

Chapter 4: Observing Analysing Pre-Colonial Settlements of Zimbabwe

This chapter seeks to present the findings of the study. It critically the identification of various factors that influence the development of cohesive settlements in the pre-colonial settlements of Zimbabwe. With the purpose of developing a model, the chapter focuses on the clear highlights of factors that influenced settlement formation and factors that influenced cohesion within the formed settlements. Interpretations are based on interviews, papers and observations by sociologists, anthropologists, archaeologists and historians.

Design of layouts and buildings in the Great Zimbabwe present a stunning form that has left most people with some level of scepticism of whether the Shona people were the designers of the structure. The Great Zimbabwe design also presents a huge city of that time making it an example of indigenous planning systems and oneness. The question then becomes, what elements led to such a design and the interaction and oneness within the Great Zimbabwe capital. This section presents the possible factors that led to cohesion and the design features within the Great Zimbabwe capital.

Politics play a significant role in the design and formation of any settlement. The same was right in the determination of the design and cohesion within the Great Zimbabwe State. The Great Zimbabwe State was a politically centralised state with the King having the sole decision over everything within the community. The king was believed to be linked to the gods and possessing mysterious powers. This made the people to take the King as a god. As such, decisions made by the King were sacred and respected. This made everyone to actively participate within the state. To show the power, the king built the walls and to parade his wealth (Chirikure *et al.* 2017). The king therefore dwelt in the Hill Complex in the Great Zimbabwe State. One sociologist from the Great Zimbabwe who was acting as a tour guide stated that,

"The inner section of the western enclosure proves to be a royal residency to the ancient kings. Supreme evidence of herringbone decorated spears which traditionally imply power, array of turrets, monoliths and its space is all credible witness that the place also had the dare function..."

Great Zimbabwe's political dominance spread across Zimbabwe way beyond the current location of the Great Zimbabwe Ruins. It is believed that the settlement had political dominance over most of the settlements in the area that is now called Zimbabwe. This was done through subjugation where the leaders of the

areas would pay tribute the Great Zimbabwe king. As such, Great Zimbabwe began to operate as the capital while other areas became the provincial and the local administrative offices for the collection of tribute. This can be evidenced by the claims made by Rasmussen and Rubert (1990) that, there exist a series of hundreds smaller but similar ruins. Around the settlement which could have been areas for local authority.

All the smaller settlements were called the *madzimbahwe* which is Shona for houses of stones. Looking at these settlements and the effects of politics in cohesion and the settlement form of the Great Zimbabwe. The king was so powerful such that there was no form of rebellion within the state. This created one nation that focused on their economic activities behind the king. The cohesion made it possible for the development of the magnificent Great Zimbabwe State walls. Furthermore, the power of the king made it possible for him to conquer other states that brought him tribute. In the context of this study, it is not the tribute that matters but how it was collected. The king had created various sub-regional offices with submissive kings as tribute collectors or local authorities. In town planning terms, this coincides with two concepts, walkability and centrality. The local authorities were located in central and walkable places around the area under the leadership of the Great Zimbabwe kings. While one can argue about the issue of walking as the only mode of transport by that time, the argument then moves to people centred planning. The Great Zimbabwe was planned to make life easier for the people within the society.

The Zimbabwe social systems are still subject to a lot of debate (Fontein, 2016). The early Iron Age societies are believed to have been egalitarian in nature. Garlake (1982) argues that, "There was no distinction of rank or wealth." This statement by Garlake (1982) presents a community that was all inclusive with a high level of community cohesion. This self-sufficient society that did not have any form of political system began to fragment in the 11th and 12th Century. The communities in the Great Zimbabwe region began to form regional identities. The next periods were marked by a series of social stratifications that became the social set-up of the Great Zimbabwe State.

The Great Zimbabwe state had three social groups, the royal family, the further relatives and the craftsman then the rest of the society. These groups were located in different places with the Royal family and the important traditional mediums being located in the Great enclosure, the specialised craftsman being located in the Western enclosure and the rest of the population living in *dhaka* mud huts down in the valley. While this stratification could be a potential source of conflict among the Great Zimbabwe dwellers, the society remained

united. The Great Zimbabwe people were peaceable. Garlake (1982) states that: "They were peaceable farmers, growing the indigenous millet and sorghum and keeping goats, sheep and a few cattle." Each person focused on his/her area of trade; farmers were happy settling away from the rocky areas into the agriculturally productive valleys. As such knowledge of one's place within the Great Zimbabwe community helped in maintenance of peace and cohesion within the society.

In an interview with one lady from the National Museums and Monuments Great Zimbabwe office, the society of the Great Zimbabwe society was said to have been bound by the following, Norms and Values, Dressing and Language and Food. She stated that,

"The Karanga people were bound by a set of values that made them one people. This was aided by language (Chikaranga) that unified the group of people as they were doing their chores.... To strengthen the argument, she gave an example of the bible when the descendants of Noah wanted to build the Tower of Babel to go to God... God just created disorder in terms of language and the tower was not constructed... [Genesis: 11]"

It is believed that through the Karanga language, the people could coordinate and come up with a significant development which can be evidenced by the dry-stone walls at Great Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, food was one of the significant factors that united the Great Zimbabwe people as one people. It was believed that every visitor should be given food within the Shona community. One official stated that,

"Food was a binding factor among the Shona people. Ukama igasva hunozadzikiswa nekudya (food is the essential missing piece of every relationship)."

As such food became a unifier among the Shona people. Looking at tradition, the Shona people became so involved in subsistence agriculture to be able to fulfil their food needs. This can also be explained in current Zimbabwean cities where urban agriculture became a common issue once the urban area was free for all.

Furthermore, social classifications played a significant role in the settlement of the Great Zimbabwe people. The Great Zimbabwe society had two types of classes, the royalty and the commoners. One's class determined where one settled. Another official at the Great Zimbabwe monuments stated that,

"The dry-stone walls were like a durawall (fencing wall) ruzhowa in Shona.... All the people that stayed within the wall were royal and commoners stayed outside the wall."

In an explanation of the settlement patterns, the official further stated that,

"The Great Zimbabwe can be divided into three sections, the hill complex, the valley complex and the Great enclosures. The Hill complex is believed to have been the dwellings of the King and the spirit mediums. The Valley was a place for hama dzamambo (the King's relatives) and the traders and the Great enclosure was where the king's wives stayed ... The rest of the society stayed around the walls this was evidenced by round shaped floors found through excavations scattered all over the area covering approximately 720 ha around the Great Zimbabwe..."

Another aspect that bound the Great Zimbabwe community cohesion were family ties. People in the Great Zimbabwe settled around in what was called *Nzanga*. *Nzanga* was a group of people from the same tribe with same totem living close by. In some cases, the father would have a central house and the children built around the father's place in the *Nzanga*. The other binding agent to the Great Zimbabwe cohesion was polygamy. Great Zimbabwe community was a polygamous society. A man could marry many wives but from the same family from the surrounding areas (*rooranaí vematongo*). The concept of marriage was also done in the context of marrying people with similar values and norms. As such people of the same origin of both the male origin and the women origin settled together as one.

Economic activities were significant factors in shaping the spatial layout and the location of the Great Zimbabwe state. The state was anchored by agriculture thereby settling at the edge of the Zimbabwean plateau. This allowed the inhabitants or the people of Great Zimbabwe access to good arable soils and good pastures for livestock. Besides agriculture, the Great Zimbabwe state also engaged in trade (both long distance and barter), pottery, basketry, weaving, iron smith and mining. While mining is part of the list, scholars argue that mining was too labour intensive and very few people desired engaging in mining, as such most people that engaged in mining only mined under the king's commission.

