Chapter 1: Sense of Community and Traditional Urbanism Contextualised

Being part of a societal group provides one sense of belonging and well-being as one would feel that he or she is a vital cog of the community's overall success. A sense of community is the sense of belonging brought about by common values, beliefs and practices which, when translated into design, allow people to identify with their neighbourhood. The kind of zoning and land uses in a neighbourhood then determines the level of interaction among the inhabitants. This presents a positive correlation between the success of cities and communities and the interaction among the inhabitants. Having a strong sense of community is thus, linked to more factors than just one's location as it involves sentiments. Boekamp (2012) avers that one can be part of the community physically but emotionally not being part of the town.

Neighbourhoods in Zimbabwean cities are designed after British standards that came as a result of colonisation (Davison, 2002). Products of such standards are focused more on infrastructure and housing provision and, as such, give less attention to social interaction and cohesion. Increased individualism has reduced the "sense of community" that community members ought to have for neighbourhoods to be sustainable. Schools of thought in urban design and humanities have come up with diverse conceptualisations of what constitutes "sense of community" (McMillan and Chavis, 1986; Chavis and Wanderson, 1990; Rovai, 2002). Attributes of 'sense of community' comprise of the sentiment of belonging, want to positively participate and being homogeneous within a community. Building from the conceptualisations, this study takes "sense of community" as the sentiment of belonging to a community that determines one's participation in a social group. The definition takes into consideration all the factors that circumscribe the concept of "sense of community".

In urban design, "sense of community" concept began to manifest in the twentieth century through various theories and concepts such as Garden City Concept, Neighbourhood Unit Concept, and the Geddesian triad among others (Hall and Porterfield, 2001). Plausible as the concepts maybe, they do not respond well to the Zimbabwean case [as evidenced by failure of British designs to develop highly cohesive and socially active cities]. As such, the original "sense of

community" that prevailed in the pre-colonial Zimbabwean cities [as seen in ancient cities like Great Zimbabwe, Ndebele State] has not been expressed in the Modern Zimbabwean cities. Failure of modern design standards and approaches to express the Zimbabwean sense of community presents a need for this study.

The issue of social cohesion in city planning is gaining global significance and purchase (Valle, 2008). There are two approaches to enhance sense of community in cities that are currently at the epitome of design. These include participatory urban design which engages people in the development of a design (Duany and Speck, 2013) and new urbanism which focuses on enhancing compactness and walkability in cities (Speck and Duany, 2016). Proponents of the participatory urban design (Kunze *et al.*. 2011) and new urbanist (Speck and Duany, 2016) approach argue that including certain design principles in community design enhances "sense of community". A study carried by Vale (2008) indicated that communities that are designed with the involvement of the public had the highest levels of cohesion, social networking, emotional safety and social interaction. Unge and Klandersman (1985) discovered that homogeneity in neighbourhoods is a source of sense of community. This relates to Gans (1967)'s study on friendship that noted that the basis of friendship was homogeneity.

Globalisation has also come to be a threat to local "sense of community" particularly in developing countries within the Global South situatedness. Western hegemony in movies, technology and politics has led to the admiration of western cultures at the expense of the local "sense of community". Beck (2000:57) argues that traditional systems of community beyond the family are beginning to dissolve and globalisation may result in the destruction of local communities. This is linked to the fact that the designs that are implemented under the neoliberal atmosphere have destroyed the "sense of community" (Speck and Duany, 2016). Designs in a neoliberal environment divide communities on financial grounds (Lund, 2002) and this has partially contributed to the formation of 'slums' for the groups that are not part of the elite community. This has led to social exclusion and reduced public participation in decision-making and increased social stratification leading to the loss of sense of community in cities.

Refocusing of urban planning towards a more context defined planning has led to re-orientation of planning as witnessed in the case of Aboriginal cultures and non-aboriginal cultures in the Canadian setup. Planning is largely done with the originals in the area to ensure continuance of the culture (Patel *et al.*. 2017). This

came as most planning practices in Canada had a detrimental effect on the traditional settlements. The new settlements led to the dispersion of patterns of community settlements, and this changed the form of the community into one with high a welfare dependency. A typical example is of the Grand Rapids Hydro Project that was done in the 1960's (Dean *et al..* 2017). To improve on these, the Canadians through the MacKenzie Delta Beaufort Sea Regional Planning Commission introduced a new Aboriginal planning approach that included the sustainability and conservation approaches and cultural values. As such, an understanding of the culture led to the development of a successful community.

