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Repackaging "Traditional" Architecture of the African Village in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Repackaging is being done through construction of buildings with connections to traditional architecture as well as respective traditional naming of such symbolizing a return to African values. Naming of spaces and buildings is closely tied to the architecture of African heritage. This chapter explores the architecture of selected outdoor spaces in Zimbabwe. It is argued that the new places symbolize, represent African culture in terms of homage, food, hospitality, and cultural security. Furthermore, it is argued the spaces offer an eyrie of cultural values as housed in the architecture as well as names of the spaces thus communicating African sensibilities, aura of the traditional village at the same time sustainably conserving the architecture authored as by African heritage. One of the conclusions made is that the urban landscape can store and communicate African heritage; interestingly, requisite architecture can be used in this endeavor. Data were gathered qualitatively, and participant observations, interviews and extensive desktop research were involved.

Keywords: semiotics, village, hut, names, architecture, heritage

1. Introduction

For years, Africa has rolled out efforts to assert its position within a globalized "village." In some cases, the continent has been presented as torn apart between having either to appropriate new systems and risk annihilation by western systems (and culture) or to recreate its systems enshrined in its culture (or indigenous knowledge systems) in order to regain its rightful place in a globalized world. Globalization, as Yankuzo [1] argues, is a critical tool for cultural homogeneity designed to end cultural diversity in the world. This means, diverse cultural values are replaced by global cultural values, and the varieties of social and cultural developments have been fuelling globalization over the years. Furthermore, Yankuzo [1] believes globalization as a phenomenon has "a multi-dimensional process, whereby cultural, economic and political relations increasingly take a global basis" (p. 2). Against this view, what it means is that Africa continues to negotiate for space in this globalized space. Africa's traditions, practices, and discourses reflect that the continent has not been annihilated by globalization. Instead, Africa continues to mark its unique space in varying ways.

In Africa, the "rural landscape" has been characterized in the discourses as the source of African sensibilities. The African village is a granary of that which is African [2], with the urban landscape providing contrasting images tied to westernization, urbanization and all forces of modernity. African indigenous knowledge systems have extensively shown how the rural landscape has been the sanctuary of African culture, traditions and values. Urbanization, in contrast, has been projected as a threat to these values. One reason behind the continued smoking of the *ncelwa*[1] and practices attached to the *buntibe*[2] by the BaTonga people of Zimbabwe has been that the BaTonga were "neglected" for years [3]. Ironically, this "neglect" may be read as part of the many reasons why, a great deal of their culture remains "uncontaminated" or less contaminated by "modernity."

Even African literature, reflects aspects of cultural erosion. For instance, Lucifer in *Waiting for the Rain* [4] proclaims that his birth in Africa was against his will and ultimately becoming an African was to him a biological error. Lakunle in *The Lion and the Jewel* [5] detests, like Lucifer, African values as barbaric, primitive and excommunicated practices. The degree of cultural erosion and westernized is so vivid that writers call for efforts in "returning" to the source of cultural values and practices especially because contemporary African urban dwellers have rural backgrounds [6] or have the village as their place(s) of origin. Most Africans moved to the urban landscape for economic reasons.

This chapter, therefore, architecturally explores selected outdoor spaces in Zimbabwe. The chapter argues that the new places symbolize and represent African culture in terms of homage, food, hospitality and cultural security. Furthermore, it is argued that while this triggers nostalgia to Africans, the spaces offer an eyrie of cultural values as housed in the architecture as well as names of the spaces in order to communicate African sensibilities about the African aura of the traditional village at the same time sustainably conserving the architecture authored by African heritage. One of the conclusions made is that the urban landscape can store and communicate African heritage, interestingly, requisite architecture can be used in this endeavor.

The chapter also argues that the naming and architectural systems also reflect modernization as well as a sense of economization of the African village since those behind the naming and constructions are taking advantage of the economic opportunities presented by the twenty-first century land reform program. It is further shown that African culture has thus survived or is given a lifeline by being repackaged, modernized and appropriated in the new terrain; a terrain where modernity forces and processes have in some way sort over the years to delete ultimately, African sensibilities.

