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Frontiers of urban control: lawlessness on the city edge and forms of clientalist statecraft in Zimbabwe¹

This article develops the concept of 'urban frontier' to explore conflicts over state regularization of city edge informal settlements in Zimbabwe's capital Harare. It conceptualises the presence of 'lawless' urban frontiers and 'illegal' territorial authorities in capital cities as expressions of a permissive form of central statecraft. In so doing, the article takes forward debates over the politics shaping the margins of Africa's rapidly expanding cities, redressing scholars' tendency to neglect central party-state strategic calculations and party politics in their analyses of unregulated settlements. Dominant interpretations generally hinge on state absence or weakness and emphasise localised influences. The case of Harare's highly politicized city-edge informal settlements reveals the inadequacy of apolitical approaches particularly clearly, as all were controlled by the ruling ZANUPF party. The conflicts provoked by regularization provide a lens on disputes within the ruling party, which we interpret as disputes over different forms of clientalist statecraft. Analyses of urban frontiers can thus help move away from generic one-size-fits-all explanations of informality and patronage politics in Africa's expanding cities.

Keywords: African cities, peri-urban, informality, clientalism, land value capture, regularization

Introduction

In 2013 Air Commodore Chiganze and a convoy of riot police escorted state planners into Harare's notorious Caledonia Farm settlement. Their penetration of an infamous 'no go' area marked the start of the Urban Development Corporation's (UDCORP) drive to restore legal-bureaucratic order to a broader expanse of unregulated settlements encircling the capital. It began to make visible a vast informal city, reversing prior assumptions of the City's stagnation or even counterurbanization (Mbiba 2017a). Caledonia was named after a former commercial farm on the city's eastern periphery and was home to some 120,000 people. It had gained notoriety as a site of violence and illegal accumulation by ZANUPF 'land barons' who extorted rents from insecure residents. But it was far from an isolated case, as there were unregulated settlements on a similar scale in Harare South, and substantial counterparts in Harare North as well as in and around neighbouring municipalities.

This militarised effort to bring order to Harare's 'lawless' periphery raises many intriguing questions. Why did state planners need support from the security services? After all, these 'no go' areas were not the recruiting grounds of a violent rebel movement or insurgent citizens. Rather the settlements were controlled by the ruling ZANUPF party. Below the prominent 'land barons', 'illegal' authorities were the party structures – ZANUPF District Coordinating Committees, party branches and cells. ZANUPF relied upon the settlements for support in an opposition-voting city.

The idea that these large settlements were 'regulatory voids' is equally intriguing, given the central state's role in creating them through land reform, resettlement, housing and cooperative policies. 'Barons' claims to land and authority were underpinned not just by their party credentials but by official documents and recognition as leaders of state-registered cooperatives supposed to be developing these spaces, and many residents had state leases. Even land invaders had a degree of recognition through legislation protecting occupiers' claims and a moratorium on demolitions. In trying to bring order to this 'lawless' city periphery controlled by the ruling party, state officials were clearly not battling a criminal world outside the state. Rather, they were confronting a version of the state itself.

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The article analyses conflict over these ‘disorderly’ city borderlands as a dispute within a singular landscape of state power (cf Elyachar 2003, Dorman 2009). It interprets the production of informality as the expression of a permissive form of central statecraft, and discusses the process of extending bureaucratic regulation for insight into state-making. By so doing it sheds new light on the actions of – and in-fighting within – ZANUPF as actor shaping the urban periphery, highlighting the politicization of control over newly urbanizing spaces. But it also uses the Zimbabwe case to speak to broader conceptual debates over African urban transformations.

First, it develops the concept of ‘urban frontier’, spelling out its utility as both empirical focus and theoretical lens. We draw on traditions of writing on frontiers that emphasise their ‘relation to the processes, capabilities and institutions of the state’ (Watts 2017, Ballve 2017), which we extend by focussing on city spaces. Frontier politics hinges on disputes over land, property and ‘what is or is not legitimate authority’ (Watts 2017), which is centrally important in city borderlands. We pay particular attention to the frontier ‘myths’ that animate state intervention and their imbrication with material dynamics. As Ballve argues, ‘The geopolitical imaginary of frontiers as stateless is powerful ...Frontiers produce the state by casting out a purportedly non-state space in need of appropriation’ (Ballve 2017, Watts 2012, 2017).

Second, by understanding the production of ‘urban frontiers’ as a reflection of a form of central statecraft embedded in authoritarian regimes’ emergent modes of rule, the article puts the politics back into analyses of African cities peripheries, rectifying the occlusions of much existing literature. Scholars of African informal settlements usually emphasise central state absence and lack of capacity, stressing the powers of localised, rural or ‘traditionalist’ influences.² There is a tendency to neglect party politics (both inter- party competition and disputes within ruling parties) and to ignore the messy legal-institutional relations of unregulated urban spaces (Sawyer 2014, Gastrow 2016, Bekker and Fourchard 2013). The lack of attention to centralised party/state strategic calculations and to the role of political parties is particularly problematic for the highly politicized Harare case, where informal de facto territorial authorities in informal settlements were all part of the nationwide topdown, hierarchical and fractious structures of the ruling party. Although ruling parties may be particularly densely enmeshed with state bureaucracy in post liberation states, it is common across postcolonial Africa for central state powers to be overweening and for municipal authorities lack autonomy, which is exacerbated if cities become opposition strongholds (Goodfellow 2013, 2017, 2017a, 2017b; Bekker and Fourchard 2013; Resnick 2014).

Third, the article argues that an analysis of ‘urban frontiers’ can take forward debates over different forms of clientalist statecraft in Africa, and their implications for urban regulation. Again, this matters because of the need to move away from generic, cross-continental accounts of patron-clientalism. The article builds on Tom Goodfellow’s agenda-setting work on the politics of urban regulation in East Africa (Goodfellow 2017b, 2013). He argues it is important to understand different ‘varieties of clientalism’ across national contexts, in order to explain why policies of urban regulation are/or are not implemented in different countries’ capital cities. What we add here by a focus on disputed urban frontiers is a means of rendering visible different forms of clientalist practice at work within one city context. Following the course of such disputes offers a dynamic and historically situated perspective on statecraft in the making.

Harare’s ‘illegal’ settlements mushroomed in the context of two decades of ‘crisis’ from the late 1990s, shaped by the challenges to ZANUPF rule posed by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC).³ After the MDC’s emergence in 1999, Harare returned MDC MPs and took control of

² This paper deals only with the politics of informal settlements, it does not deal with other aspects of informality, such as vending.

³ Initially, there was one MDC. From 2005, the party split into two: the larger group that predominated in Harare was MDC-T, after it’s leader Morgan Tsvangirai. After Tsvangirai’s death, in early 2018, there were further splits, with the largest party being Nelson Chamisa’s MDC-Alliance. This article uses MDC as a shorthand throughout the article, meaning MDC-T (2005-2018), and MDC-Alliance (2018).

the City from 2002, dominating council and filling the position of Mayor. The case study clearly demonstrates the 'mythical' quality of officials' rhetorical claims to state absence, as the regulatory 'voids' we discuss originated through layers of central state intervention - via land reform, housing and cooperative development policies. Control over land on the city's periphery was central to ZANUPF's strategy for attempting to win votes and to undermine MDC-led urban municipalities (Kamete 2007, 2009; Muchadenyika 2015; Muchadenyika and Williams 2017; McGregor 2013; Mbiba 2017). The context was one of repression of the political opposition and civic organizations, and state institutions were militarised, securitized and brought under party control. At the same time, the economy plunged, de-industrialised and informalised, culminating in rampant hyperinflation and a total breakdown of services in 2008 (Hammar et al 2010; Alexander and McGregor 2013). During the Government of National Unity between ZANUPF and MDC parties from 2008 to 2013, the production of informal settlements accelerated as both parties wooed supporters through land occupations. But the efforts to regularize these spaces examined here occurred after ZANUPF had regained sole control over the central state through the 2013 elections. Harare municipality remained MDC-led, but was impotent and hugely compromised by Ministerial interventions.