Urban design in Africa mostly derived from colonial design outlooks, principles and ideas. Most African cities have Anglo, Portuguese and French designs among other colonialist histories (Cooper, 1996). The exotic design standards have resulted in most African cities appearing as foreign cities and this has led to the loss of African "sense of community" (Collier and Gunning, 1998). The cities in Africa have been designed following sets of colonial standards that depicted the British "sense of community" which is anchored on the basis of income (Davison, 2002). Therefore, one has to fit into an income group or risk squatting and the products of these design principles are reflected by large African cities like Harare, Johannesburg, Maputo, and Lilongwe among others (Mkwandawire and Soludo, 1998). The exclusive nature of the cities has partially contributed to the formation of slums with Caledonia in Harare, Khayelitsha in South Africa, Kibera in Kenya among others (Desgroppes and Taupin, 2012, Marx and Charlton, 2003). The exclusivity of the modern cities did not exist in pre-colonial cities that allowed all members to participate in their own ways.

The trajectory taken by African countries have seen the design of cities for people without the people resulting in loss of ownership among the residents and therefore, loss of "sense of community" (McMillan and Chavis, 1986). African civilisations have been known to have their unique designs that were influenced by their culture (Bigon *et al..* 2016). This was before colonisation which led to the development of undesirable Western urbanism (Amankwah-Ayeh (1996). From a study done by Amankwah-Ayeh (1996). it was identified that cities existed in Africa way before colonialism that were designed and planned under the influence of African ideologies that included Timbuktu, Djene, Kumasi, Gao, Thaba Bisiou.

Design principles in the pre-colonial period had circularity as the base of design, hence most African cities were circular in nature. Taking South Africa as an example, settlements in Broederstroom are dated to have existed between AD3350-AD600 and they were circular in form (Amankwah-Ayeh, 1996). This was largely an issue of tradition were people were settled around a hill, as families as such settled in circles for instance Yoruba in Nigeria Another typical example was of Dingane's community which was built in a circular format. As shown on Figure 1.2.
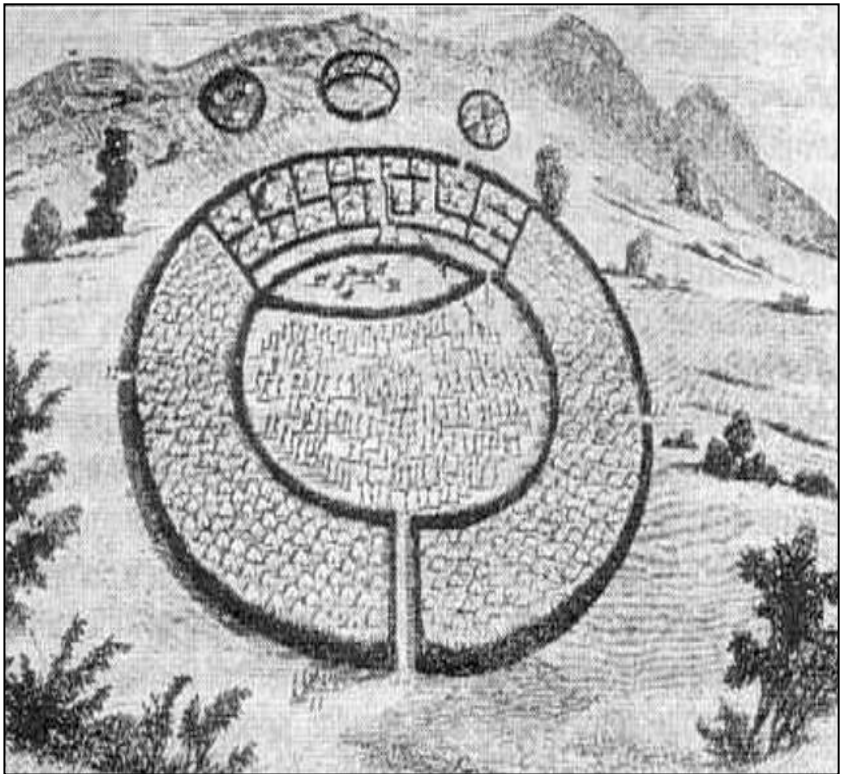