Agriculture was done at the current Great Zimbabwe location and in the surrounding areas. Evidence of fields was found in areas as far as the current location of Gokomere (Interview with anthropologist, 2019). This evidence that the Shona people already had the concept of Green Belts. Agriculture was done far away from intensively settled areas of the Great Zimbabwe city.

Blacksmithing was another significant aspect of the Great Zimbabwe city. As an Iron Age city, iron tools were essential in the day-to-day life of the Great Zimbabwe. This was done in blast furnaces made of dagga. Blacksmithing was done using wood that was burnt to smelt iron and copper. Gold Smelting was done at the king's compound. Furnaces were found at the Western side of the settlements to avoid pollution. As such the most concentration of industries was

found in Mashava area whose distance was similar from where the agricultural areas were located (Questionnaire respondent, 2019). This means that zoning was very essential particularly in locating certain land uses that could be detrimental to the Great Zimbabwe dwellers.

The economy of the Great Zimbabwe state created very important synergies between various people of various trades. The farmers exchanged goods with other people from other trades and these relationships were maintained through the people with special skills staying close to each other in the western enclosure to allow close interaction. The idea of staying together allowed for agglomeration economics thereby allowing the Great Zimbabwe to be one of the largest cities in ancient Sub-Saharan Africa.

Furthermore, the economic activities within Great Zimbabwe created a form of cohesion towards empowering the King. Tribute was one of the major sources of political power for the royal family and for the elite group. It was paid to show allegiance to the king through tribute, Great Zimbabwe continued to prosper as the people continued to respect the king. This process meant pooling of resources towards empowering the king. It is believed that it is through the riches that the king got from tribute that the Great enclosure was built. The enclosure became a sign of flamboyance as the king had power and resources evidenced through the tribute system.

Evidence has been found of settlements in areas around the Great Zimbabwe that were centres for tribute collection for the Great Zimbabwe King. These included areas like Chenga, Matuzu among others. These areas were governed by various chiefs and tribute was managed by the king's stewards known as *Nhariredza Mambo*.

One major source of oneness within the Shona community was religion. It was the glue that bound the Great Zimbabwe community. Great Zimbabwe was ruled by the kings that were believed to be the Land and the Gods. They ruled through *mhondoro*. *Mhondoro* were the agents of communication to *vadzimu* who then communicated with *Mwari* (God) or *Musikvanhu*. The God would then respond through the *svikiro* who were the spirit mediums. The Great Zimbabwe state is believed to have been a sanctuary particularly the Hill complex and the Acropolis within the Great enclosure. Huffman (2017) believes that the Great Zimbabwe state was a religious centre. The location was an acropolis that had a cave under the hill. The Hill is believed to be the place where the priests would sit and perform rituals. It is believed that the acoustic properties of the cave made the

Mwari worshippers to think that the voice of the priest was of *Mwari* responding to their needs.

The *Mwari*-cult led to the development of settlement patterns that were influenced by two systems, The Mapungubwe pattern (K2) or the Cattle Central Pattern (CCP). Both patterns led to the development of sacred places that were not open to everyone but the King and then priest. In the front secular model, the rain making kraal was behind the homestead of the king. It is believed that the general rain making ceremonies were done from these private spaces which have been attributed to occur on hilltops. From the descriptions of Huffman *et al.* (2018), the rain making ceremonies (*doro remukwerera*) were done on inaccessible mountain tops which best suits the description of the Hill complex. The rain making ceremony therefore created a level of cohesion within the Great Zimbabwe community. Everyone participated in his or her own way. The girls had the duty to spread rain making medicine in the field, men were responsible for taking and burning cow-dung. This made religion central to the development and the cohesion in the Great Zimbabwe state. Through the *Mwari*-cult, the Karanga people were a cohesive unit.

However, this mode identifies a clear religious system, Beach (1988) argues otherwise. The discourse by Beach (1988: 17) notes that,

"The Great Zimbabwe state had no clear market spaces, public spaces or religious spaces.... Religion within the Karanga people was shown through compassion and love to one another."

This contradicts the two models by Huffman (1986) however this does not dismiss the fact that Great Zimbabwe religion was one of the major sources of cohesion. Fontein (2016) argues that religion was responsible for reduced disobedience among the Great Zimbabwe dwellers. This could be represented by the existences of an altar within every *Karanga* hut. The *Karanga* hut had a place called *chikuva*. This *chikuva* is an altar that whenever a person died one had to place on the sanctuary where he/she was appeased to *Mwari*.

The Great enclosure also had areas of religious significance where it is believed that the Shona people worshiped their Gods and did some religious ceremonies. The conical tower was pointed as the shrine (see plate 4.1). The major religious site however was the hill complex Eastern enclosure. On the site, one historian stated that,

"In the eastern section, here where we are (see plate 4.1) is a section of the religious arena where traditional rituals would be conducted. Evidence found on the eastern side of the Great Zimbabwe Hill Complex, plus the stretchy of terraced and bench also testify in Shona traditions how it could have been used a functional dare."

This places the Hill complex as one of the most significant points in the history and lifestyles of the Shona people.

Plate 4 . 1: *Conical Tower in the Great Enclosure* (Research, 2019)



Great Zimbabwe attributes are hereby explained in their context then linked in relationship to current town planning deriving meanings and possible implications.

The findings on Great Zimbabwe are reflections of a self-sustainable cohesive society driven norms, values and beliefs. The Great Zimbabwe is a magnificent community not only in terms of the dry-stone walls but also the remarkable planning. The past communities represent what present communities seek to achieve. These include walkability, inclusivity, intensive combination of uses, cohesion of community, environmental sustainability sustenance. These are reflected in many ways including the way of life, the location of land uses, the land uses and the history of the Karanga people.

The concept of walkability as indicated by the literature review entails the existence of infrastructure, incentives to walk and the walking distances. The Great Zimbabwe community was designed for walkers. The width of the routes that are believed to be the ancient routes to the king's palace can only accommodate a person who is walking than any other form of transport. This is also reflected by the widths of the routes between the walls in the Great enclosure. One can argue that the Great Zimbabwe had to be built with the human being at the centre of the considerations. Though this holds water, the development of subordinate places that were centres for tribute collection still support that the Great Zimbabwe's structure focused on ensuring walkability. Regardless of the rich cattle economy and the able iron smiths that could create some form of transport (Oxen drawn carts), Great Zimbabwe people ensured that they live in small sects (*Nzanga*) that had walkable access and self-sustenance.

Sense of community in the Great Zimbabwe was largely pinned on participation in community traditions, beliefs and activities. The level of inclusion in the Great Zimbabwe was very high. Every person had a part to play in the community as such they managed to build the Great Zimbabwe walls. At rituals like rain making ceremonies that were of significance in Great Zimbabwe, everyone played a part. For instance, local girls who could be considered the least important in the patriarchal Great Zimbabwe community participated in the process of rain making (spreading rain making medicines). This applied in every aspect on the Great Zimbabwe community, everyone had a role to play. Everyone playing a part increases sense of ownership as such everyone participates within the community. It is through participation that cohesion was enhanced.

The Great Zimbabwe community was oriented towards intensive combination of land uses. There was no place designed for a single use within the Great Zimbabwe city. For instance, the King was believed to live in the Hill complex. This complex was divided into two, the eastern and the western enclosures. The eastern enclosure housed the Priest and it is believed that events like the rain making ceremonies were done in this place. In the western enclosure was the king's place. This place was characterised by king's dwelling, the *dare* where the king held his meetings to solve community issues. Gold smelting furnaces were also found in the western enclosure. Looking at these uses, and reinterpreting the uses in current town planning language, it can be explained in Table 4.1.