Regularisation was part of a broader, untransparent effort to 'formalise' resource control and combat corruption, which should not be interpreted as an attempt to end party/state patronage (Alexander and McGregor 2013). At the time of the research this partisan 'formalisation' coincided with, and was drawn into widening factional divides within ZANUPF that culminated in a military 'coup' in late 2017. What the state drive to close the city-edge 'disorder' illuminates particularly clearly, however, is the tension between two divergent ZANUPF forms of clientalist politics with much deeper origins: a 'statist' variant where patronage operates through state institutions versus an overtly partisan counterpart working directly through the structures of the ruling party. By following the course of the effort to close the regulatory 'void' on the city edge, we shed light on contestation within ZANUPF over varieties of clientalist statecraft.

Our sources include interviews with officials in the Ministry of Local Government Public Works and National Housing (MLGPWNH), the City of Harare, councillors, planners, surveyors and employees of the Urban Development Corporation (UDCORP). We also draw on official documents, particularly the spate of Inquiries into illegal land sales on the City's margins, some of which were intended as the basis for criminal charges against 'land barons'. These sources shed fascinating light on the development of the capital's informal settlements, though they need to be handled with care, as the interpretations they contain are shaped profoundly by the pervasive political pressures within state institutions. Many officials brought up the subject of 'political interference' themselves and discussed it very readily (under conditions of anonymity) because of how it compromised their professionalism, infusing every aspect of policy and practice. Before turning to the politicized drive to regularize Harare's informal settlements, however, we elaborate our approach to urban 'frontiers'.

Frontiers and African cities

We use the term 'frontier' to refer to spatially located processes of state-making, through which regimes of territorial authority and property are contested and replaced (cf Rasmussen and Lund 2017). First we examine some of the term's meanings and usage, then we spell out how our conceptualisation of urban frontiers can help elucidate political processes on African cities' margins, drawing insight from work on conflict cities.

The word frontier itself is complex. Although often used as a synonym for border or borderland, 'frontier' is useful for our purposes here because it carries meanings beyond simply the physical

space of borderlands. Rather, frontier refers to a social space, characterised by particular political imaginaries and practices. One important strand of meaning refers to 'historical and present day colonial encroachments' (Wendel and Rosler 1999). The idea of frontier conjures imaginaries of 'wilderness' and vacant or underexploited land, violence, lawlessness and opportunism. As such, it can be cast as the opposite of civilization, as in Turner's much criticized late nineteenth century account of the gradual subsuming of the 'tidal wave' of the American frontier to the forces of civilized rule (Turner 1921). Many authors emphasise the essential violence of frontiers - both physical and epistemic (Watts 2017; Ballve 2017). Beyond colonial contexts, frontiers can be understood as 'liminal spaces in which existing regimes of resource control are suspended' (Rasmussen and Lund 2017). The frontier myths of disorderly violence matter because they sanction the dismantling and reordering of territorial authority, land and property relations. Indeed it can be helpful to think about frontier politics as comprising two opposed processes or episodes: on the one hand, frontier dynamics that 'dissolve existing social orders', and on the other, territorialisations that 'reorder space anew' (Rasmussen and Lund 2017). Much recent theoretical work on frontiers is not about cities at all, but focuses on state borderlands, insurgencies and new extractive zones marred by violently contested authority, repression and expropriation (Watts 2017; Rasmussen and Lund 2017; Ballve 2017). Yet even classic settler colonial frontiers can be reinterpreted as being as much about consolidating rule over urban spaces as about rural processes (Edmonds 2010). Here we extend strands of writing about frontiers as state-making to African city spaces.

Scholars of African cities have invoked the idea of 'frontier' more or less loosely, mostly not in relation to state-making, but to refer to the effects of new capital flows or cultural imaginaries. Myers, for example, casts investment from China and diasporas as provoking 'a new scramble for African cities', involving 'land grabs' and displacements on city margins (2015: 56), while Agergaard et al (2010) see globalised commodity chains for African products as creating new rural/urban frontiers. Simone uses the term to explore mobility and expanded horizons of possibility: he describes the 'frontiers of [African]urban peripheries' as a 'fantasy space', suffused with 'varied imaginaries and anticipations' (Simone 2007: 470, 2011).

Our central concern with state-making, however, has led us to look beyond the African studies literature to take inspiration from scholars of conflict cities who have developed the idea of 'frontier urbanism' (Pullan 2011; Pullan and Baillie 2014; Yiftachel 2009). Although stimulated by work on cities very different than the Harare case, it is useful for our purposes for the following reasons: it stresses the role, reach, and strategic military-political interests of the central state, draws attention to infrastructures of territorial control and to how the legal ambiguity of frontiers can be protracted over time. Pullan notes how city authorities generally lack powers to produce frontiers: radical reordering of city space hinges rather on 'support or interference (depending on your point of view) from the central state' (Pullan 2011:16). Weizman (2006: 91) elaborates how, 'when the frontier seems to degenerate into complete lawlessness, it is because its "organized chaos" is often generated from the centre'. Harare's informal settlements lacked classic frontier architectures of walls, bridges and roads. Their control depended rather on the securitized human infrastructure of the ruling party – its spatial network of district, branch and cell committees (discussed in McGregor and Chatiza forthcoming). But the drive to restore bureaucratic order included symbolically important state construction projects – roads to 'open up' settlements and in situ state offices. The persistence of legal 'grayness' (Yiftachel 2009) resonates very strongly with the Harare case.

This conceptualisation of urban frontiers contrasts radically with dominant understandings of African city margins. African peripheries tend to be cast as sites of state weakness or absence (Sawyer 2014; Myers 2015). Landau (2014) casts peripheral informal settlements as highly mobile 'urban estuaries' lacking hegemonic forms of authority. The concepts that have animated scholarship on African city-edges are those of 'peri-urban', 'suburb' and 'twilight'. 'Peri-urban' was coined in the 1970s to

understand West African city fringes and to the extent that it is conceptual rather than a descriptor conveys the idea of rural/urban 'mixes' - of land use, housing and authority (Simon et al 2006; Marshall 2009; Sawyer 2014; Aalgaard et al 2015). This made important contributions to work on livelihoods and influenced spatial planning (Simon et al 2006), but arguably occluded conflict (Mbiba and Huchzermeyer 2002). Unsurprisingly, traditional authorities loom large in African peri-urban research, reflecting the importance of chiefly authority derived from customary law or their de facto control of land and people (Gough and Yankson 2000; Ubink 2008; Ubink and Amanor 2008; De Barrio 2013; Lund 2006; Gillespie 2016). Yet chiefs and 'traditional' claims are not important in Harare's urban frontiers that concerns us here. Some scholars have reached for 'suburb' to theorize urban peripheries, aiming to convey a socially differentiated and varied landscape (Sawyer 2014; Bloch 2015; Mercer 2017; Harris 2010). But the term's connotations of low density, middleclassness or quiet encroachment are inappropriate for the settlements we discuss and the use of the term itself has been described as an 'exemplar of linguistic imperialism' for elevating Euro-American meanings (Harris and Vorms 2017). Lund's notion of ephemeral 'twilight' institutions vying for attributes of stateness in informal settlements comes closer to our concern with state-making, but it privileges localised, bottom up influences, which can limit insight into contexts where centralised topdown party/state actors are important.

An empirical focus on the making and unmaking of disputed urban frontiers thus provides a new lens on changing African peripheries, enabling a shift away from the predominant concern with rural/urban mixes, traditional authorities and localised influences. It is particularly relevant for highly politicized spaces, where central state actors are involved. The key player in Harare's 'lawless' urban frontier was ZANUPF, working both through and outside state institutions, which had authorised and controlled settlement of these spaces. In Zimbabwe, cities are encircled by and encroaching primarily on (former white-owned) commercial farmland, which was transferred to the central state for reallocation through land reform. (Only a small proportion of Harare's new urban growth is occurring within communal lands abutting cities, which is not explored here). 'Frontier' we argue, offers an apt tool for analysing the emergence of, and contestation over de facto ZANUPF territorial authorities that emerged in significant swathes of the sprawling urban periphery.

