Schmidt, 2018). It seems little has been investigated about the impact of contestations in acquisition of communal land for urban expansion to the growth and expansion of urban settlements in Zimbabwe. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the contestations in acquisition of communal land for urban expansion in a bid to promote proper growth of urban centres using the case of Guruve Growth Point. If this study is not carried out to interrogate causes and impacts of the contestations, urban expansion is stifled, and socio-economic development is seriously affected. Thus, results of this study will guide policy-makers and planning practitioners in handling conflicts emanating from communal peri-urban land acquisition and henceforth being in a better position to promote urban growth.

The aim of the study was to investigate the contestations in acquisition of communal land for urban expansion in a bid to promote proper growth of rural urban centres using the case of Guruve Growth Point. The study objectives include, among others, the need,

- 1) To examine the main causes of conflicts prevailing between rural communities and local authorities over land for urban expansion.
- 2) To assess the legal framework governing acquisition of land for urban expansion in peri-urban areas.
- 3) To analyse the effects of conflicts prevailing between rural communities and the local authorities over land for urban expansion.

- 4) To recommend planning strategies to address the contestations relating to urban expansion into rural areas.

The research questions were formulated as follows:

- 1) What are the main causes of conflicts between rural communities and local authorities in the process of acquisition of land for urban expansion?
- 2) What is the position of existing legal instruments on land issues in urban and peri-urban areas?
- 3) How are the conflicts prevailing between rural communities and the local authorities over land for urban expansion affecting development?
- 4) What measures can be taken to address the planning for urban expansion in rural areas?

The protracted contestations currently obtaining in the acquisition of communal land for urban expansion in Zimbabwe and other countries points to the fact that there is general lack of knowledge in the planning practice and policy pertaining to peri-urban developments or the legal framework governing urban and peri-urban land issues is somehow inadequate. Thus, this study is of great benefit to planning policy, planning practice and to generation of new planning knowledge. According to Henely & Locke (2016), an understanding of land issues in peri-urban areas will help in promoting sound urban growth and land administration. Proper land management and administration can thus, lead to a less conflict urbanisation process with minimal impacts to the communal land occupiers. This study will greatly guide planning practitioners and policy-makers in understating peri-urban land issues and thereby enabling them to handle and minimise land conflicts by creating a mutual and symbiotic relationship between the parties involved.

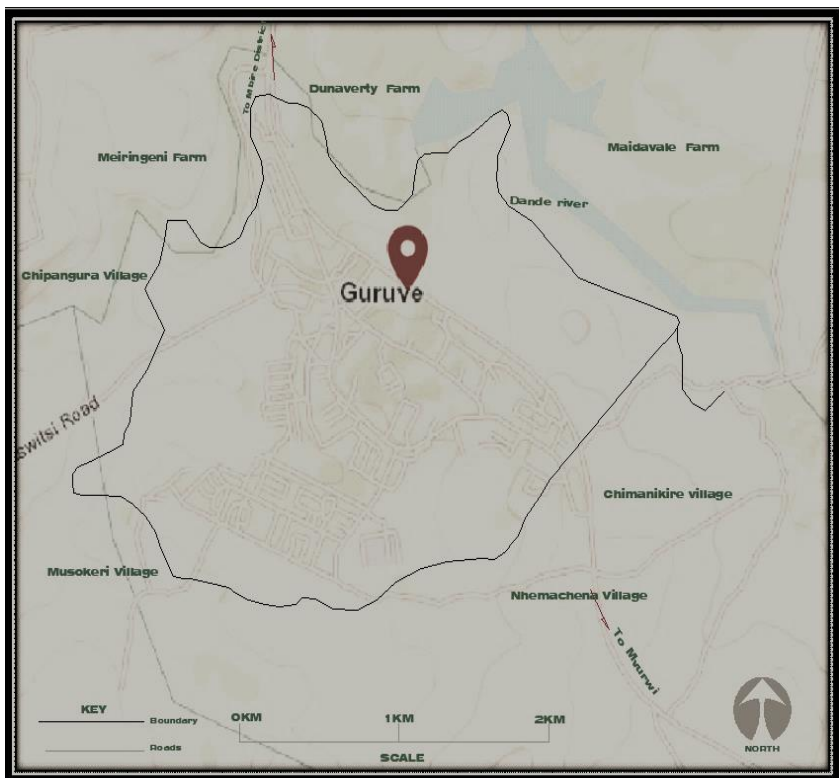
Further, this study will help policy-makers in understanding land governance issues. According to Henely & Locke (2016), policymakers should aim to minimise the scope for struggles over land through effective land planning and administration by clarifying the mandates and decision-making powers of various ministries, agencies, and local governments; ensuring that changes in the authority over planning are carefully managed so that new arrangements respect existing planning choices; and effective land valuation and compensation by ensuring that rules for valuation and compensation are applied transparently in

peri-urban areas to guarantee that landholders do not either lose out materially, or decline to participate in the formal sector out of fears. This implies that this study is of utmost importance in helping policy-makers to clearly understand the causes of contestations in acquisition of land for urban expansion and richly learn how to handle the issues from the recommendation of the study.