Table 4. 1: *The combination of uses on the Hill complex* (Author, 2019)

Land Use	Great Zimbabwe Use	Current Town Planning Use
Dare	To solve disputes, to make community decisions and to inaugurate the new king.	Institutional (community halls, court)
<i>Doro Remukwerera Sites</i>	To do the rain making ceremonies, consecrate the king	Institutional (Church)
<i>Muzinda Wamambo</i>	The king's place of residence	Residential
Gold Furnaces	Smelting Gold for the King	Industrial

Plate 4.2: *The Western Enclosure* (Research, 2019)



From the Hill complex, land use mixing is be evidenced in the Great Enclosure. The Great enclosure was believed to be the queen's palace where the king's wives stayed and had a sense of security. This place was used as the residence of the queens and their children with the order of significance. Furthermore, cotton weaving was believed to have been done in the Great enclosure. Evidence of

sorghum traits also mean that the Great enclosure particularly at the conical tower could have been used for traditional rituals like the rain making ceremonies. Since the Queen mother (*Vahosi*) stayed in this place, pre-marital education is believed to have been taught in the Great enclosure. This is also intense combination of uses and in town planning language it can be represented like on table 4.2.

Table 4. 2: *The combination of uses in the Great Enclosure* (Author, 2019)

Land Use	Great Zimbabwe Use	Current Town Planning Use
<i>Musha wavakunda vamambo</i>	Residence for Kings wives	Residential
Cotton weaving	Cotton weaving	Industrial
<i>Doro remukwerera</i>	Rain making ceremonies	Institutional (religious centres)
Premarital education	Premarital education	Institutional (Education).

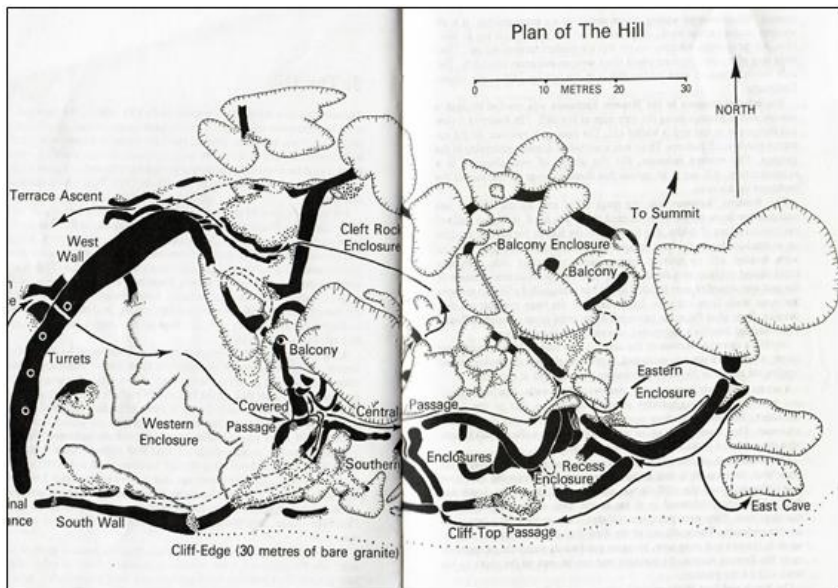


Figure 4. 1: *Hill complex* (Garlake, 1973)

From the royal sites to the common lands, evidence of combination of uses still remained. Every household within the Great Zimbabwe community had various characteristics. From the replica of the Kalanga home at the Great Zimbabwe site it could be noted that each homestead was self-sufficient on its own. Each homestead had the residential spaces where the people slept; *gota* sleeping for boys, *nhanga* sleeping for girls and a house for each wife. The same place had the *dare* place where family issues were discussed. In the round huts, there was a *chikuva* area which was a sanctuary at every house. The site also had the kraal areas which had the family cattle. Agricultural crops were kept in the *dura* for storage. At the homestead, there was the playing area which games like *tsoro* and *nhodo* were played. All these features made the place self-sufficient. To explain this kind of intensity of mixing uses in the Great Zimbabwe at home stead level, table 4.3 tries to convert the uses into conventional town planning colours.

Table 4. 3: Mixed-use at commoners' areas (Author, 2019)

Land Use	Current Town Planning Use
<i>Nhanga, Gota, KwavaHosi, KwaNyachide and Other wives</i>	Residential space
<i>Chikuva</i> area	Institutional, religious area)
<i>Dare</i> (family issues, production of tools (<i>tsvimbo, miseve, mupini</i>))	Industrial and Institutional
Play Area	Public Spaces\ Active open spaces
Kraals	Agricultural

The magnificent Great Zimbabwe area is evidence of community of cohesion. There is no way that a building of that nature could be built without community oneness. One such building that was constructed as influenced by cohesion was the Tower of Babel depicted in the bible that was built with the people as a result of cohesion (Genesis 11: 1-9). From that, walls like that of Great Zimbabwe's Hill Complex, Valley Enclosures and the Great Enclosures could only be built with a community that had one goal. Furthermore, the issue of living in the *Nzanga*, marrying from the local and family members living in close proximity meant that the Great Zimbabwe people maintained the cohesion as they were one family. The Great Zimbabwe people lived in family units. If a son married, the father would give the son his son a place to build his place close by. As such, the communities were clusters of related people (*Hungwes*).

Plate 4. 3: *Eastern Enclosure* (Research, 2019)

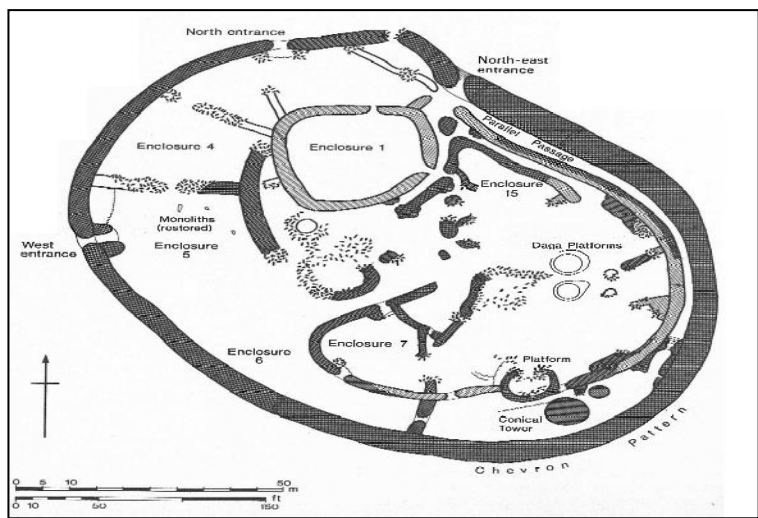


Figure 4.2 *The Great Enclosure reconstruction* (Garlake, 1973)



Figure 4.3 *Great Enclosure in Picture* (Research, 2019)

Furthermore, cohesion was also seen through the payment of tribute and contribution of small sub areas in the Great Zimbabwe communities. The Great Zimbabwe as the administrative centre was also supported by smaller other sub communities that were found around the settlement. These could only pay tribute if they were aligned with the king. Their continuous harmonious existence with the king meant that they were a part of the Great Zimbabwe community, driving towards the stipulated goals of the ruling king.