By using an interpretation of urban frontiers that demands attention to party politics and the messy, shifting and politicized legal-institutional frameworks over newly urbanising spaces, we take forward Tom Goodfellow's research on the interconnections between urban transformations and statemaking (Goodfellow 2013, 2015, 2017, 2017a, 2017b). His work has helped respond to calls for political economy insights into why public institutions in African cities lack capacity and fail to capture land and property values (Turok 2016; Monkham and Moore 2015; Palmer and Berrisford 2015). It emphasises the heightened importance of urban land and property as bases for accumulation in Africa, where urbanization is occurring without concurrent industrialisation (Goodfellow 2017; Whitfield 2015; Pitcher 2017; on Harare, Mbiba 2017, Muchadenyika 2015, Chirisa et al 2014). But in Harare – and elsewhere - urban patronage economies are not just about capturing land values, but are also about capturing votes (on 'votebank' politics in South Asia, Bayat 2000; Roy 2015; on Harare, Muchadenyika 2015). While Goodfellow relates different varieties of clientalism to specific national political settlements (2017b), we use 'frontier' to provide insight into conflicting forms of clientelage within one city context. Exploring the emergence and attempt to close urban 'frontiers' also necessitates historicization, which is important given that frontiers are 'sites of experimentation and possibility' (Ballve 2017) and 'zones of unpredictability' (Tsing 1994:279). Researching trajectories of authority within these liminal spaces can provide insight into broader processes of statecraft in the making.

Harare's periphery 2000-13: party/state production of unregulated settlements

The emergence of substantial informal settlements on Harare's edge is particularly revealing of broader shifts in Zimbabwean statecraft because the country was previously notorious for its exceptionally strong postcolonial urban planning tradition (Kamete 2009, 2012, 2013, Muchadenyika and Williams 2017; Rakodi 1995; Potts 2011; Mbiba 2017). The scale of Harare's new informal settlements could easily reach 500,000 people, in a city officially said to number between 1.5 million (Harare Urban) and 2.1 million (Greater Harare), providing evidence to counter prior views that the city was stagnating (Mbiba 2017a).⁴ These settlements are like Yiftachel's (2009) 'grey spaces' of persistent insecurity in that they breach laws and regulations, but are not completely illegal either, not least because the central state and ruling party played such key roles in authorising their emergence. This happened through three overlapping domains of central state policy: land reform; militarized urban 'Operations' and policy towards cooperatives. Below we spell out how these policies were implicated in the expansion of 'unregulated', unserved, insecure settlements controlled by ZANUPF.

1. Land reform and occupations City edges were affected by nation-wide processes of land reform and party-sanctioned invasions of white-owned farms that began in the countryside from the late 1990s. This often violent remaking of land and property rights was legitimated through the ruling party's nationalism and rhetoric of an unfinished war of liberation, as well as being supported by legal-bureaucratic processes. But the process was also dubbed 'jambanja', 'chaos' and in practice, land claims hinged on political bargaining that left new occupiers dependent on relations with ZANUPF (Cliffe et al 2011; Chaumba et al 2003; Zamchiya 2013). The formal aspects of land reform were governed by central state institutions in a manner that by-passed municipalities and rural councils. Former private farms were ceded to the Ministry of State Lands and then reallocated to cooperatives headed by prominent ZANUPF politicians, war veterans, military and other ruling party-connected figures, with formalities including Ministerial 'Offer letters' and processes of gazetting. Farms were also invaded by a mixture of interest groups, who staked claims by setting up their own party branches and district committees that were integrated into ZANUPF hierarchies. The rights of new peri-urban occupiers were underwritten through the same legislation that protected rural occupiers (Marongwe et al 2011). But the settlements informalised as beneficiaries capitalised on their resource through illegal sales, subdivisions and renting out. This proceeded without regulation partly because the formalities of incorporating these spaces into urban jurisdictions became politicized, leading to a stand off between institutions, such that Ministry of Local Government, the City and rural councils blamed each other for the 'mess' on the ground, and none undertook to provide services.⁵

The intractability of this institutional stand-off reflected political interests and the fact that the profit from land sales and rents did not accrue to the City, charged with responsibilities for servicing and administration. In the meantime, money was syphoned off and captured by ZANU(PF), via cooperative leaders and lower echelons of the party hierarchy that consolidated territorial authority in these spaces. The new settlements that grew up in this way were far from universally poor. Residents were predominantly displaced people from various parts of the city and the urban poor unable to pay higher rents in established townships. But some sections were settled by civil servants, bank employees, retired soldiers and others. Indeed, private developers operating in these spaces targetted the middle classes.

⁴ Overall population figures from hararecity.co.zw. Four informal settlements alone have a population of ca.300,000, based on registered or estimated stands and an average household size of 4. Regularization involved the following official numbers/estimates: Caledonia ca. 30,000 stands/120,000 people; Hatcliffe Extension 7,000/28,000; Hopley 20,000/80,000; Epworth ward 7 20,000/80,000. There are many other informal settlements inside City boundaries, some of which are sizeable, particularly in Harare South where there are on-going land occupations at the time of writing. There are also significant informal settlements in other parts of Greater Harare, including in and around Chitungwiza and neighbouring rural district authorities.

⁵ The Ministry of Local Government has undergone changes in title and responsibility. From 2000-2013, it was the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (MLGRUD); thereafter it was split in two, to create the MLGNWPH, and the Ministry of Rural Development and Cultural Heritage.

2. *Central state 'Operations'*. The second set of processes contributing to the rapid growth of informal settlements are the militarized central state demolitions known as Operation Murambatsvina [Operation Clean the Filth] in 2005 and subsequent army-led resettlement exercise Operation Garikayi [Operation Stay Well]. The demolitions affected 700,000 people's homes and/or livelihoods nationally and greatly exacerbated Harare's housing shortage. People were dumped back in rural areas, and gathered in holding camps on the city edge, or were resettled through Operation Stay Well (Potts 2006, Kamete 2009). Once again, there were formal state processes of planning and allocating plots to individuals who were issued with Ministry of Local Government leases. The urban displaced were mostly opposition supporters, yet found themselves formally resettled or living in camps where ZANU(PF) consolidated territorial control through securitized party structures. Informal processes took over in planned Stay Well settlements that bolstered ZANU(PF) authority, including land sales and subdivisions and politically-led invasions of open spaces designated for schools, roads and other public facilities.

3. *Housing policy and cooperatives*. Official policy towards cooperatives as a route to housing and servicing was also implicated in producing the regulatory 'gap' and shaped the particular form of ZANUPF *de facto* authorities within it. Indeed, cooperative policy became an important 'tool of ZANU(PF) patronage' (Chirisa et al 2014; Masuko 2008). Cooperative leaders' formal status conferred powers over land and members and enabled their emergence as 'land barons' and *de facto* territorial authorities. Cooperatives had gained a place in urban policy from the early 1990s. Their mainstreaming from 2004 was framed as a continuity with 'enabling' approaches to housing and parallel development, which allowed for settlement during the process of servicing and increased the role of private developers (Marongwe et al 2011; Chatiza 2016). Operation Stay Well reinforced cooperatives' role, as it quickly shifted from state allocations of completed core houses to land only, and people were encouraged to develop homes and services themselves through cooperatives registered with the state. Cooperative leaders' abuse of their powers was underpinned by permissive legislation towards land developers.