Data for the study were gathered qualitatively. Interviews with owners (and consumers) of selected lodges and restaurants were conducted during visits undertaken to such spaces by the researcher. Participant observations were also done as the researcher participated in various activities organized at such spaces such as weddings, workshops, parties, and various other social activities. Furthermore, extensive desktop research was conducted to enrich the study. In order to lay the foundation for my discussion and reporting, first, an aside on the twenty-first century Land Reform Program in Zimbabwe is done to put the discussion into context.

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[1] BaTonga women smoking pipe

[2] BaTonga drum(s) and cultural dance

2. Twenty-first century land reform in Zimbabwe

Documentation of the twenty-first century land reform, dubbed the Fast Track Land Reform Program (FTLRP) in Zimbabwe, is quite visible, and there is a considerable corpus of studies on the land issue in the country. Some scholars have called land issues in the country, *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business* [7]. However, most studies on FTLRP generally agree that the program was a result of the country's thirst to settle the land question in the country. Others have provided varying perspectives on the land issues with the likes of Vambe (ed.) [8] deciding to deal with political dynamics involved in the program, which subsequently affected economic and social lives of the Zimbabwean people, given the heavy political undertones characterizing it.

In her report, Tibaijuka [9] reveals the many sidedness as well as many faces created by the land reform in the country. For instance, there are narratives detailing the dynamics of Operation *Murambatsvina* (Operation Restore Order), dubbed "Operation Tsunami" because of its speed and ferocity. Fontein [10] recounts realities during the operation when ordinary people in the cities destroyed their own residential structures considered "Illegal." Studying the aftermath of the FTLRP, Potts [11] observes the economic and humanitarian crisis and dislocations that followed the land reform program. More broadly, however, Sadomba [12] reflects the historical underpinnings of land reform from 1980 and the agitation as well as demand for land by war veterans. Moyo and Chambati [13] conclude that the FTLRP represents the only instance of "radical redistributive land reforms since the end of the Cold War," reversing,

> *… the racially-skewed agrarian structure and discriminatory land tenures inherited from colonial rule, whereby over 6000 large-scale white farmers and a few foreign and nationally-owned agroindustrial estates controlled most of the prime land, water resources, and bio-reserves, while relegating the majority of the population to marginal lands and cheap-labor services. ([13], p. 1)*

The twenty-first century land reform program in Zimbabwe also attracted the attention of the international community and imagination. For the locals, it rekindled memories of the past mostly tied to colonialism and its land policies. Mutondi [14] notes that for the Zimbabwean people, it was also about economic empowerment read as "the final embodiment of empowerment following Zimbabwe's independence in 1980" (p. 1). Political interpretations of the land reform program were two sided. Drivers of the program claimed the program was overdue. The then President, Robert Mugabe, declared in 2005 that

> *without doubt, our heroes are happy that a crucial part of this new phase of our struggle has been completed. The land has been freed and today all our heroes lie on the soil that is declaration. Their spirits are unbound, free to roam the land they left shackled, thanks again to the Third Chimurenga. ([14], p. 2)*

Defenders, mostly beneficiaries of the land reform (mostly politicians), projected the program as successful. The defense was centered on the recentralized "decision-making relating to land matters, ostensibly because [the government] perceived itself as fighting against external forces bent on reversing the gains of the program" ([14], p. 4). Thus, political statements and action were pitched very high in order to hide certain local tendencies (some of the action relating to the land takeovers was permeated by violence), which made it difficult to discern what was happening on the ground ([14], p. 4).

Chief among the defenders of the program was the government, its institutions, agents, and officials. But those opposed to the government's model placed at the center "human rights violations" along racial, sometimes tribal lines. The white Zimbabweans were characterized as victims, and black supporters of this were also seen as victims too. The Mugabe government characterized black people who opposed its stance and model of the program as lacking totems, connections to the Zimbabwean culture and identity; stooges meant and being used to reverse the gains of the armed liberation struggle that brought independence in 1980.

Perhaps, the politically charged periods of 2000–2008 rendered the program more political than economic or sociocultural. As such, studies done during the same period tended to take the same lines with conclusions being submitted as the program being unsustainable rather than a socially and economically sustainable developmental drive for the people of Zimbabwe. Almost two decades after the FTLRP, research and discourses now center on measuring the success of the land reform based on arguments around poverty reduction and economic efficiency with political considerations gradually wearing away.