Figure 1. 1: *Dingane's community* (Amankwah-Ayeh, 1996)

The Bantu settlement pattern that was centred on cattle protection known as the cattle pattern of K2 also reflects circularity. Figure 1.3 is a sketch by Drake and Hall (1993) of the design of the cattle pattern.
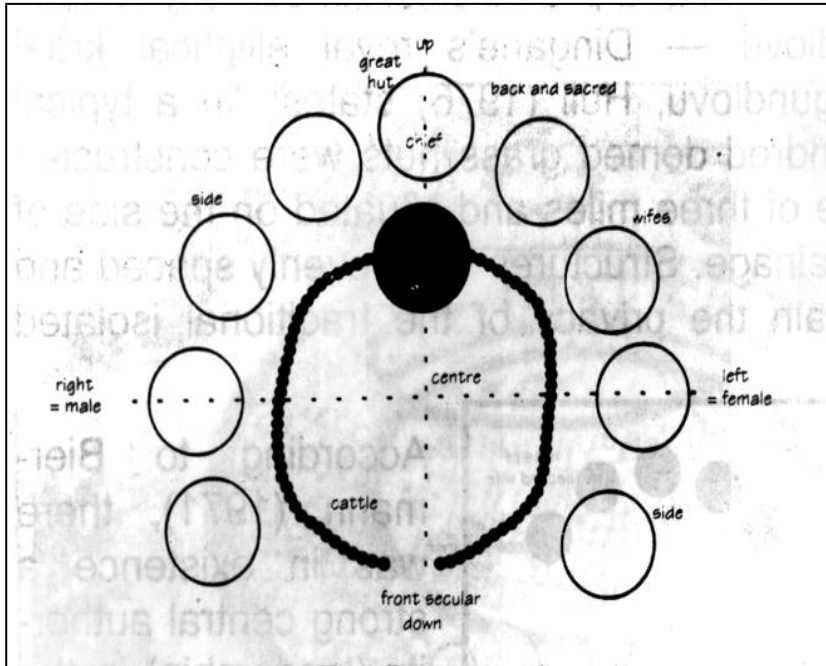
Figure 1. 2: *Bantu cattle pattern* (Drake and Hall, 1993)

Design of settlements in Zimbabwe in the pre-colonial era was guided by *ubuntu/hunhu ethos,* and Samkange (1980) defines *hunhu* as "a philosophy that inspires, permeates and radiates ... regulates our well-planned social and political organisations." This was a huge attribute of Zimbabwean communities as relayed by existing evidence. Organisation of land uses was designed based on its acceptability guided by the values, norms and dignity (Garlarke 1973). Consequently, the settlements designed had high levels of interaction and social cohesion. Colonisation of Zimbabwe saw the introduction of British design principles and laws (Chaeruka and Munzwa, 2009). Scholars like, Lynch (1960), Broady (1966) and Duany and Speck (2016) have applauded designs for creating more aesthetically pleasing cities, however, Pikirayi (2000) and Watson (2009) argue that they alienate the locals. The Shona and Ndebele people's history can be understood by looking at Great Zimbabwe and the Ndebele state. Great Zimbabwe's community has been applauded for beautiful designs that some scholars argue was not the work of Zimbabweans (Mauch, 1871, Pegado, 1531). For the Ndebele, there is need to look at the state and the organisation of their communities.

The Ndebele state was located on what is now Bulawayo which is 15km from the current Bulawayo centre. The Ndebele state was replaced by a grid iron design that is different from the layout of the centralised Ndebele state (Cobbing, 1988). "Sense of community" in the Ndebele communities were largely driven by power and culture (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008). The people built their villages guided by defence mentality, as a result, an individual identifying to a community was the binding agent to the Ndebele "sense of community". One had to fall within the boundaries of a village, and participate to be part of a group (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008).