The Great Zimbabwe State had very high densities of people in one place. A simple translation of the estimated population of the Great Zimbabwe of 20,000 people on an area of 720 ha translates to a population density of 6, 897 people per square metre. As from January 2019, the average population of density per square metre in London was 5590 people while Hong Kong had an average of 6300 people per square metre. This evidence that Great Zimbabwe had a generally high level of density. During the iron age period, a community could only grow that big if they had a common goal and one voice bound by certain norms values and beliefs. These levels of densification could mean cohesion as the people were

so packed in one place making their relationships closer. The people that lived within the Great Zimbabwe lived in the Nzanga which were clusters of high-density communities. This allowed people to interact on a daily basis. The densification was also seen in the context of uses where Great Zimbabwe had agglomeration of industries for instance all Agriculture agglomerated at Gokomere and most of the mining agglomerated at Mashava.

From the Great Zimbabwe community, it can be identified that while it was an ancient community, its people-oriented nature made it a sustainable and cohesive society. The combination of uses, the walking-oriented designs, the high densities of settlers and the magnificent products of the Great Zimbabwe people reflect this. This being the background of cohesion within Shona communities, the study went on to look at the Ndebele communities.

Unlike the Shona people history that had many versions of the same story, the Ndebele history is one that is less argued about. The only discontent is on the nature of relations between the Shona and the Ndebele which is at the periphery of the scope of this study. This section provides an overall outline of the Ndebele communities' beliefs and cultures and how it influenced the lives and the designs of the pre-colonial Ndebele city. This section is presented in a mixed approach as the lives of the Ndebele were interlinked as such clearly distinguishing the social from the religion or the economy from the political will make the research less rich than it could be if look at in an integrated manner. As such politics and the economy will be looked at comprehensively while the religion and the society will also be combined.

The Ndebele, through their political methods of ruling and conquering earned them various titles including splendid despots, noble savages, martial spirit and blood thirsty savagery. The Ndebele have also been described as ones that were militaristic and authoritarian. Most scholars that wrote around the Ndebele's political systems described the Ndebele region as a violence terrain. Ndlovu-Gatsheni however clears the Ndebele system of politics by dividing it into two phases, the 1820-1840 period that was a violent moment during the movement after *Mfecane*. The other phase was between 1841 and 1893 when the Ndebele settled on the Zimbabwean plateau making it a more heterogeneous terrain. It is at this point that Beach argues that the Shona again began to reappear in terms of power. This period saw the Ndebele seeking for consensual governance and trying to rule together with everyone. The Ndebele was largely conquered by the institution of *Amabutho* which was civilianised during the second phase to meet the less aggressive and more cohesive system.

During this period, the office of the King was transformed ritualised and the Ndebele king assumed the duty of a rain maker, distribution of cattle, administering grain and as the cult head. In this period, the king was less of a tyrant and power in the state was based on meritocracy. From this political system, the power groups emerged, the *Abenhla* (those from the North), *AmaHole* and *Zansi* (those from the south). While this was the classifications of different systems, the Ndebele system of governance remained centralised around the king (*inkosi*). Figure 4.4 show how political power was distributed in the Ndebele state.



Figure 4. 4: *Ndebele Political Structure* (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2008:76)

While there are traits of democracy, politics in the Ndebele state was not open for competition. Kingship was hereditary and only people of the same blood could be kings. The argument was that power belonged to those who wielded it in this case, the Khumalo. The patriarchal ideology also played a significant role in the Ndebele state. As such there was adherence to the father-like figure whose actions were always right. The Ndebele king therefore was the father of all the

Ndebele people and the people showed respect by being his 'children'. Thus, the Ndebele political life was acted out as a chain of personal relations. From this, the Ndebele people considered themselves as one family (*uMthwakazi*). This system therefore, evidences a strong sense of community fostered by political relations. Though in some instances it was a result of fear, oneness among the Ndebele communities prevailed.

The other important aspect in ensuring sense of community within the Ndebele state was the role of the Chief. The chiefs played an advisory role to the king. In an interview with one historian on the issue of the Ndebele's, he argued that,

"The chiefs played an advisory role and presided over Amaxhiba (regiments), these were in an advisory council that was known as the Umphakhati, these chiefs also played a role in maintaining cohesive unit within the Ndebele state and could do anything with their power. An example is how Chief Lotshe got king Lobengula to execute the Induba chief."

This evidence another source of cohesion within the Ndebele community. The people were managed in sub communities by a chief who later reported to the king. Figure 4.5 is a reconstruction of a royal meeting.



Figure 4.5 *Chief's meeting* (Nyathi, 2016)

The Ndebele Economy was largely characterised by agriculture, raiding and mining. The major focus of the Ndebele was livestock farming that influenced the settlement of the Ndebele people. The location, the settlement pattern and the activities were centred on protection of the livestock. The Ndebele also focused on crop production that included the farming of crops like maize, sorghum, pumpkins among others. All these activities were complemented by the raids that the Ndebele people carried out on the Shona. The cattle economy that the Ndebele had was boosted by cattle raids that were dependant on the political prowess of the Ndebele.

The Ndebele social system was stratified into three distinct groups, The *Zanzi*, *Abenhla* and *amaHole*. The Zansi were the original group that had followed King Mzilikazi from Zululand. Whilst the population of this group was the least, they were the most powerful in the Ndebele society. *Abenhla* was the second group and the class comprised of people that had been conquered before the Ndebele got into present day Zimbabwe. These included the Venda, Sotho, and Tswana. The last class was the *amaHole* that had people that were conquered in Zimbabwe. These were either volunteers or the captives, they were the largest group. Over time of settlement, the democracy opened up and interclass marriages were permitted. The non-Nguni groups became socially significant.

The Ndebele owned cattle but the rule was that, the king owned all the cattle and the land was his. This implies that land use ordinances existed within the Ndebele state. Land was not free in this sense. There were two forms of cattle ownership in the Ndebele state (*inkomozamathanga*) personal cattle and (*inkomosenkosi*) communal cattle. The cattle had a huge role in determining one's social status. Cattle that were raided were taken to the king for distribution among the Ndebele people. The cattle distribution process meant that the king became popular among the Ndebele people and they rallied behind him cohesively. Furthermore, during times of famine, food was distributed by the king and the chiefs among their people.

The social systems of the Ndebele were on the basis of their culture. The king was believed to be the high priest who was closer to the Gods. Divergent of the Great Zimbabwe kings, the Ndebele King did not perform any rituals. The King only communicated with the Gods when there was a drought or a plague. The Ndebele believed in their God, *Unkulunkulu* and the wife of the god *Mvelengani* who was believed to be the source of wealth. The gods had children and came to earth in the form of snakes. There was no ritual for the gods as such the Ndebele had no clear worshipping space. The Ndebeles came in and adopted the Shona

traditions of *vadzimu* that were called *idlozi/ amadhlozi* who were believed to protect the Ndebele people.

The Ndebele people's perception of the world was that it was round. In an interview with one of the sociologists he stated that,

"The Ndebele were a superstitious group that believed that the world was round. As such their design and other elements essential to their community was round. For a Ndebele person to feel comfortable, he/she had to be in a round place that explains the settlement layouts, the court/ *iguma*, their huts. This can be seen from the fact that when one of the white visitors brought him a new design of corners, he was not comfortable as such opened an extra door to access his round hut..."

From this statement it is noted that sense of place in the Ndebele state was directly linked to beliefs and beliefs determined the settlement in the area. The circularity within the Ndebele community was not random but played an essential role in determining the sense of place. Figure 4.6 shows the home built for Lobengula that he used as a storage facility. Plate 4.4 shows a Ndebele Beehive hut reconstructed in 1998 but consumed by fire in 2010. Plate 4.4 is the site after fire consumed it.