Regardless of the cost in humanitarian sense, economic, political, and social complexities as well as dynamics, the program created economic opportunities for the locals around land ownership. Not only did the land reform address agrarian related land ownership and utilization, but residential as well as commercial land was also made available for expansion of existing settlements as well as for creation of new settlements and economies. It is this reading of the program, which opened up economic opportunities in terms of the availability of commercial land, which this chapter heavily sides with. The new spaces have allowed repackaging of "tradition," specifically repackaging of the traditional African village architecture and subsequent naming of the created spaces since most owners became locals.

3. Semiotics, architecture, and names

Buildings and their subsequent names are semiotic resources. Semiotics is used to view buildings as objects as well as respective place names as resources in the construction as well as naming patterns and systems of the landscape itself. Not only does this empower us to interpret meanings carried by lodges and restaurants, but also this alludes to the language of the landscape as it has come to communicate a variety of messages.

When linguistic sign systems are used either as names, strings of sentences, or lexical items, the sign systems create a signifying system. Ikegami ([15], p. 1) calls such a system a "meaning-generating" system "observable in the cultural spheres they are dealing with" ([15], p. 1). The science (sometimes approach) dealing with signs, their systems, and general function in meaning making as well as interpretation is known as *semiotics*.

Broadly speaking, semiotics is a phenomenon in which something is used to stand in for something else. De Saussure [16] and Pierce [17] used "semiology" and "semiosis," respectively, which, in modern semiotics, are basically understood as semiotic processes. With reference to "semiosis," [15, 18] human beings operate and survive by evaluating as well as assigning significances and values to things, phenomena "around him *in relation to himself*"[3] ([15], p. 2). This means, human existence is determined by use of sign systems where the world becomes a network of signs represented, or (mis)represented, as a network of sign systems.

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[3] Emphasis original.

Semiotic knowledge teaches us that anything can function as a sign since signs do not have predetermined properties. This also means that buildings and their names do not have predetermined properties as such function as semiotic signs. However, the observable properties of signs are in fact defined in terms of their relation to what they represent. Johansen and Larsen ([19], p. 26) say signs are an "inconspicuous part of our everyday existence" revealing a triadic relation among sign, object, and interpretant. *Icons*, *indexes,* and *symbols* are given as signs in a bid to explain the conditions of representation (or otherwise) and meanings generated when signs function [17]. More broadly, therefore, we can borrow Braga and Mundy [20] who, in attempting a position on whether semiotics is a science or a method, say:

> *...semiotics can...be thought of as an applied science, in that it serves as an instrument for the study of empirical objects, or rather for the description and analysis of concrete products of language, whether they be a poem, a theorem, a piece of music, a utilitarian object, a rite, a political speech, a play, an art object, a movie, a TV program, etc. In short: each and every linguistic manifestation. (p. 115)*

From the above, we note that aspects from which meaning making especially through language and its use is fertile ground on which semiotics can be and has been used. Riffaterre (in Champagne ([21], p. 229)) used semiotics to analyze French poetry for the simple reason that "poems are ... assumed to be closed units of meaning ..." Hale [22] speaks of Umberto Eco as having used semiotics in the writing of his novels notably *The Name of the Rose* [23], *The Island of the day before* [24], and *The Mysterious Flame of Queen Loana* [25]. Cunningham [26] submitted the relevance of semiotics in educational psychology and, hence, speaks of educational semiotics [27]. Dunbar-Hall [28] used semiotics as an analytical method to study popular music. The list, therefore, is endless and cannot be exhausted here, hence, by extension, we can revoke semiotics in analyzing onomastic data.

4. Buildings and their names as semiotic resources

Architectural objects such as buildings and their names within a landscape form a language. They are units of a landscape language. Their creation and use create patterns and communicative sign systems. Furthermore, buildings and space place names derive their energy from one who designs, constructs, and names them. This means there are even power dynamics as well as circumstances or events that may be involved in the designing, constructing, as well as naming of a thing or a place. The colonized participated too in various ways in naming as well as erecting buildings from their worldview, thus creating places and spaces in response to new realities they now experienced.