During the Government of National Unity (2008-13), formed between ZANU(PF) and the opposition MDC parties, land occupations became a 'stampede', as politicians offered urban land for votes in the run up to the 2013 elections (Mbiba 2017a; Muchadenyika 2017, McGregor 2013). Although MDC politicians and councillors also rewarded supporters by leading occupations and allocating land to cooperatives registered with the City, this was small scale, given the City's lack of control over land or support from coercive arms of the state. Indeed, the intensified ZANU(PF) urban land invasions were key to the electoral inroads the ruling party made within the City itself over this period.⁶

The new informal settlements on the urban periphery created through these processes stood as a material manifestation of ZANU(PF) party/state powers, grounded in territorial control. They evidenced the ruling party's varied and interconnected modes of clientalism, which operated both through central state institutions and directly through the party structures. The quasi-legality of these newly urbanised spaces reflected their origins in state processes of land allocation, and party/state sanctioned land occupations, as well as the permissive attitude towards party structures and cooperatives acting as *de facto* territorial authorities. Yet the scale of accumulation on the part of the 'barons' and the abuse of the residents living within these spaces increasingly became a political liability.⁷ From 2013, when ZANUPF was once again in sole control of the state and the MDC opposition was divided and weak, policy towards these settlements shifted to regularization.

⁶ Between 2013 and 2018, ZANU(PF) city councillors rose from one to seven (out of 46), and ZANUPF MPs increased from 1 to 3. In 2018, surveillance of these wards relaxed, and the number of ZANUPF councillors and MPs reduced to 1 of each.

⁷ Particularly following a land audit commissioned by the City (CoH 2010)

'Taming' the urban frontier? Discourses and practices of regularization

Regularization promised to re-make territorial order in these frontier spaces and restore state bureaucratic control. State officials in the MLGNWPH heralded their intent to recast land and property rights through frontier 'myths' of stateless spaces in need of incorporation. As Ballve argues, 'frontiers are by definition relational – they are the frontier of somewhere, for someone' (2017). Below we explore the official discourses and audits that cast these spaces as 'lawless, regulatory voids', and which legitimated new forms of central state intervention. Regularization provoked new conflicts within the ruling party, adding to older patterns of inter-party rivalry emphasised in the existing literature (Kamete 2007, 2009, 2017; Muchadenyika 2015). Although official discourse cast the effort to close the 'void' as a battle between professional planners and criminals, we interpret it rather as shedding light on conflicts over different types of clientalist statecraft.

In the following three sections, the article first analyses official justifications for central state intervention, then examines the intra-ZANUPF conflicts provoked by implementation before finally turning to the effects on the opposition run municipality.

Official justifications for bringing order

A spate of formal inquiries into illegal land sales and cooperatives underpinned the new effort to regularize the urban periphery, intended as forming the basis of criminal charges against individual 'barons'. The documents shed fascinating light on the repertoires of claiming land and authority within informal settlements. These claims did not show 'vernacular endurances', use traditionalist idiom or hinge on localised influences as one might expect from the African literature on peri-urban spaces or debates over resource frontiers (Rasmussen and Lund 2016). Rather they showed sedimented layers of past central state intervention by invoking leases or registration as cooperatives, as well as appealing to the authority and liberation ideology of the party. Officials' frontier discourse of 'lawlessness' was 'mythical' because it was selective and laid the basis for new central state interventions. By criminalising individuals and blaming councils, official discourse systematically obscured ZANU(PF)'s political interests in incapacitating opposition-run municipalities and producing city-edge informal settlements controlled by the ruling party. The fact that some 'barons' were Central Committee members, however, meant that the initiative to 'sanitize' the frontier was from the outset deeply embroiled in the party's increasingly factionalised internal politics.

The MLGNWPH stressed the need for 'sanitization' to 'restore order' through 'properly planned settlements with the requisite infrastructure' to 'avert a potential health time bomb' in the form of cholera outbreaks (MLGNWPH 2016a, 2014, 2016). There was need for 'sanity' in the housing sector, through prosecutions of 'unscrupulous land developers, barons, cooperatives and housing trusts... [that] are swindling unsuspecting members of the public'. 'Bogus outfits will face the full wrath of the law', the Minister proclaimed (MLGNWPH 2016). Planning experts were commissioned to undertake the audits and inquiries into illegal city edge land sales and cooperatives. All these official inquiries pressed for a moratorium on land sales and the cessation of cooperatives as a vehicle for housing development (MLGNWPH 2013a, 2015, 2015a, 2016, 2016a; JOC 2014).

Investigations could only go ahead with state military backing. Some settlements – particularly Caledonia farm settlement – were 'no go areas' for state and City officials. The audit teams needed the security forces to move there, given 'intimidation by the land barons and massive counter-mobilization [including]...widespread misinformation with residents being told by the land barons

that the team's work would lead them to losing their stands' (MLGNWPH 2015:6). Audits of cooperatives in Harare North and Harare South likewise needed state military muscle (MLGNWPH 2015a, JOC 2014). The City's Harare South audit, for example, was undertaken by a Joint Operations Command (JOC) involving Zimbabwe Republic Police, the Zimbabwe National Army, the Zimbabwe Prisons and Correctional Services, the Presidents' office, Municipal Police and Environmental Management Agency (JOC 2014).

All inquiries placed blame for the mushrooming informal settlements on the 'barons', corrupt councils and abuse of the cooperative model. They positioned ordinary residents as exploited victims. The first audit concerned two councils on Harare's outskirts (the satellite city of Chitungwiza and Manyame Rural District Council). Though it described a diversity of actors, it summarized the cause of illegal land sales as:

....on the one hand the general citizenry's desperation for land and on the other, the land barons comprising politicians, youths, cooperatives and individuals, together with council officials who acted ... in complicity with the land barons. Home-seekers have become victims (MLGNWPH 2013:19).⁸

Audits blamed local authorities for failing to regulate these settlements. The Caledonia Inquiry blamed the City of Harare, elaborating how 'cooperative leaders have taken full advantage of the absence of an authority ...and moved in to create illegal local governments' (MLGNWPH 2015:30). It detailed the 'huge gap between the planning process and facts on the ground', tracing the important role of corrupt planners and officials in the profitable businesses of land and property development within the regulatory 'gap'.⁹ Of the 20 territorial phases of the settlement, only 1-3 had approved layouts (MLGNWPH 2015:15). Layouts for some other sections had been lodged with the City, but had not been acted upon due to 'mandate issues', while most of the settlement was illegally planned or un planned (phases 8-17, 19-20). One company - PlanAfric – was particularly significant. First it was hired legitimately by MLGNWPH in 2003 to plan sections catering for urban displacees and early cooperative invaders. It was then hired illegally to 're-subdivide' previously planned phases by two District Administrators (DAs), who exploited the institutional confusion of the City's shifting border (one DA was responsible for rural Goromonzi and the other for the urban district into which the settlement was incorporated). The two DAs 'gave illegal offer letters to cooperatives, trusts and union leaders indicating that they have been allocated land for development', which were registered with the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development (MSMECD) (MLGNWPH 2015:14). Some phases originated in invasions, such as phase 8 which 'was invaded by former farm workers who organized themselves and allocated each other residential stands', while 'Phase 15 was initially allocated [by the DA Goromonzi] to the Zimbabwe Home Industries and Marketers Association, but was invaded before it was occupied (MLGNWPH 2015:14). Other individual planners were hired directly by cooperative leaders and also made plans for some of the same land. Indeed, informal planning and land development processes within the 'frontier' created considerable business – and personal profit - for planners and surveyors. Planners pointed out in interviews how much 'we benefitted from that'.¹⁰

The names of the cooperatives themselves illustrate the partisan repertoires that legitimated claims. Many signalled cooperative developmentalism (eg 'Tiritose' – 'We're together'), but the most popular choice of names echoed ZANU(PF)'s 'patriotic history' (Ranger 2005), invoked and flattered the (then) President Mugabe himself, the Presidents' wives and a cast of partisan national liberation

⁸ The named 'barons' included ZANU(PF) councillor/ head of United We Stand Cooperative Frederick Mabamba, involved in 'all illicit land deals', and Mr Hamandishe's 'group of youths', who spearheaded many land invasions.