The concept of sense of community has been of interest in the social sciences and humanities discipline (Watts, 2000, Amit and Rapport, 2002, Gusfield, 1975). Approaches to enhance sense of community have been brought forward mostly in the humanities (Durkheim, 1964, Ahlbrant and Cunningham, 1979, Peterson *et al.*. 2017, Ross and Searle, 2018). There exists a large pool of sociological interpretations of the phrase "sense of community" (MacMillan and Chavis, 1986, Vember, 1990, O'Connor *et al.*. 2015). In urban design, the concept of 'sense of community' is beginning to emerge as design scholars are gradually considering this aspect in neighbourhood urban design (Foster, 1953, Duany and Speck, 2013). Various models have been introduced with elements of sense of community, for instance, the Garden City concept, the Neighbourhood Unit concept and the Ideal city among others (Nasar, 2003). In Europe and America respectively, the models are working as they are contextually relevant (Duany and Speck, 2013). While these designs are working in Europe, the African 'sense of community' in design is still lagging (Onyedinma and Kanayo, 2013). Colonial urban design standards did not and have not yet addressed the needs of African "sense of community" (Njoh, 2009). In Zimbabwe, the British designs present a 'sense of community' that is exotic to the natives (Mafico, 1991) regardless of this, the designs have been adopted even in the post-colonial period. Principles and standards used to design residential layouts in Zimbabwe are largely focused on the economy and infrastructural development but overlooks the significance of designing for social cohesion. This has led to increased individualism in most urban communities evidenced by reduced participation in city design and planning (Mazonde and Carmichael, 2016). This study therefore, seeks to review historic Zimbabwean settlements [Great Zimbabwe and the Ndebele State] that had high levels of social cohesion and interaction. The study will borrow aspects of the settlements that affected "sense of community" and merge the aspects into current urban design. This will lead to the development of a model that portrays a Zimbabwean "sense of community".

The aim of the study is to identify and examine aspects of Zimbabwean "sense of community" from the ancient Zimbabwean cities that can be integrated into current design practices to develop a model neighbourhood that portrays a sustainable "sense of community". The study aims to identify and examine the design characteristics of traditional pre-colonial settlements in Zimbabwe that contributed to a strong "sense of community" and explore how these characteristics can be integrated into modern design practices. It also seeks to

evaluate current design practices in Zimbabwe, identifying aspects that need modification to enhance the "sense of community." By integrating pre-colonial characteristics with contemporary design principles and practices, the study endeavours to model an urban community that portrays a sustainable sense of community.

These study questions were rallying points of interrogation, these questions are framed below:

- What were the characteristics of traditional settlements in Zimbabwe that affected sense of community that can be integrated in modern design practices?
- What are the missing aspects in modern urban design practices that affect "sense of community"?
- How can characteristics that influenced sense of community in Zimbabwe's pre-colonial cities be integrated into modern design practices.
- How will a settlement with a strong and sustainable sense of community look like?

Overall, Urban design in Zimbabwe borrows its principles from British planning which came in with colonisation. (Mafico, 1991). The idea behind the colonial designs were to subjugate the natives and wipe away their cultural systems. This in turn would lead to the alienation of the Africans. The cities designed served the ideas and wiped off the central aspects of Zimbabwean 'sense of community' in city planning. Carrying out this study will result in the understanding of the qualities of pre-colonial cities of Zimbabwe, that had a strong influence on social ties and fuse these into current design approaches. This will improve the design approaches and the levels of community interaction and relationships.

The imposed "sense of community" in Zimbabwe has created urban design models that have led to the development of neighbourhoods that are individualistic in character. Designing in Zimbabwe has a bias towards creating communities based on financial and social classes [low density, medium density and high-density]. This form of financial sense of community has a neoliberal stance that orients people into some degree of financial selfishness. This contradicts the values of Zimbabwean sense of community which is hinged on *hunhu/ubuntu and* oneness and sharing. Therefore, developing a model that responds to the Zimbabwean "sense of community" will help in enhancing social cohesion in modern Zimbabwean cities. Furthermore, the model has the potential to become the future of urban design in Zimbabwe as it will be centred on Zimbabwe's heritage. Having this model may also improve understanding of urban societies in scholarly circles as it will affirm the concept of architectural determinism in the context of Zimbabwe.

Globally, guided by international institutions, the Sustainable Development Goals disc ourse has been gaining traction as a plausible indicator of development. Sustainable Development Goal 11 introduces the concept of inclusivity. Carrying out this study will result in the development of design models and principles that enhance human involvement. This is backed by McMillan and Chavis (1986) who argued that through enhancing sense of community, citizen participation will be enhanced. Having neighbourhoods that are designed with cognizance of the Zimbabwean values and norms will result in the inclusion of classes that had been side-lined. This will lead to the country achieving one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). The study, therefore, will be of huge importance for the country in its pursuit of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals.