Plate 4. 4: *Ndebele Beehive Hut* (Findings, 2019)



Plate 4.5: *Beehive hut floor after fire* (Research, 2019)



Figure 4. 6: *Lobengula's modest home* (Nyathi, 2018: 3)

One notable aspect of all Ndebele homes even rural homes of today is the *Iguma* of the court. This was a sitting place where all significant decisions of the family were made. The *Iguma* was an attribute of all Ndebele places and made the

Ndebele people feel at home. The place was designed in a circular way designating the equidistant central seating that was done by the Ndebele in a court see figure 4.6 where Lobengula sat with his people at his home. Like the Shona people's dare, the *iguma* was largely a sitting place for men and was a sign of patriarchy. Since the Ndebele community believed in one family under the father, the *iguma* played an essential role in fostering sense of community. One anthropologist said,

"The *iguma* to date is an essential feature of the Ndebele Home, it represents the power of males and represent unity in a family. It is at *iguma* that the family males discuss, talk about future developments in the family...During Lobengula's time all chiefs and the king sat at the *iguma* to discuss how the Ndebele State was run..."

This opinion from the archaeologist made it clear that *iguma* was one source of social cohesion within the Ndebele communities. Plate 4.6 Is an example of the Ndebele village home with a forecourt well designed.

Plate 4. 6: *Iguma* at a modern hut (Tui and Nyati, 2019:103)



A description of the Ndebele city and its functionality particularly that of KoBulawayo sounds like that of the Great Zimbabwe community. From the Museum sites, narratives of how the Ndebele settled and lived highlights the aspects of gated community for the rich and the commoners lived outside the fence. The only difference is that the Ndebele community's fence was made of wood. An official at the site stated that,

"The Old Bulawayo during the time of king Lobengula had a huge wooden palisade that surrounded the area of approximately one mile in diameter. Inside lived the king and his important induna, his wives and the cattle that lived inside. As such it was largely a location for the Abezansi."

This indicates how the social systems played a significant role in the settlement of the Ndebele people. In an explanation of how the Ndebele people lived, one official stated that

"The KoBulawayo settlement had a dumpsite at the gate, wagon shade an inner wall that had cattle kraals, the public space at the centre for significant gatherings, the king's homes, his wives' huts, a kraal that had sacred goats that meant death if one entered..."

This explanation says a lot about how the Ndebele people settled. The significant aspects of the community were well kept. The king had a public open space at the centre that was meant for public ceremonies and interactions. This was the centre for Ndebele social cohesion under the king. For a general understanding of the Ndebele settlement setup, a reconstruction of the Ndebele setup was done and super imposed on the last location of the Ndebele settlement which is at the current statehouse. See figure 4.7.

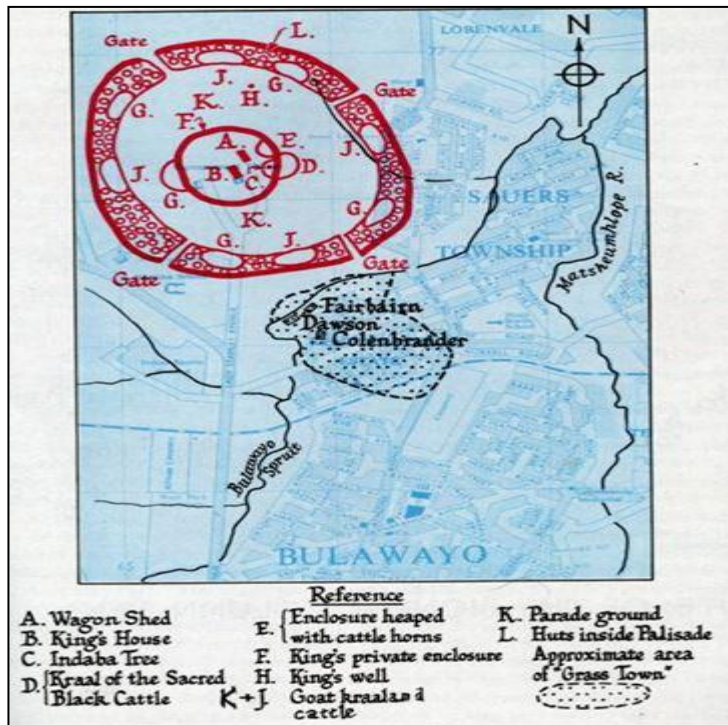


Figure 4. 7: Old Bulawayo settlement type (National Museums and Monuments)

Besides what was found at the museums, scholars in different but related fields had their own opinions of the Ndebele settlements. The Ndebele communities were believed to settle in a fan pattern. One historian stated that,

"Their settlements were believed to have been one with a large open space at the centre where the cattle stayed. This was to protect their most prized possessions from attack or raid."

Gathering spaces were also at the centre of the Ndebele communities implying a significance on the public open spaces in the Ndebele community. The wives of the head of the settlement stayed at the centre together with the relatives. In the 1940's the Ndebele shifted from circular forms to more linear developments following contour lines (Diane, 1990). This was done to preserve agricultural interests within the Ndebele community. Plate 4.7 shows an aerial view of old Bulawayo before it was finally consumed by a wild fire in the year 2010 making it

a failed Museum Site that got National Museums and Monuments a \$500 fine from the Environmental Management Agency for failing to put fire guards.

Plate 4.7: *Old Bulawayo/ KoBulawayo Reconstruction 2009* (Makuvaza and Burret, 2011: 5).



From the issue of general settlement layout, planning in Ndebele communities can be seen through the home. In an interview with one of the Ndebele social anthropologists, he stated that,

The Ndebele homes were divided into two, the *ekhaya* which is a rural home that came as a result of the existence of colonial urban homes. The other home is the *umuzi* which was the original traditional Ndebele home.

The Ndebele home proved more intensity in terms of mixing uses than any component of the Ndebele community. This setup explains why the Ndebele community patterns never emphasised on other uses as each unit was compact.

Figure 4.8 shows a Ndebele community home layout. The components on the layout presents a self-content dwelling unit that can be presented as having all aspects.

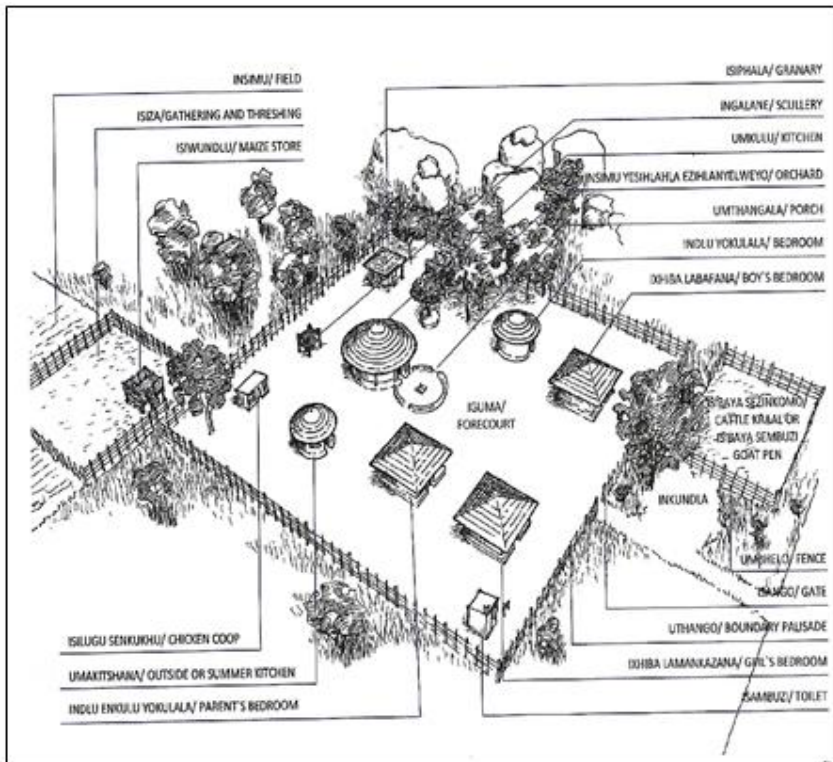


Figure 4. 8: *Ndebele Homestead Layout* (Tui and Nyathi, 2018:42)