Places, spaces, and objects (buildings), therein, follow the triad and a variety of signs [16, 17]. We find them either as *icons*, *symbols,* or *indexes* depending with the ultimate meaning intended. In other words, using or handling buildings, spaces, and their names as semiotic resources means *meaning* is not fixed all the time; hence, the ability of these spaces at one point becomes *icons* on the other *indices* and yet on the other being *symbols,* but all the time confined within the sign-signifier-signified conception. From this background, therefore, lodges and restaurants in Zimbabwe at the backdrop of the FTLRP assume a similar character.

The practices and systems observable in contemporary Zimbabwe mark out the definition and "ownership" of spaces created by the land reform program. The program empowered the locals to design, construct, and "name" these new spaces. Remember, to name is to control; thus, the locals who partook in setting up the said

lodges and restaurants also named new spaces as a reflection to the newly found economic opportunities. They have done so consciously aiming at creating indigenous spaces in order to evoke as well as communicate African sensibilities and their heritage.

5. Selected spaces and their description

In this section, I report as well as describe the architecture of some of the most prominent lodges and restaurants. While owners of these places are locals, the common names I observed as well as the outlook of their architecture had some resemblances distinguished mostly by locality and ownership. Both male and female locals have ownership of the spaces, and in some cases, this appeared to some extent to determine the naming patterns as shall be discussed below. The physical space location of the lodge or restaurant was noted to be the most distinguishing factor with ownership varying significantly. The following are some of the place names.

5.1 The village lodge

"The village lodge" was observed to be a common space for newly established lodges dotted in considerable outskirts of main towns and cities in Zimbabwe, mostly in Midlands and Mashonaland provinces. In terms of naming, what is key in this place name is the prefixing of the main economic activity "the lodge" with the lexical item "village." These spaces apart from offering overnight accommodation for travelers, they also have restaurants and conference rooms, hence, not only favoring for overnight accommodation, but also offering venues for the conduction of various other social activities such as wedding ceremonies, business workshops, and conferences. Owners did not hide their niche from the naming patterns as expressed grave desire in making a mark in the hospitality industry, and thus, the name "village lodge" was in itself suggestive of an African-centered ambient for the conduction of the above activities.

5.2 Chicken hut

"Chicken hut" in contrast to "the village lodge" was observed as primarily a restaurant or eating space where dominant meals served are poultry-centered one. Beyond offering restaurant facilities, hiring out of basic catering services are also offered for weddings and other gatherings, which may be staged far removed from their physical locality. Nonalcoholic beverages are also served with the said meals. The irony, however, lies in which the poultry-centered meals served are mostly based on foreign menus with Italian, French, and Greek as well as American being much popular. Physical location of the spaces was generally observed to be within the central business districts of the towns or cities.

5.3 *Pamuzinda* (The King's Kraal, King's Homestead)

"*Pamuzinda*" (The King's Kraal, King's Homestead) speaks volumes in terms of connotations to royalty. Like "chicken hut," these are mostly restaurant, but they have an extra niche to them which is the bar. Meals are mixed, with African traditional meals making the bulk of the dishes served, however, at the backdrop of a bar. One example is *Pamuzinda* at the outskirts of Harare, which is more of a bar and the space provides entertainment where even prominent Zimbabwean musicians are hired to perform for revelers

KwaMaiguru/KwaGulez (my brother's wife's place),
PaMaGumbo, (a place of one of the *Gumbo*/Leg totem),
PaNdari (the Shabeen),
PaMusha (at the homestead).

KwaMaiguru/KwaGulez (my brother's wife's place) like *Pamuzinda* while offering revelers with food and drink (alcoholic mostly), the most characteristic feature of these is the open spaceness. The same also goes for *PaMaGumbo* (a place of one of the *Gumbo*/Leg totem), *PaNdari* (the Shabeen), and *PaMusha* (at the homestead). The central aspect, however, is the food, where traditional meals and menus are used. These are read as "eating open spaces" the common feature of the meal being "braai," served with *Sadza* (thick porridge). Alcoholic beverages are also served, mostly beer. Revelers participate in self-entertainment especially in as far as music provision is concerned as much of it is played from their vehicles.