⁹ Planners, interviews 8 and 9/4/2017

¹⁰ Interview, independent planner 9/4/2017.

heroes. 'Traditionalist' repertoires of claim-making were notably absent. The Caledonia inquiry noted only one unconvincing attempt to elevate ancestral land claims: Mr Kuchineyi Marowa 'a self-claimed spirit medium formed Heritage Valley Trust...to protect the place from being invaded...on grounds of ancestral graves' and those of 'the first Chimurenga heroes ...killed by the British.' But the investigators found 'nothing of national heritage value at Caledonia Farm', and the traditional leadership of the adjacent communal area did not substantiate his claim. The officials took Mr Marowa's stance as 'a bid to build his empire...as he had been allocating land' (MLGNWPH 2015:16).

Abuse of the cooperative model was detailed in all audits. Some but not all coops were registered with MSMECD, but most did not follow cooperative rules and residents' payments lacked proper paper trails. With some few exceptions, cooperatives had realised 'no meaningful development' in ten years. Groundwater was contaminated 'as most wells are close to pit latrines'; the disease risk needed to be 'urgently addressed' (MLGNWPH 2015:16). Throughout Caledonia, cooperatives not only allocated land to members, but also 'sold stands to other cooperatives, individuals or groups who approached them' (MLGNWPH 2015:14). The Chairperson of the Union of Cooperatives, Mr Nelson Mandizvidza was himself involved in illegal land sales. In Harare North, the audit blamed the MCDSMED for failing to regulate, detailing mismanagement and violent conflicts: several cooperatives, such as Sally Mugabe, Zvakatanga, Sekuseka and Ivhu Inhaka each had two sets of rival executives, both of which were illegally selling the same plots. There was 'victimization of some members by the executive' as well as 'political interference, violence and intimidation of co-operators resulting in illegal repossession of stands belonging to other cooperatives by the union and the councillor and reallocation to other coops' (MLGNWPH 2015a). There was also a conflict between coops and Harare North ZANU(PF) MP Chikwinya (MLGNWPH 2015a).

All the audits described territorial authorities that were illegal, personalised, overlapping and violent. Planners reflected how 'the manner in which individuals parcelled land to each other in the different phases of Caledonia reminds one of the colonial scramble for Africa' (MLGNWPH 2015: 13). The audit described one 'baron' - Livingston Chikanga - being referred to as 'mayor' of Caledonia. When summoned before the committee, he was said to have 'bluntly vowed not to stop collecting the "illegal money" on the basis that everything done at Caledonia farm is illegal' (MLGNWPH 2015:13). Residents were said to refer to authorities by invoking the 'barons' by name, the different territorial phases of these settlements being named after 'an individual organization or land baron'. Yet many of the most prominent 'barons' had land across the different settlements of Greater Harare and other towns.¹¹ The Caledonia Inquiry calculated the figure of illegally accumulated money from land sales and cooperative charges in the one settlement alone as US\$57m, with Mandizvidza himself benefitting from \$2.8m (MLGNWPH 2015:3).

But the silences of these official investigations are also revealing, and it is notable that they scarcely mention party politics. Although all 'land barons' are senior ZANU(PF) politicians, military figures, or war veterans, their connections to the ruling party are not mentioned. The audits are silent on individual baron's relationship to the formal ZANU(PF)'s hierarchy. There is no discussion of how party structures within the settlements reach to the grassroots through organized spatial hierarchies of districts, branches and cells. Electoral strategies hinging on invasions and control of land as a political resource are not discussed. Indeed, the audits divert attention from ZANU(PF) systematic territorial structures across the City's peripheral settlements by focussing on illegal accumulation by individual barons, cooperative leaders and corrupt officials, particularly in councils.¹² This manner of discussion obscures the partisan logic and clientalist modes of statecraft that created the settlements and instead reduces the matter to one of cultures of corruption in local authorities and wayward individuals.

¹¹ Interviews MLGNWPH officials 6 and 7/4/2017 and independent planners 9/4/2017.

¹² The Caledonia Inquiry has one short vague paragraph on 'abuse of politics' (MLGNWPH 2015:29).

The inquiries concluded by setting out a model for regularizing in which land continued to belong to the central state and made the case for new central state intervention via the Ministry of Local Government, through a 'capable' body charged with planning, registration and dealing with conflicts (MLGNWPH 2015:30). Regularization would be 'a comprehensive exercise that ensures all residents are properly registered and have security of tenure by way of agreements or leases' (MLGNWPH 2015:32). The chosen agent of regularization was a state enterprise - the Urban Development Corporation [UDCORP], to be funded by levies on the residents of the informal settlements themselves.¹³ UDCORP's accounts would be published to ensure accountability; residents' funds would be held in individual, ring fenced accounts with a reputable bank, the Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe.

Official inquiries thus created the frontier 'myths' of state absence and criminality that set the stage for new central state interventions to reterritorialize authority and re-order land and property rights. The discourses of local authority corruption, victimised residents, and criminal accumulation by individual 'barons' legitimized a new role for UDCORP in re-shaping city-edge land rights and collecting funds from residents. This policy discourse systematically obscured ZANU(PF)'s role and interests in producing and controlling these settlements. Implementation, however, meant head on conflict between the Ministry and ZANUPF vested interests within the 'gap'. It thus brought into profile dispute within the party over divergent varieties of clientalist statecraft. We turn to these conflicts next.

Regularization through political bargaining within ZANUPF

Regularization pitted two divergent repertoires and manifestations of ZANU(PF) party-state authority against one another – the legal-bureaucratic embodied in planners versus the revolutionary nationalist embodied in party structures that gave licence to dismantle land and property rights. Although conflict over regularization was drawn into the deepening ZANU(PF) factionalism that led to the military coup and President Mugabe's resignation in late 2017, these two divergent claims to authority and contrasting modes of clientalist statecraft are both deeply embedded in the party's post-independence history and will likely shape politics and urban regulation (or its absence) into the future. UDCORP's planners, although operating on the basis of cost-recovery from residents rather than through state finance, can be seen as a continuation of the state's modernist, technocratic planning tradition that was not overtly partisan. The settlements themselves and the 'barons' within them, in contrast, represented a different mode of clientalism that operated through party structures directly. Rather than see this as a clash between 'formal' (state institutions) and 'informal' (party) institutions, we cast it as revealing varieties of clientalist statecraft. UDCORP should not be interpreted as a return to older postcolonial traditions of state developmentalism because it was so fully enmeshed in the MLGNWPH's politicized practice. Below we use interviews with officials to shed further light on how internal conflict over varieties of clientalist statecraft shaped the process of regularization.

MLGNWPH officials were unanimous in stressing their lack of political clout in relation to the powerful party political interests and individuals in the settlements they were trying to regularise. They were up against the top echelons of ZANUPF: '[The Ministry] doesn't have all that authority to sanitize and rationalise', one official emphasised.¹⁴ To facilitate UDCORP's progress, the MLGNWPH set up a militarized inter-ministerial Committee to oversee its work. Chaired by the planner Percy Toriro, political muscle came in the figure of the Vice Chair, a serving member of the Zimbabwe Air

¹³ UDCORP answered to the MLGNWPH, but could operate across the institutional divide between rural and urban created by the division of the Ministry of Local Government in 2013 into the (urban) MLGNWPH and (rural) Ministry of Rural Development and Cultural Heritage.