The Ndebele people, unlike the Great Zimbabwe people, were very adaptive to various changes brought to them by different groups. The concepts in their planning was influenced mostly by principles of security which were caused by their troubled history in Zulu land and the need to protect their leaders and defence from raids. As such, developments in the Ndebele state began as circular developments but however turned to some linear developments due to agricultural needs. This implies that the Ndebele cities did not have fixed forms but were fluid areas with flexibility to change in case of need. This is an attribute that still lacks in cities as they grow and then fall without having to change their form. Furthermore, the Ndebele cities had other concepts like combination of

uses, walkability, defensibility of the area and unique urban forms developed by architectural aspects.

One unique character that most cities wish to achieve is fluidity which is the ability to change and meet the needs of the community and adjust to any changes without having to collapse. This was a clear character of the Ndebele settlements and this can be seen through the adjustment of the architecture. When the Ndebele people got to the Zimbabwean plateau, the kind of trees that produced smooth curved dome roofs were not there and as such they had to change their designs from domical to conical roofed buildings. Furthermore, the Zululand and Mzilikazi settlements were circular in nature as a defence strategy with the king being the centre and the order coming up due to significance. This was also characterised by cattle kraals that were more important and more protected than any other possessions, being located at the centre. The environment in Zimbabwe required the Ndebele people to start practicing agriculture and worshipping (borrowed from the Torwa people). All this led to a change in the form of the city into linear settlements guided by contour lines and the general terrain. To adopt to Zimbabwean situations, the king then settled at the highest position in the area. This ability to change due to circumstances made Ndebele cities to grow bigger and perpetual. The more the need rose, the more the cities changed.

Combination of uses is another attribute of the Ndebele communities. Like the Great Zimbabwe communities, the Ndebele state had all land uses in the areas within close range. The Mzilikazi settlement type of circular settlements had different land uses starting with cattle kraals at the centre, the king's house close by, his wives and other people as they moved out. Looking at these, it may seem like it was all residential, however, each person had his/ her trade within the Ndebele community. Therefore, every person practised their trades at their homes making the home area of each family a mixed-use development. Having those homes with a mixture of land uses made the whole settlement a chain of mixed-use dwellings making it a mixed-use settlement.

Walkability is one of the most obvious consideration that was made when Ndebele communities were developed. Cities of the Ndebele people were circular as such equidistant from the centre. The king's place, the cattle kraals and where all important decisions were made was central. As such if the centre is to be considered as the current Central Business District, it is noted that the residents of the Ndebele communities lived within walkable spaces. This fostered social interaction as the people could walk and talk as such build sense of community and social capital.

As a warring community, the Ndebele people lived with a defence mentality. This meant that all the developments and organisation were done with close monitoring and surveillance. The people had to be residents of *Umthwakazi* for them to live in the place. As such social networks built on the bases of class organised location of the people, *Zansi* at the centre, *Abenhla* in the middle and the amaHole on the outer part of the settlements. This meant that the King was the furthest from the point of entry of the enemy and on a higher ground. Figure 4.9 is a reconstruction by one of the missionaries (Robert Moffatt) of the home of Lobengula. From the reconstructions, it is noted that the Ndebele settlement was designed with defence in mind.

From the re-constructions of the old Bulawayo site, it is noted that public spaces were some of the most prominent and convenient land uses in the Ndebele settlements. This place was a centre for all important gatherings as such a major source of social cohesion. All traditional ceremonies were carried out here. The meetings, the negotiations with visitors, these were all at the central places see figure 4,7.

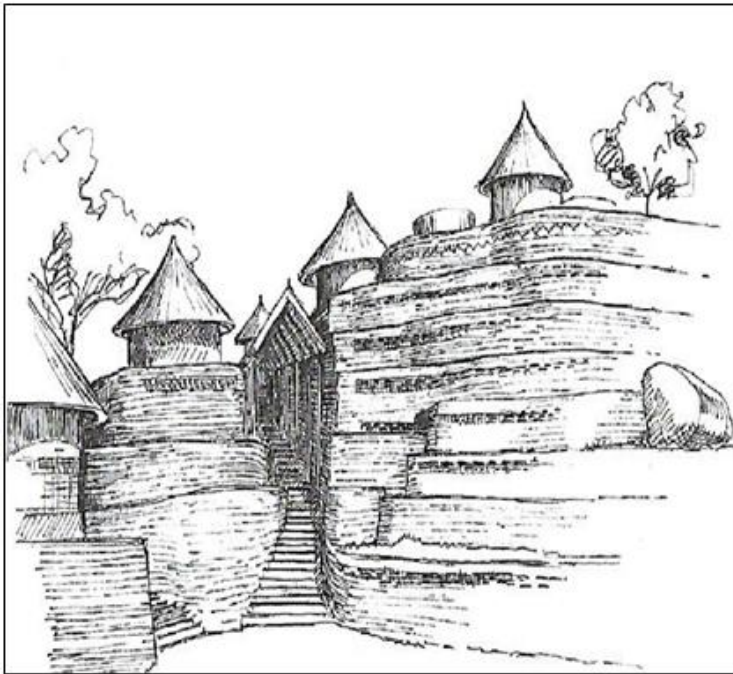


Figure 4.9: *King Lobengula's palace* (Tui and Nyathi, 2018: 16)

While urban planning in precolonial Zimbabwe was spectacular and fostered social interaction in many ways, it could not survive the changes that came with colonialism. In the year 1890, the Zimbabwean groups were subjugated by the British master first as the pioneer column. This brought about an era marred with British planning ordinances, standards and approaches in the way cities were to be organised. It is through this that land ownership rights, subdivisions, planning permits and planning boards and authorities were set. It is through this that planning practices that are currently being carried out were born. This part presents the various opinions of the planning and architectural practitioners in Zimbabwe in relationship to how planning has led to current communities and reduced interaction in a way.

In the context of urban planners, the focus was to look at how planning approaches in Zimbabwe have been affecting the quality of social networks that are developed in urban communities. For one urban planning practitioner, the main argument was that, planning practice did not have any influence on social cohesion. The planner argued that,

“Planning is about layout subdivisions which is all about creating stands and distribution of stands. In some cases, what we focus on is development control which again does not affect social interaction. The issue of cohesion and social network is relational, people with relationships like in rural areas are more connected... The planning we do has nothing to do with that...”

This comment from one of the experienced and current planners indicate an approach to current planning. Planning is no longer looked at as a process but a project to develop a product (layout plans). As such the consequences of plans or the proposed land uses is not a case.

Discussing on the issue of cohesion and urban plans another planner working with the City of Harare was of the opinion that planning is still peripheral when it comes to issues of cohesion in cities. The argument was pinned on the idea that while planning created open spaces and public areas, it did not guarantee any kind of interactions. The planner stated that,

“The kind of planning we do is more or less about zoning. We create land use zones and then we hope people use the areas. If not, they become white elephants.”