Planning practitioners' perception on peri-urban land issues and developments will also be sharpened by this study. Mwathunga (2014) contend that conflicts over peri-urban land emanate from the different perspectives that planning practitioners and peri-urban dwellers have over land. Planning proposal usually serves the interests of the minority rich people at the expense of the majority poor who happen to hold customary land without security (Mwathunga, 2014). Thus, planners do not regard customary land rights as they do the formal land rights and this result in conflicts when communal land is to be acquired. This study will bring a new perspective on the rights of peri-urban dwellers and how planners can successfully achieve urban without protracted contestations.

This study will focus on examining the conflicts prevailing between local authorities and communal land occupants as local authorities tries to expand their boundaries, the effects of the conflicts to urban and socio-economic growth and to examine the legal instruments that guides land acquisition in Zimbabwe. The study is conducted using the case study of Guruve Growth Point (formerly Sipolilo), that is a district located in the Mashonaland Central Province of Zimbabwe. Guruve Growth point is one of the centres that is urbanizing fast and according to ZimStats (2012), it is the second urbanized district in the province from Mazowe district. Guruve district is grappling with acquisition of communal land for the expansion of its boundaries hence it became of interest to the researcher. The study will use interviews, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and administering questionnaires to communal landowners surrounding Guruve Growth Point, Guruve Rural District Councils officials, the Ministry of Lands officials, District Development Coordinator and traditional leaders. These are the stakeholders who are involved in the process of acquisition of land for urban expansion and thus, their inputs will greatly assist the researcher in understanding the nature and causes of the contestations.

As illustrated in Figure 2, Gurube Growth Point is surrounded by communal areas, that are Chimanikire and Nhemachena in the East, Musokeri in the south, and Chipangura in the West and to its North are Meiringeni, Dunvert and Maidavale farms. The growth point is in serious contestation with Nhemachena, Chimanikire and Musokeri communal areas in the process of trying to expand its boundaries and achieve growth in line with the current demand for land.



**Figure 1.2:** Communal Areas and Farms surrounding Gurube Growth Point  
(Author's creation, 2021)



#### Definition Of Key Terms

**Contestations:** The act by that two parties to an action claim the same right, or when one claims a right to a thing that the other denies; a controversy (Thesaurus Dictionary)

**Communal tenure:** a land tenure type by that land rights are held by multiple users in communal ownership. Land allocation, use and transfer to the individuals are determined by leaders of the community. Such tenure allows individuals to hold rights and obligations jointly with all other users (Adam, 2014).

**Public/State tenure:** a tenure type where the state exercises ownership and governance of land. Land allocation, use and transfer of land are determined by state. That means individuals have the duty to observe rules for use/access as determined by the controlling/managing agency of land (Adam, 2014)

**Peri-urbanization:** the process of urbanization in peri-urban areas and in other words refers to the process through that peri-urban areas are physically and functionally incorporated into the urban system (Webster & Muller, 2004). It involves the conversion of rural agricultural lands to urban built-up properties and thereby entails changes in landownership patterns and transfer processes (Adam, 2014).

The study comprises five chapters, that is chapter one up to chapter five. The first chapter is the introductory and prefatory chapter which serves to elaborate and outline the research problem, research objectives and questions. Chapter one lays the foundation of the study as it provides the background of the research problem, provides a justification of why the cited problem is worth to study and outlines the research aim and objectives that will guide the whole research and determine the contents of chapter two, three, four and five. The second chapter serves to give an in-depth review of relevant literature on contestations for communal land for urban expansion from global to the local context. The literature review section is based on the aim and objectives of the study and the key research questions outlined on chapter one is answered by the literature review section. Another important aspect of the literature review section is conceptual and theoretical frameworks of the study that serves to expose the interrelationship between the main variables under study. The third chapter will provide an overall description of how the research is conducted in detail. Chapter three presents the research methodology and design for the study. It cover issues on research paradigm and philosophy, research approach and design, sampling design and the research methods , data analysis and ethical issues. The fourth chapter deals with both qualitative and quantitative data presentation analysis. It serves to present and interpret the results of the study in line with the research questions outlined in chapter one. Chapter five presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations from the study. The conclusions and recommendation is drawn from the results of the study presented in chapter four.

The chapter basically provides the general overview of the research results considering the objectives and a way forward on what should be done to address the research problem as viewed by the researcher.

This chapter has laid a foundation of the study by giving and stating the problem or gap that need to be addressed, the aim of the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions and the justification for carrying out the study. It has also given a delimitation of the study and the study scope and the description of the study area. The next chapter is going to cover a review of the literature relevant to this study and the conceptual and theoretical frameworks.