¹⁴ MLGNWPH official, interview, 7/4/2017

Force, Air Commodore Chiganze and senior members of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP). UDCORP's 'penetration' of the settlement was achieved only through displays of state military force. Committee members recall going in 'covered by riot police all around', with Air Commodore Chiganze at the helm of operations, dressed in full Air Force regalia.¹⁵ With one voice, officials complained of incessant 'political interference'; 'the main, main problem is politics'.¹⁶ A planner recalled the difficulty in trying to uphold professional logic: 'the main ones profiting are the owners of the coops, with official letters from the Ministry. Look at the names – Ushewokunze, Sally Mugabe, Nehanda...before you tackle anything with an ex-combatant, if you differ with that person it becomes a political position, yet you're coming from a professional point of view'.¹⁷ UDCORP's progress on the ground in Caledonia and elsewhere was thus hindered from the outset, and disrupted by the constant need to engage in political bargaining.

UDCORP's work posed a direct challenge to the authority and interests of the 'barons'. UDCORP planners used the coop leaders only to gain lists of names, and then circumvented them, moving house by house, compiling new registers of plot holders from whom to collect fees.¹⁸ There were numerous instances where Chiganze had to personally intervene.¹⁹ Officials and planners narrated treading carefully and retreating following death threats.²⁰ Progress with registering, reallocating and infrastructure was slow: by February 2017 there were some new boreholes, a new partially completed road and a new City District Office that was receiving building plans. The road and District Office, in particular, were potent symbolic material markers of formal state authority and of the 'opening up' of the settlement. But participation by Caledonia residents themselves was only partial: only a fraction paid their infrastructure fees.²¹ Moreover, progress on issuing lease agreements was 'disrupted due to the level of resistance and non-cooperation strategies of the land barons'.²²

Tackling the 'barons' was a political minefield. In the words of one official:

There are times when we tried in some of the [Minister's] state of the nation speeches, to put in statements about the land barons, moving against the land barons, but they'd laugh it off. For me to try to enforce – it was difficult, because you'd be told by [Harare politicians representing city-edge constituencies] that 2018 [the election] was coming, when I was trying to do something that was violating his interests. Remember 2018 is coming. And then they'll tell you, I'm a Central Committee Member...I'm going to tell the Committee, the President, this guy is costing the party... So you tend to back off when it gets thick.²³

Resolving disputes over the very many double allocations was a huge and politically sensitive job. Not only had as much as 30% of the land had been allocated to more than one person, but conflicts were potentially explosive, as they involved 'untouchables' who invoked their status within the party's top organs and grassroots clients as more important than planners' professional view:

Most of these cooperative chairs are political figures. So in a situation where there is a lot of havoc and you try to say let's find a solution and find these are party people, you can't touch them. You'll have a double allocation, and you're saying, let's move the other person to

¹⁵ CoH official, interview, 14/4/2017

¹⁶ Interviews with MLGNWPH officials, City officials, independent planners 2016, 2017. DATES.

¹⁷ Independent planner, interview, 9/4/2017

¹⁸ MLGNWPH officials, interviews 6 and 7/4/2017

¹⁹ Interview with Chiganze, 'Land barons defiant in Caledonia' H-Metro 2/6/2016.

²⁰ Interviews, MLGNWPH, 6 and 7/4/2017

²¹ UCCORP press release 6/2/2017. By early 2017, \$3.4 million was raised from 28,104 registered beneficiaries, yet 'if the beneficiaries were consistently paying their monthly infrastructure development fees, \$1,405,200 would be received monthly'

²² UDCORP press release 6/2/2017. Only 6 of 26 phases had received leases.

²³ MLGNWPH official, interview, 7/4/2017

another place, and someone can say, you're affecting my cell, you're affecting the party. Worse now the [elections] period we're into.²⁴

Some disputes were intractable to the point of deaths among the disputing parties:

We start by meeting the cooperative leaderships, so each can say that's my stand. Then we try to understand the background...The initial allocations were to coops. Although some open spaces or institutional spaces were there on the plans, but now 15 years down the line, so someone has just decided to allocate people land on those spaces....But there are other issues – if I am a [coop] chairperson and think I can run roughshod over the next chairperson, I can start allocating stands in his area...There are some cases where you will have representation [from the coop, through the union and apex] up to the federation itself. ...In some contentious cases we have all those people at a meeting to try to say, let's give this person the stand. In some cases people have died...²⁵

The politicized process of registration and giving stands to everyone meant UDCORP's initial estimation of the population rose significantly from 23,000 stands to just under 30,000, as the registration process 'harvested' 30% more stand-holders who were then accommodated on vacant land'.²⁶

Obstruction was not only from the 'barons', but also from other state institutions, particularly the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development (MSMECD), which was undermined by the shift away from cooperatives.²⁷ More important was the fact that the courts protected the 'barons'. Officials collected significant bodies of evidence against individual barons, in a difficult process which had also required Chiganze's overhaul of the local district police office so that it would handle residents' complaints.²⁸ But the Magistrates Courts then High Court ruled that the Ministry of Local Government could not bring cases against the barons as it was not the aggrieved party: residents of Caledonia themselves would need to bring fraud charges.²⁹ Other legal obstacles came in the form of the lack of legal protection for those paying into Development Trusts, with precedents set by unsuccessful attempts to punish a baron in the eastern city of Mutare, notwithstanding testimony from 22,000 witnesses including 16,000 victims who were far from the poorest of the poor, as they comprised civil servants.³⁰

Divisions between MLGNWPH and the barons were increasingly understood in terms of the party's internal factional divide, because the then Minister of Local Government Kasukuwere was a prominent member of the 'G40' faction (headed by President Mugabe's wife, Grace, in rivalry with the 'Lacoste' faction headed by Emerson Mnangagwa who assumed the Presidency through the military coup in late 2017).³¹ Officials bemoaned this polarization within the party, 'the party is pulling in different directions. So us as civil servants now are heavily affected. If I made a decision

²⁴ MLGNWPH official, interview 7/4/2017; Toriro and Chiganze, in 'Land barons defiant'

²⁵ MLGNWPH official, interview, 7/4/2017; Toriro and Chiganze, in 'Land barons defiant'

²⁶ MLGNWPH official, interview 6/4/2017

²⁷ MLGNWPH official, interview 7/4/2017

²⁸ MLGNWPH officials, interviews 6 and 7/4/2017; press reports

²⁹ MLGNWPH official, interview 7/4/2017; press reports

³⁰ Similar loopholes protected bogus developers selling diaspora investors instalment housing plans (McGregor 2014). On the Mutodi case, http://www.pindula.co.zw/Energy_Mutodi#Fraud_Allegations [accessed 4/8/2017].

Barons sought countercharges, 'Land barons wreak havoc', Financial Gazette, 22/9/2016

³¹ 'Land barons wreak havoc', Financial Gazette, 22/9/2016

that is perceived to be a Lacoste decision I'm in trouble because our minister is perceived to be G40'.³²

Although officials cast UDCORP as guided by professionalism rather than politics, the state enterprise can be understood as engaging in a statist version of patron-clientalism. Its practice has been far from transparent, not least because it circumvents processes of democratic accountability. It is clear from the accounts above that both Ministerial officials and UDCORP planners were subject to political pressures that shaped their practice, allowing for clientalist privileges in the mechanics of resolving conflicts, surveying and registering plots. Moreover, the process of regularization itself was seized upon by ZANUPF politicians as an opportunity for new land occupations. Although MLGNWPH ceased to use cooperatives as a vehicle for land development, it continued to allocate state land to other groups 'in need' – youth, women's groups – privileging those with party connections, thus potentially creating further ZANU(PF) controlled informal settlements. Other controversial Ministerial land deals included sales of land earmarked for the needy to one of the country's leading Pentecostal prophets.³³

Bargaining within ZANU(PF) thus shaped every step of 'regularization' in practice, and officials' claims to professionalism were undermined by the party/state's continued resort to clientalism of both statist and overtly partisan varieties. The MLGNWPH continued to use state institutions to allocate land formally to 'needy' party clients, while also sanctioning party-led land invasions. Regularization itself also stimulated new party-led occupations, and hence produced new frontier settlements that were a 'regulatory void' at the same time as it incompletely closed existing 'gaps'. By channelling funds from residents away from the 'barons' and cooperatives and towards UDCORP and the central state, this model of regularization also perpetuated the (politically inspired) incapacitation of the City, to which we turn below.