This comment by the planner introduces issues of the attitude of planning authorities towards planning for cohesion. The planners still perceive themselves as not being fully part of the process of fostering interaction but rather as players that cannot be blamed if there is no interaction when planning is done.

In a discussion with a planner currently employed at the department of physical planning the issue of planning for social sustainability was also raised. The planner

stated that plans could foster or stifle social interaction in a way. In the argument, the planner argued that,

“Planning in Zimbabwe is aware of the need for socialising as such we give standards for open spaces. If we allocate open spaces, we know people will interact in those areas and then social networks are made. Beyond that it is now the duty of sociologist (chuckled).”

Humorous as the statement was supposed to be, it gave a clear opinion of the attitude of planners in present day. Urban planning to them is all about following standards and not deviating in any way for sustainability. As long as the layout plan has 5% of the open spaces stipulated, their uses are not as important as their existence.

The study then moved away from public planners and looked for how planning was done in the private sector. In an interview with a planner working under a land developer in Harare, a different opinion as to the approach to Zimbabwean planning was identified. The planner argued that plans were now more about company profits than any other idealistic principles. In her comment, she argued that,

“Sense of community in design? What is that in the eyes of our bosses and clients? In the world we do our planning, it is idealistic, Utopia! Kkkk (chucked). When you do your layout plans for our bosses you have to create as many stands as possible. Things like open spaces, and street designs are a waste of space for stands as such we will be losing money. You just make your plan acceptable by the Department of Physical Planning then you are good to go.”

This was another eye-opening statement from the private sector planner working in land developing companies. The statement highlights that planning is now done to make money without having to worry about the consequences of the plan to any other facet of the community. The plans are designed to satisfy the department of physical planning to avoid rejection then after that it's all about money and profiteering.

To further understand the issue of sense of community and social sustainability approach to designing in Zimbabwe, a group discussion was done on a WhatsApp group called “Zimbabwe Planners Forum” where issues of effects of planning on social sustainability were discussed. Two patterns on planning emerged and in Zimbabwe, there exist two groups of planners who are the academic oriented (lecturers, students and recent graduates) and the practitioners. In the eyes of the academic planner, design can affect social interaction and society needs to be planned for. One planner stated that,

Yes, sense of community is an essential consideration in current planning practices. The planner needs to look at how his/ her plan will affect social dynamics. If you look at communities like Tynwald North and South, there is

more individualism than in areas like High Fields, Dzivarasekwa and Budiro to mention a few. This is largely influenced by the fact that the areas were designed as communities that were compact and had places for interaction. *Taitotamba bhora ne gen'a rangu tichitozivana so chero ndiukamuwana aripi haandirase* (we used to play soccer in my community as such we created important social networks).

This opinion of the planning approach was more like an example that was not really informed by much practice but books as suggested by another planner in the same group. The argument was that while in the context of an educational environment it was the right thing to say, in the planning field it was different. Planning in Zimbabwe was informed by two things, planning policies and government policies. The planners' argument was that,

'You people are too ideal. In the world we do our planning, we are not given room to do any of the things you write about. Imagine in this age of "New Dispensation", our government is talking about command housing and you start talking about your sense of cohesion, haaa vanoti ndezvako zvenuclass (they will tell you, you are being bookish), what is needed is for you to create as many stands as possible and push the government agenda.'

This perspective by the planner in practice also brought about another issue which is on political influence and government agenda on planning. The plans that were being developed were not really weighed or done in a comprehensive way but to satisfy the needs and the agendas of those in power. This highlighted how current urban planning was being carried out in the opinion of urban planners.

The other group of practitioners that are involved in urban design in Zimbabwe are the architects. This group focus more on the design of the buildings in the urban spaces and in some cases rural space. Interviews were carried out to understand how their designs would make people feel at home and how the designs they were producing fostered sense of belonging. The first architect who responded to the question was also in a similar position with the first planner that the researcher had interviewed. The response was that architecture did not influence sense of belonging.

"We produce houses, you and your family make it a home, that why one can feel comfortable in a house that he is lodging (renting)."

The response made it clear that architecture in Zimbabwe was not informed by any kinds of culture neither did it intend to develop any sense of belonging rather it was just a building plan to build a house.

Another architect who was interviewed had a different approach to how he developed his plans. The argument was that when developing our plans, the architects follow the specifications of the owner nothing more. His argument was that,

"A client comes to me and say hey (Tin Tin) his Nickname i want this and this and this on my house here is your deposit. When can i collect it...?"

This was another opinion that brought about a different view. Buildings that will be produced in such areas will be very different and there is no uniformity. As such failure to match the buildings will imply that they do not offer any kind of relationship undermining the sense of belonging (one cannot identify himself with diverse kinds of design rather uniformity).

Sense of community in ancient Zimbabwe was derived from four aspects, beliefs. Norms, values and relations. It is from these aspects that ancient Zimbabwean communities were developed. The other aspect that can be identified as one determinant of communities was survival. Ancient civilisation did not have technology as such their survival was largely determined by their systems. This part will give an analysis of how the four aspects could have determined design of communities in the Ndebele and Great Zimbabwe state.

The Shona and the Ndebele people had beliefs that determined their ways of life. These included religious beliefs that of the world being round. This idea made them to design their settlement mimicking the shape of the earth. This idea meant that the Shona and the Ndebele felt comfortable in dwellings that were circular, as seen by their homes, the huts made of pole and *dhaka* in both the Shona and Ndebele settlements. This can also be seen through the circular settlement patterns reflected by fencing walls at Great Zimbabwe and the settlement layouts at Khami ruins. All these beliefs affected settlement and the way the ancient Zimbabwean cities were also designed.

In the context of norms and values, the Shona and Ndebele's settlements and communities were bound by inter marriages. This was based on the concept of *rooranaï vematongo* in Shona communities. This meant that the Shona and the Ndebele married people they were familiar with. This was further cemented by the fact that the Shona people had a tendency of giving their children land as such they lived in small sects of interrelated people. The same concept applied in the Ndebele communities. They believed to be one family, *Umthwakazi* under the father ship of their king. This ensured a continuation of strong interrelationships within the Ndebele people. The relationships also determined the settlement of the Ndebele people.

Like a human body cell, so were the two settlements of the Ndebeles and the Shonas. An analysis of findings shows that all aspects that were needed for survival were found at every home, neighbourhood and the city. It could be noted that if one was to remove a homestead, or a neighbourhood, the city of

Great Zimbabwe or those under Ndebele would continue surviving. The neighbourhoods were self-sufficient and developed towards the prosperity of the Ndebele and Great Zimbabwe cities. While the prosperity of the city was dependent on this aspect, the survival was not. This is the missing aspect in current planning practices. The zoning that is currently done create very rich and anchor core of the city and other dormitory points of the city. This creates zonal dependency that affect prosperity of a city and reduces sense of community within the city.

Having looked at the two ancient practices that determined city development and the practices that are currently determining the development of cities, it becomes essential to try and decipher meanings from the discussions. The current planning practices are guided by planning laws, the need for housing driven by various policies and the profit-making ideology. It can be identified from the literature review and the findings that sense of community in current urban planning in Zimbabwe is yet to develop into a consideration. Another aspect that comes out is that currently most of the settlements do not have a focus on street design but on provision of roads. This has an implication on the quality of street spaces that are being designs, given the argument in chapter two that streets determine sense of community.