6. The African village "reconstructed": architecture and naming

The "village" concept reveals African cultural values, which include and designed to reveal a sense of community life, a sense of good human relations, a sense of the sacredness of life, a sense of hospitality, a sense of time, a sense of language, and proverbs to mention a few. The vernacular architecture and naming of the above places against the "village concept," hence, signify and symbolize much of this African village concept. To appreciate the African values attached to the "village," we note that in terms of the "sense of community life" offered by the African village; traditionally, Africans believe that the community is the custodian of the individual. In the material reference to the phrase, the individual must thus return or go to the "community center" or village square, which is a social, political, judicial, and religious center.

Of the view that, "today, many urban Africans coming from a village and argue that it is in the village where traditional African culture can still be found" ([6], p. 51), it follows the locals in Zimbabwe after the FTLRP by ridding on the village concept are in fact aiming at establishing as well as producing locality in order to redefine themselves as "actors who properly belong to a situated community of kin, neighbors, friends, and enemies" ([29], p. 179). Lucifer, in *Waiting for the Rain* [4], returns to the "village" before undertaking his journey abroad. Much of the class of western and African cultures as well as reflections of the dilemmas that Lucifer faces are revealed by his being back "home," the village, which in this case is the "community center."

Furthermore, in terms of the "sense of good human relations" attached to the village concept, we learn that relationship between individuals reveal their worth as human beings, hence, the art of dialog, discussion of problems, and searching for solutions through dialog. Within the spaces presented above such as *KwaMaiguru/KwaGulez* (my brother's wife's place), *PaMaGumbo*, (a place of one of the *Gumbo*/Leg totem), *PaNdari* (the Shabeen), and *PaMusha* (at the homestead), which are open spaces, revelers gather over traditional meals and drinks "dialoguing" as well as discussing social, political, and economic problems that became characteristic of the Zimbabwean situation especially at the dawn of the twenty-first century ushered in by the radical land reform program.

In social conversations cited above, identification of each other and general "totemic" use to reflect individual ties is common, traditional and brings about a sense of belonging. Hence, *PaMaGumbo* (a place of one of the *Gumbo*/Leg totem) is no accident as it is purely a place name heavily enshrined with totemic connotations. There is no doubt that Africans believe extensively and express their totemic connections. No wonder the then President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe,

characterized Africans who opposed his rule as lacking "totems" in direct reference to people of European descent, who had migrated to Zimbabwe or expressed connections as well as ties to be Zimbabwean.

In terms of *PaMaGumbo,* therefore, those of the *Gumbo*/Leg totem, as well as those who may have been brought into contact with those of the Leg totem (by marriage or otherwise), find homage and accommodation in such spaces from which they can also call them home. One, therefore, reads a systematic as well as deliberate choice of designing, constructing, and naming of the places and spaces not only to reveal the village concept, but also to market the place using a great deal of the dictates of the African heritage. Hence, not only has the village been reconstructed and economized, but its values also such as totems, modes of relations, and communications are molded deliberately to bring economic value to owners of the spaces as well as the urban community at large.

KwaMaiguru/KwaGulez (my brother's wife's place) signifies hospitality. *Maiguru* (Shona for one's brother's wife) or in urban lingo "*Gulez*" symbolize hospitality especially in as far as food and drink are concerned. The places while serving modern dishes, bias is mostly on traditional African dishes or menus from which revelers through consumption of the food reflect easiness as well as feel at home in "*Maiguru's*" sanctuary. What is interesting here is also the fact that ownership of *KwaMaiguru/ KwaGulez* and even *PaMaGumbo* are women, reflecting women's involvement as well as participation in economic establishments of these restaurants. *KwaMaiguru/ KwaGulez* and even *PaMaGumbo* are feminine, hence communicating connections to women of Africa and their role in cultural communication and basic operations of African life in general. Hence, owners of these spaces deliberately name them ridding heavily on traditional relationships as bound up within and by the village concept.
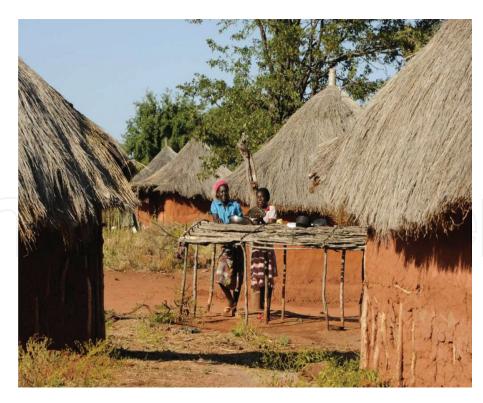
To reveal aspects of traditional African architecture characterizing the new spaces and how these have been enriched, an appeal to the structures is worthwhile. Hence, the physical structures marking the spaces are important. The African village, traditionally, is characterized by the "hut"; in other words, the hut is made up of wooden poles and clay soils are used to patch up the walling poles. In terms of the roof, again wooden poles are used and they are grass thatched. The buildings are conically shaped, and a collection of such huts in a defined space creates a "village" as exemplified in **Figure 2a** and **b**.