Urban problems in Zimbabwe and across most developing countries tend to take a pattern of those of the colonial masters. This reflects the influence of urban plans and urban problems. As such borrowing planning from the Zimbabwean forefathers can help in dealing with some of the problems that have come about as a result of the British plans and planning processes. This process will lead to the development of plans that relate to the needs of the Zimbabwean environment and the cultures and comparison to the exotic planning principles currently operational.

The study focuses on two ancient cities in Zimbabwe, the Great Zimbabwe and the Ndebele State/ Khami Ruins. The two areas are situated in Masvingo and Matabeleland provinces respectively. The Great Zimbabwe represents the Shona culture while the Old Bulawayo site represents the Ndebele culture. The two study areas are no longer functional, however, the remnants of the settlements and the history that is found in the museums at the site can give an understanding of how the societies lived.

The History of the Shona people can be told by scrutiny of the history of the Great Zimbabwe state (Fontein, 2016). The Great Zimbabwe dates back from the 11th Century and is believed to have been built over 300 years. Debate still exists on the constructors of the Great Zimbabwe (Chirikure *et al..* 2017). Scholars like Hartnack (2015), Muchemwa (2016), Ndlebe (2016) argue that the design of Great Zimbabwe is too sophisticated to have been built by the Shona people by the 11th century. However, there is no evidence to substantiate the claim that the Shona people did not build Great Zimbabwe due to its unique design (Mpofu, 2014). The conclusion is that the Shona people constructed Great Zimbabwe (Mtetwa and Lindahl, 2017).

Great Zimbabwe is estimated to have existed in flourishment between 1200 and 1500. The state is believed to have inhabited around 18, 000 inhabitants during its peak (Connah, 2015).and the area covered an area of between 160 and 320 kilometres (Fagan and Durrani, 2015). The area was designed into three distinct architectural groups that include the Hill Complex, the Valley Complex and the Great Enclosure. The Great Zimbabwe was a trade centre and the occupants traded with the Chinese, Portuguese and had a link to Kilwa (Ndoro, 2001). The

community was ruled by kings and had strong social ties. The Great Zimbabwe is estimated to have fallen around the fourteenth and the fifteenth century (Mpofu, 2014).

Figure 1. 3: *Great Zimbabwe state* (Marlowe, 2013)

To really comprehend the Ndebele culture there is need to look at the history of the Ndebele after Mfecane. After the defeat by Tshaka at Mosega, the Ndebele left under the leadership of Mzilikazi and they settled at four capitals namely Gibxhegu, Mahlohloko, Inyathi and Mhlahlandleia. After Lobengula gained power in the year 1870, they moved near Gibxhegu and renamed the area KoBulawayo derived from *bulawa* meaning to kill or persecute. The site was burnt down by Lobengula in 1881 and moved to the current location of Bulawayo. In 1998 a reconstruction was attempted but the site was unfortunate as it fell victim to a bush fire in the year 2018 sparing only the museums. The location of Old Bulawayo is approximately 27 kilometres from the current location of Bulawayo (20°18′10″ S 28°37′35″ E). The area was established as a new town in 1870 following the argument that lead to the death of Mzilikazi.

The Ndebele are descendants of the Khumalo people that moved out of South Africa during the times of Mfecane and the rise of Tshaka the Zulu (MacKenzie, 2017). The Ndebele came to Zimbabwe in 1883 settling in the area now Bulawayo