In ancient cities on the other hand, there was a persistent focus on human oriented development. This implies that the developments that were done gave people a sense of place. For instance, the *dare/iguma* made the fathers feel they had power while, the hut *imba huru/Indlu* and gave women a sense of place. This orientation is one that is now being advocated for in current cities that have been designed with a focus on vehicles, money and allocating houses. This can be identified as a major attribute and difference between sense of place-oriented design and current urban design.

Combination of uses in ancient cities also played a crucial role in ensuring that the sense of place was maintained. The communities had various homesteads clustered together (Ndebele and Shona). Each homestead had every necessity for the people in place. There was a family field, the cattle kraals, the *dare/iguma*, the sleeping areas, the sanctuaries among other significant uses. With these close by, living close to relatives, people spent most of their times together thereby strengthening their relations. Figure 4.9 shows the generic Great Zimbabwe Layout plan. Figure 4.11 shows a current layout plan for a new settlement in Zimbabwe. The layouts indicate intensity in combination of uses in ancient cities than in current cities as such creating time for interaction and cohesion in ancient city settlements. On the other hand, current cities have created Euclidean zones

that reduce time for interaction as such cohesion is reduced making cities sad as highlighted by Montgomery (2013).

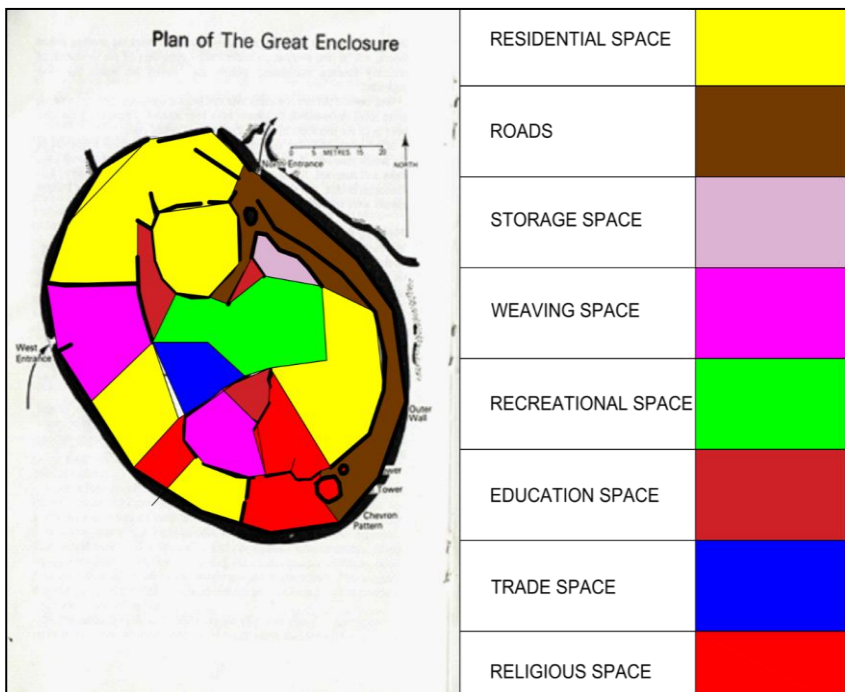
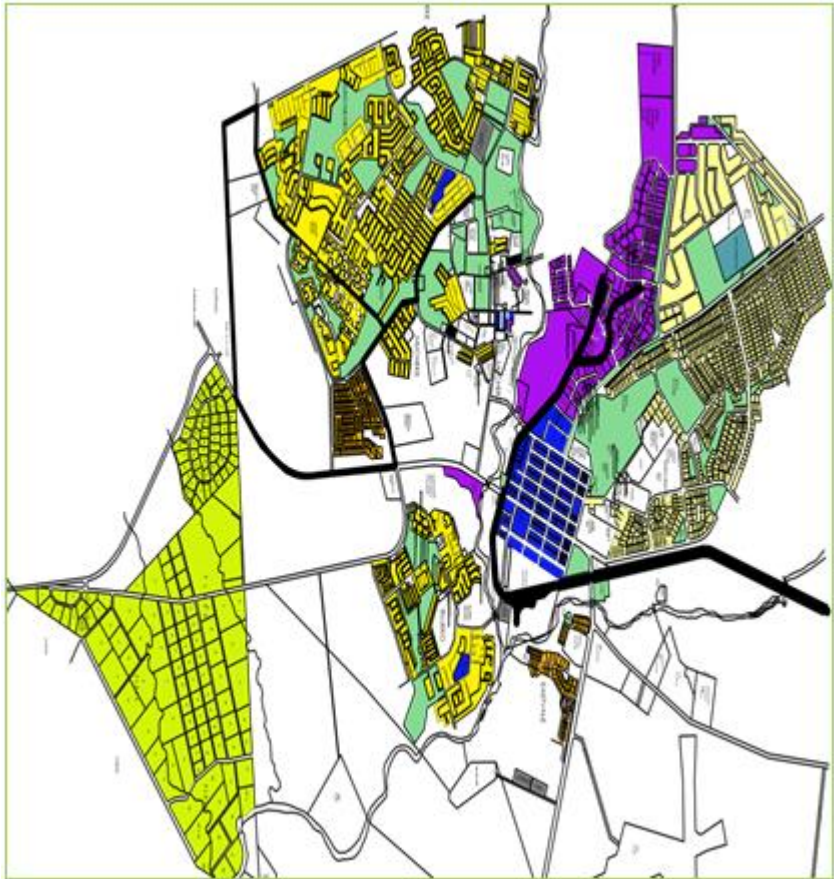


Figure 4. 10: *Great Enclosure in Urban Planning Colours* (Author, 2019)

Urban planning in Zimbabwe also has a weakness in terms of fostering sense of community. There exist various standards and actions that have some degree of enhancing sense of community but it is not emphasised on. The first is the issue of street designs. The laws and standards in Zimbabwe provide for road reserves but does not mandate planners to carry out street design. Since streets are essential in enhancing sense of place, this becomes a weakness.

Another issue that came in during the study is the lack of cohesion between urban design professionals. There is no interaction between the designers of the macro space and the designers of the micro spaces. As such there is no common goal of enhancing social cohesion and communities that are created are very different.

Plate 4.8: *Layout of Masvingo* (Masvingo City Council)



The two plans on figure 4.9 and plate 2.1 are two different planning and land use concepts. The Great Zimbabwe settlement layouts show a very small area with almost all the town planning colours. This highlights combination of uses implying that people spend most of their time close by interacting and getting to strengthen their social capital. On the other hand, the layout of Masvingo shows large tracts of single use zones. Where a person works, shops, recreates and stays are three different places. This means that the people spend most of their time either working or travelling to different places. This reduces the level of cohesion and interaction developing a weakness in the current urban design approach in enhancing social cohesion.

The chapter intended to present the findings and give an analysis of the possible meanings that could be derived from the study. It identified that sense of community in Great Zimbabwe was determined by ethics, norms and values. This transformed into actions that determined the settlement of the people. From the findings, it could be noted that the ancient cities had high levels of density, intensive combination of uses, the cities were fluid and, in some aspects, defensible. All these ideas were driven by a sense of cohesion that existed in the Shona and Ndebele people. The Shona people believed in the *idya nehama* and *rooranaí vematongo* (get married to people you are fully acquainted to) and the Ndebele where one family. All this gravitated towards settlement pattern. The study then looked at current design practices that proved to be separatist and driven by ordinances and neo-liberalist principles. All these traits have been baled by literature as aspects that foster individualism in communities. Informed by all this, the next chapter seeks to conclude and derive possible recommendations for this study.