In modern spaces, the same concept (as shown in **Figure 1**) is also being used where grass thatched buildings (but now in brick and cement walls) are now the common feature (see **Figure 2a** and **b**). The shape or designs of the buildings are conical, and the roofs are grass thatched as exemplified in **Figure 2a** and **b**.

In some lodges, for instance, "the village lodge" in Gweru (Midlands Province) offers overnight accommodation, and rooms are "huts" (although equipped with modern furniture and other utilities inside as shown in **Figure 2c** and **d**). One sees dotted huts within the physical spaces where the lodges have been built. The rooms are also named (rather than numbered) after either game or totems. This represents much of the traditional African village and its surroundings.

Second, the food served involves traditional meats, insects, grasses, and vegetables. Utensils used are wooden symbolizing much of the African village practices on food consumption.Meals come in to complete the ends of the architecture and designs The outdoor spaces of the lodges are designed as if to place patrons in a "bush" bringing them close to "nature" as shown by **Figure 2e**. One has a sense of the natural ambience and for Africans such set-ups trigger nostalgia.

Furthermore, entertainment provided in the same spaces as well as the general ambient reflects African traditions as well. Traditional music, dances, and performances are organized for revelers especially in lodges and those restaurants located at the outskirts of towns and cities. These three characteristics enrich the buildings

Figure 1.
Typical African village made up of conically shaped and grass thatched grass.

and their names chosen as the spaces named should have characteristics that support the totality of that which is found in a traditional village.

The reconstruction of the African village is, thus, observed from a number of fronts. First, there is a deliberate designing and construction of the new spaces. The "huts" are conical in shape and now being constructed using modern building materials in tandem with changes that have happened over the years. While traditionally poles were used, due to advances in technology, modern bricks, and cement are now being used for walling. However, the roofing is made up of treated poles and is grass thatched. The processes involved in upholding the architecture under discussion reveal costs implications at the same time bringing about some economic activities involved in the construction and maintenance of such spaces. To exemplify this, we note that suppliers of food stuffs to be prepared such as insects, traditional grasses (and vegetables), meats, and so on have taken an economic drive.

During the construction phases themselves, the grass is bought, and treated tree poles are supplied and used with modern building materials such as cement and bricks to create an African ambient. Traditional dance groups as well as musicians of traditional music such as *mbira* all participate for a fee. While we read culture and heritage being displayed and consumed, the same culture and heritage has been economized through a reconstruction of the African village in such a manner that locals have found economic opportunities from selling their culture, this time not only to foreigners as tourists but also to their own kin. Visiting such spaces for local revelers is like a journey back to the village from which the pressures of the urban landscape are quenched. Colonialism witnessed a huge influx of Africans migrating to the cities for economic reasons [6]. Such migrations with time resulted in Africans having to move between the city and rural home quiet frequently. As it were,

> *...others resided in the cities for many years. But even those who spent their entire*
> *working life in the city intended eventually to return to their hometowns. This*
> *is reflected in the visits that many of the more permanent migrants made to the*
> *village, usually around Christmas. ([6], p. 62)*

Figure 2.
(a) Round huts built with modern materials, (b) grass thatched huts for a lodge, (c) a view from the inside modern hut, (d) how some of the lodges are advertised, and (e) the ambience and outdoor set-ups of the lodges.