The City's role in perpetuating the 'vacuum'

The institutional relations used for regularization make no sense if interpreted through a planning lens – they are clearly dysfunctional. The arrangements are only comprehensible if one follows Rakodi's exhortation to 'forget planning, put politics first' (2006). By giving UDCORP the role of regularizing, the policy perpetuated the disconnect between residents and municipality, and continued to channel funds away from, and to undermine the authority of the City, which was supposed to service the settlements. It marked a perpetuation of what Resnick (2014) describes as a 'strategy of subversion' reflecting the country's 'vertically divided authority' between a ZANUPF central government and MDC-run municipality. The political logic of this inter-party rivalry has been a major theme of prior scholarship on Harare (Kamete 2007; Muchadenyika 2015; Muchadenyika and Williams 2017). Below, we show how ZANUPF's interests were embedded within the City directly as a result of political controls over officials and appointments, and in the powers enjoyed by ZANUPF councillors. This meant the City's actions also contributed to the production and persistence of the 'gap'.

The City of Harare, which falls under the MLGNWPH, was a subordinate player in the Ministry's regularization drive. It developed its own policy for informal settlements on City land, announced a moratorium on demolitions of illegal structures and tried to take action against invasions, illegal sales and land barons.³⁴ But the City's lack of autonomy curtailed its capacity to make or enforce coherent policy (Kamete 2007, Chatiza 2010, Muchadenyika 2017). Constitutional provisions for local

³² MLGNWPH official, 7/4/2017

³³ President grills Kasukuwere, 'You Sold Land to Magaya', The Herald, 8/9/2016.

³⁴ JOC 2014, CoH 2016:24; CoH 2017.

government that should have ushered in an era of devolution from 2013 were not implemented and overweening Ministerial powers persisted (Chatiza 2016). As the mayor explained:

In a normal country the ministry responsible would be an enabler, a facilitator and a catalyst for the good things a council seeks to do. Almost all our major problems are directly linked to the Ministry ...Political and other interference still run City of Harare... We cannot freely employ the best people; we cannot exercise authority over those who we are supposed to lead; they enjoy unlimited political protection (CoH 2017:5).

The City's lack of control over its own activities were epitomized by controversial demolitions (notwithstanding the moratorium) undertaken by the Ministry commandeering City equipment (CoH 2016). Its near bankrupt status was reproduced by Ministerial decisions – to perpetuate absurdly high executive pay and a debt write-off for ratepayers equalling two years revenue (CoH 2017:8).

Regularization via UDCORP contributed to the City's financial burden and further undermined its ability to raise revenue. City officials and residents' associations elaborated the financial burden on the City of, 'incorporating [a settlement] after making sure it's already occupied so there is no benefit to council'.³⁵ Not only were land values harvested before settlements were handed over to the City, but where land continued to belong to the central state, subsequent payments also flowed to the centre, including those for intrinsic value, penalty and lease fees, property taxes and transfers.

UDCORP was taking over City planning and revenue collecting roles.³⁶ The Chair of the City's Environment and Sanitation Committee (responsible for informal settlements), elaborated:

That's the politics now, UDCORP is an arm of the Ministry ...now they're trying to create an implementing arm that collects money from people, to construct roads, provide services....That was supposed to be [done by] council...Council has its new District Offices [for newly incorporated settlements], people have started to pay rates to council. At the same time, they're being asked to pay to UDCORP – \$2 or \$3 dollars.... so now if money is collected \$3 from 30,000 illegal settlers, it's almost \$0.5million. So different entities develop a certain interest beyond the need to make sure people are provided with services.³⁷

The fact that UDCORP was levying residents for infrastructure undercut the City's capacity to do so. City officials bemoaned: 'People say we've already paid UDCORP, what are we paying you for?'³⁸ Moreover, UDCORP usurped the City of Harare's planning authority: 'UDCORP has more authority than council...UDCORP doesn't report to council. There is something wrong with the model.'³⁹

But the City's role in the production of regulatory 'voids' controlled de facto by ZANUPF was not entirely passive. It too had a hand in creating informal settlements, particularly at junctures when it was managed by a Ministry-appointed Commission. This can be illustrated by the history of Hopley settlement (with an estimated population of 80,000), which is located on council land and originated as a holding camp turned Operation Live Well resettlement project in 2006-7. At the time of writing, UDCORP had not begun to regularize in Hopley because of a dispute between City and the MLGNWPH over the whereabouts of land registers.⁴⁰ Though the settlement was on City land, during

³⁵ Mfundo Mlilo, CEO CHRA, interview, 12/04/2017

³⁶ At the time of research, the City's lack of planning capacity was acute: a Department that should have had 20 planning officers had five. CoH official, interview, 9/04/2017,

³⁷ Clr Gomba (Acting Mayor), interview, 9/04/2017

³⁸ CoH official, interview, 14/4/2017

³⁹ CoH official, 13/4/2017

⁴⁰ Focus group, Hopley 19/11/2016; interviews, Hopley residents 24/4/2017,

the Operation, the Ministry and army had been in charge, 'commandeering' City employees to issue people with Ministry leases. Neither institution had updated registers to take account of land sales and occupations. Nor were they providing services, though both were billing residents - for leases (in the case of the Ministry) and non-existent services (in the case of the City). De facto, the ZANUPF structures were in charge.

Hopley's history demonstrates not only the municipality's lack of autonomy over land and settlements within its jurisdiction, but also over its own officers. Both Ministry and City officials acknowledged their own institutions' part in creating the 'mess' in this un-serviced settlement. A City official bemoaned: 'Trying to clear up the mess using our officers, you are working with the same officers who were also involved in putting the facts on the ground.'⁴¹ ZANUPF controlled Hopley through the party's district coordinating committees and party youth (Kamete 2018). Claims to land and housing within Hopley reflect the layers of formal allocations and subsequent informalisation through occupations, sales and subdivisions. The larger part of the settlement (zones 1-4) originated as Operation Live Well two roomed houses and plots, allocated to individuals who were given Ministry leases. Another section (zone 6) was allocated by the City to cooperatives of its own workers, through much land was invaded before the workers had occupied their stands. A large section of wetland running through the middle of the settlement was also invaded such that there was a ZANU(PF) section and an MDC section. Throughout the settlement, people had illegally subdivided and sold off plots, as well as renting out land and rooms to lodgers. Indeed it was not common for small initial plots to have up to 6 families in residence.

The City's weakness was not just about its subordinate relationship to the Ministry and overbearing party pressures on officials, but was compounded by impotence in relation to its own ZANU(PF) councillors. City officials complained: 'The [ZANU(PF)] councillor [for Harare North] controls ...We won't take enforcement against residents without him. If we want to talk to people we go through him... You won't be able to address them without him'.⁴²

ZANUPF politicians were using regularization to encourage occupations. The prospect of UDCORP arriving in Hopley, for example, fuelled a new round of invasions of City (and state) land led by the ZANU(PF) MP and councillor for Harare South. The chair of the City's environment and sanitation committee described his frustrated attempts to stop them:

They [UDCORP] now want to get into Harare South, they are on their way there, and so people have started to invade another farm, Churu Farm...It was given to council by government, but people are now invading spearheaded by the ZANU(PF) MP and councillor. It will occupy some 10,000 people or so. Then UDCORP will be asked to get into that. We called the MP, the councillor...and we tried to desist them from doing that. But they proceeded to do that, obviously they had the support of the powerful in the ZANU hierarchy...The purpose of my committee is to issue prohibition orders, to give notices to those occupying illegal pieces of land... But in doing that, I myself as chairman, you can get calls from certain councillors, 'chair can you assist us in stopping people going out to demolish illegal structures because we can regularise'.⁴³