9

displacing Changamire Dombo. According to history, the Ndebele had an aggressive community as such the pillaged every community around them. The Ndebele state was divided into three strati, the *Zanzi* (the Rich), *Enhla* (Middle class workers) the *Holi* (lower class). These groups were converted into fighting regiments. The Ndebele community after wars began living in hamlets which were displaced villages called kraals (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014). Figure 1.4 is a map of the Ndebele state.
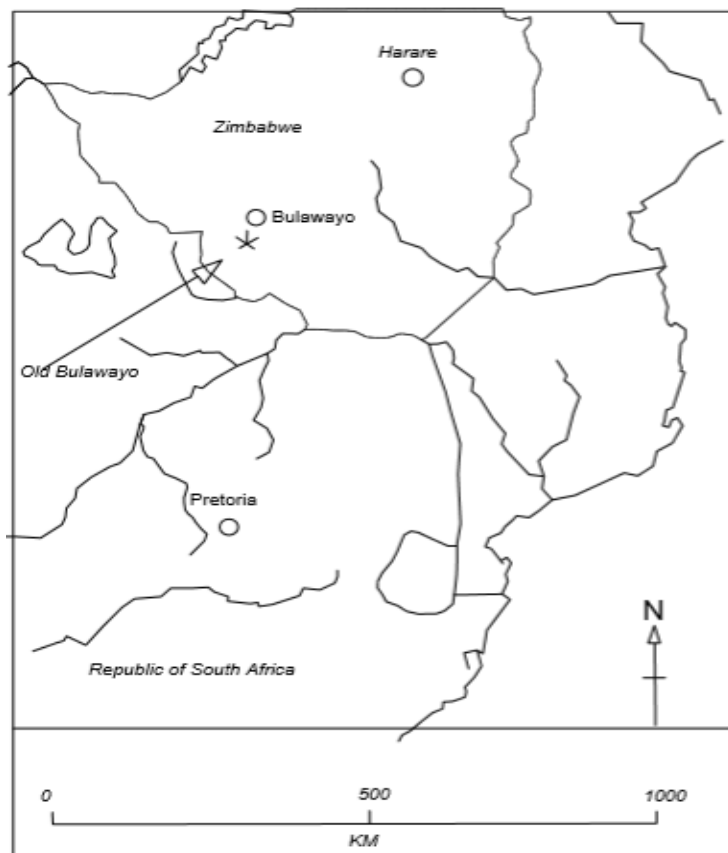

Figure 1. 4: *Ndebele State* (Makuvaza and Burret, 2011).

The study will focus on two tradition settlements to understand various components of Zimbabwe's civilisation and settlements before colonisation. Great Zimbabwe ruins and Old Bulawayo will be the main areas of focus as they bear

the history of Zimbabwean societies from the 12th Century-15th Century (Garlake, 1985). In delimiting conceptual matters, urban design is divided in two aspects, architecture which is focused on the private realm and town and regional planning which is focused on the public realm in a wider context (Erell, 2008). The study will focus on town and regional planning, this aspect of urban design entails planning at a larger context, using streets, blocks, zoning among other considerations.

Definitions of for the following key terms are provided as follows:

Urban Design-is concerned with the physical form of the public realm over a limited physical area of the city and that it therefore, lies between the two well-established design scales of architecture that is concerned with the physical form of the private realm of the individual building, and town and regional planning that is concerned with the organisation of the public realm in its wider context (Madanipour, 1996).

Community-An area where a group resides, a group with common interests (Lund, 2002).

Sense of Community- is a feeling that members belong to a place, matter in decisions of a group and share the faith that the needs of a group member can be met through committing to be together (McMillan and Chavis, 1986).

Society- a group of people living together (Chavis and Wandersman, 2002).

The book assumes the following structure:

Chapter one is about the introduction and general overview of the study. it outlines the problem statement, the aim of the study and the study questions, setting the general direction of the study. The chapter is preceded by chapter 2 which has the literature review that provides an overview of how scholars perceive sense of community in the design of settlements. Chapter 3 provides a full spectrum of the methodology that the study engages. From the methodology, the study presents the findings of the study in chapter four while the fifth chapter provides the discussion and recommendations of the study. The last chapter will present the model that the study generates, of a design that presents sustainable Zimbabwean sense of community.

Sense of community is a significant aspect in human lives. It is not simply affected by one's physical location but the emotional attachment. The sense of belonging is affected by various aspects that include but not limited to norms, values, social ties and other forms of homogeneity. All these translate into a design that makes one identify him/ herself to a particular community. The 'sense of community' aspect has been lacking in urban design in African countries, particularly Zimbabwe. This is hinged on the colonial design principles that were used to develop new urban centres. The drive behind this was to subjugate the African as such cities were of a neo-liberal nature. This calls for a look at the factors that affected sense of community in pre-colonial settlements like the Great Zimbabwe and the Ndebele state and fuse them into modern day urban design.