Frustration over how regularization stimulated new land occupations was expressed in both Ministry and City offices. In the Ministry, officials also complained how, 'When people hear UDCORP is in town, areas reserved for schools and public places they're just invaded overnight.'⁴⁴ Planners recounted ZANU(PF) politicians' encouragement: 'They're saying just go and build, that's the

⁴¹ COH official, 14/4/2017

⁴² CoH official, interview, 24/4/2017

⁴³ Interview, Clr Gomba (Acting Mayor), 9/04/2017

⁴⁴ MLGNWPH official, interview, 6/4/2017

language now....they know you're going to come and formalize.'⁴⁵The logic driving the new invasions at the grassroots was opportunistic: 'People are saying, those in Hatcliffe, Caledonia, Hopley got land, why not us? How to stop the land allocations now? Authorities will be seeing the settlements coming up but not doing anything.'⁴⁶

The reordering of land rights through regularization was thus perpetuating the City's incapacity, lack of resources and powers. It was also extending informal settlements under ZANU(PF) control through the very policies that purported to be closing the 'gap': new frontiers were opening up as old ones were partially legalised. UDCORP was introducing a new layer of land and property rights outside public scrutiny in a manner that maintained ZANU(PF) control over resources for urban patronage via central state institutions.

Conclusion

The emergence of 'lawless' urban frontiers and attempts to reorder them thus provides fascinating insight into ZANUPF statecraft. In Harare, the post 2013 regularization effort revealed disputes over varieties of ZANUPF clientalism operating through and outside state institutions. These different forms of clientalist state-making were epitomised in the divergent modes of patronage of the MLGNWPH and state company charged with regularizing informal settlements (UDCORP) on the one hand and the ZANUPF 'land barons' and party committees who exercised de facto territorial authority on the other. They reflected contradictory repertoires of technocratic statism and revolutionary redistributive populism. Yet each was a vehicle for ruling party patronage hinging on differing relations to state institutions, and we interpret them as comprising a singular landscape of state power. The effort to restore state bureaucratic control over the large regulatory 'voids' provided a wealth of information on how and why informal settlements had mushroomed over the previous decades as the party/state had redistributed valuable city-edge land along partisan lines, by encouraging party-led occupations and giving licence for ZANUPF 'barons' and party structures to act as territorial authorities. The state company's regularization was less explicitly partisan, but its practice was far removed from the technocratic practice of the early independence developmental state: its planners worked within a landscape of institutions clearly designed to further ZANUPF interests and political pressures and corruption could confer benefits to party clients as plots were formalised. The changing politics of the capital's 'frontier' settlements not only reflected broader shifting national political alignments, but also influenced them, as 'land barons' and the moves against them were deeply entangled in the party's factional politics.

But the article also used this particular case to make broader methodological and conceptual arguments. An empirical focus on politicized urban frontier spaces, we argue, provides a potentially revealing lens through which to rectify the occlusions of apolitical frameworks for debating African cities' transforming margins. These contested spaces offer a route to understanding varied forms of clientalism and the contours of conflict within and between state institutions and political parties. Using frontier as a heuristic device to shed light on emerging forms of statecraft hinged on a particular reading of the concept as being about 'state-making rather than state absence' and in which the 'geopolitical imaginary of the frontier as "stateless"' is understood as a powerful legitimization for new forms of state intervention (Ballve 2017; Watts 2017). It took inspiration from scholars of conflict cities, whose notion of 'frontier urbanism' draws attention to central state strategic military-political interests underpinning the creation of legally ambiguous, securitized settlements that persist over time and the infrastructures that maintain them (Pullan 2011; Pullan and Baillie 2014; Yiftachel 2009).

⁴⁵ Planner, interview, 23/11/2016

⁴⁶ Planners, interview 23/11/2016 and 9/4/2017

Frontier can have advantages over other concepts frequently used to theorize urban transformations on African city edges, particularly in reference to highly politicized contexts. Because 'frontier' casts the primary relationality of the city edge for state officials as being the 'unregulated', 'illegal' and 'criminal', rather than the 'rural', so it has advantages over the notion of the 'peri-urban' as route to understanding the politics of those spaces where the key issue is not rural/urban socio-economic mixes or entanglements with customary village orders. Moreover, while city peripheries may be particularly prone to frontier politics, it is clear that urban frontiers can emerge in a variety of places beyond the confines of the peri-urban. Frontier also has benefits over the notion of 'suburb'. Even if the informal settlements we have described here come over time to be seen as 'suburbs' (with the implication in Zimbabwe, of similarity to upmarket, former white sections of town), they currently are not labelled in this way, middle class sections within them do not predominate, and for the most part they continue to carry the stigma of poverty and criminality as well as lacking services and security. Suburb's invocation of quiet creep seems wholly inappropriate for settlements whose growth is understood as a politicized, violent, opportunistic 'scramble', and which have been a party political battleground during past elections. Naturalistic metaphors of 'estuaries' or 'twilight' fail to convey the central state partisan strategic calculations, inter- and intra-party conflicts that can be part of the story of why city-edge 'regulatory voids' and legally ambiguous 'grey areas' persist over time and open up for reasons other than simply bureaucratic incapacity and the sheer scale of urban growth.

Predominant framings for understanding African city edges thus risk eclipsing important political histories. Urban frontiers can provide an important addition to existing tools for understanding rapidly changing cities. As Caldeira argues, it is important for theories of how cities are being produced to allow for 'dissimilarity', within and across cities and to build on historical understanding, contestation and the potential for transformation (Caldeira 2017: 16). The highly politicized case discussed here is specific. The postcolonial legacies of historically strong planning, the party/state's redistributive land allocations to cooperatives and occupations shaped by repertoires of revolutionary patriotism emerged out of a particular political and institutional history. Aspects of this case do, however, resonate with African city politics elsewhere, not least because a highly centralised state apparatus is common in postcolonial Africa and ruling parties frequently resort to subverting opposition-run municipalities (Resnick 2014). Moreover the divergent forms of clientalism themselves have echoes of other contexts (Harare's frontier politics had elements of both Kampala's 'competitive clientalism' and Kigali's 'structured, formalistic clientalism', Goodfellow 2017b).

But 'frontier' as a concept demands attention to trajectories over time, and reveals the limitations of static comparisons as route to understanding contentious city-edge politics in contexts of instability. Should the regularization effort described here be understood as 'closing' or perpetuating urban frontiers? Regularization was intended to appeal to urban voters, and to monopolize the political capital to be secured from delivering an orderly, planned, secure and serviced city, which had taken on a magnified importance among residents angry about the extortion, insecurity and chaos of the 'scramble' for city edge land. But these spaces were not fully formalised, while policy and practice was simultaneously appealing to a new generation of land occupiers and producing new frontiers controlled by the ruling party. The outcome of the conflict between statist and overtly partisan forms of clientalism is an emergent process. Here we have paid attention to the influence of central party-state actors, but these are entangled with residents' own navigations of the city-edge and their investments in land, property and construction (on the latter, see McGregor and Chatisa forthcoming). What is clear, however, is that the resolution or otherwise of the 'frontier' status of city-edge informal settlements will continue to be a deeply political story.

'Frontier' encourages analysis of such political histories. It does not foreclose the actors, idiom and political repertoire of claims to land and authority. Nor does it limit discussion to a particular type of

land use or settlement form. It does not use language that elevates a Euro-American model of urban development. Used in the manner we elaborate here, investigating the frontiers of urban control can provide insight into varied forms of clientalist statecraft, the political interests, strategies and legitimating claims that shape authority and bureaucratic regulation as well as the production of unregulated 'voids'. It demands attention to human and material infrastructures of territorial control that support in situ authorities, legal or otherwise. And it requires sensitivity to the political language of specific contentious episodes of dismantling and remaking territorial authority. As such, frontier can provide an apt metaphor and illuminating prism for understanding contentious histories of city-edge urban transformation.

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