But for Zimbabwe, while van den Bersselaar's [6] views are valid, even in historic Zimbabwe, the land reform program further redefined and created more opportunities for a greater percentage of the population to migrate to the city mostly for economic opportunities. In some cases, there is a total disconnection of some Zimbabweans from their rural homes especially under circumstances where none of their parents are surviving who in most cases are the elderly who may have retired to their rural homes. Hence, visiting newly created villages in the cities is thus in some cases symbolic journeys to their villages as well as their past. Further engaging the above, Saidi [30] observed that,

> *Given that Africans have for long battled with cultural erosion and identity crisis,*
> *African people exhibit and continue to reflect effects of spiritual tension with their*
> *culture and environment. Their connections to "mother earth" have over the years*
> *been loosened. However, with vernacular architecture and the recreation of the*
> *"new" landscape, it is hoped that the feeling of reconnection and returning to the*
> *source can be awakened as the concretization of the meanings of nature and aspects*
> *from their natural environment communicated through objects that trigger visual-*
> *ization, representation and symbolization of their heritage can foresee creation of*
> *a place where buildings act as an extension of the interior as well as cultural and*
> *spiritual space. (p. 13)*

This reflects a great deal of aspects of heritage conservation, which is being done architecturally. Heritage can be both tangible and intangible, and there is a thin line that divides the two. Tangible heritage refers to the material objects that are seen or those that can be touched. On the other hand, "intangible heritage" generally refers to that heritage, which is usually experienced. According to "intangible heritage, it is often regarded as traditional culture that reflects the identity of a particular nation or group."

From the above submission, the architecture of the new spaces discussed above has become the pivot for the tangible and intangible heritage more so that the traditional village concept has come to be conserved in a unique way and continues to be used in contemporary times. The conclusion that Hărmănescu and Enache [31] make in as far as vernacular knowledge in architecture is concerned come in handy. They say that,

> *The past offers growth recourses for the future through the knowledge gained. In this*
> *case, the future should recognize the past value offering identity of those who use*
> *and transmit knowledge. To ignore the past, the vernacular knowledge of a place*
> *means to waste resources knowledge of a place. (p. 415)*

This speaks to efforts far removed from the increasingly and deliberate strategies in the twenty-first century "to preserve and conserve natural areas to prevent their degradation and to halt the innumerable attacks to which the industrial model of economic development has subjected the planet" ([31], p. 29). While the world has been so grossed with conserving "natural areas" by enacting legislature for instance, there has not been interest in coming up with the strategies to conserve some important aspects, especially intangible heritage in Africa. For Zimbabwe, therefore, the vernacular architecture has come to play this conservation role of culture as the landscape heavily came under construction within terrains far removed from natural sites where international legislature may force the country to protect the landscape. It is also important to note that what is being conserved here are not the buildings per se but the traditional architectural designs, activities, relations, and cultural identities of spaces, thereby promoting consumption as well as "visualization, representation, and symbolization" ([30], p. 13) of Africa's habitant heritage.

Shetabi [32] points out that built heritage has an important role to play in them expressing tangible and intangible values. In other words, buildings, based on their architecture, names and objects therein, are visual links to the past, revealing how communities evolve socially, technologically, and culturally. The above discussed buildings and spaces are proof to this line of thinking in Zimbabwe. These efforts should be encouraged because if the world is experiencing "the largest wave of urban growth in history" ([33], p. 1) and that by 2050 and that by 2050, 66% of the world's population will reside in urban areas [33], it also means that the entire world

is currently experiencing challenges in terms of balancing cultural heritage conservation and the requirements of urbanization. Zhang et al. ([33], p. 1) are thus right to point out that

> *In this context, sustainable development, which is a complex, multidimensional, and evolving concept that encompasses environmental, economic, social, developmental, and cultural components, is highly valued worldwide.*

It follows, therefore, that Zimbabwe has begun to witness architectural maneuvers in seeking to balance environmental, economic, social, developmental, and cultural components in which mere citizens are taking a leading role as custodians of their heritage by turning their private spaces into cultural centers that house vernacular architecture.

7. Conclusion

Broadly speaking, the designs, constructions, and naming of lodges and restaurants after the FTLRP signify African traditional sensibilities recreated in the urban terrain. It further means that not everything has been lost in as far as cultural values are concerned among Zimbabweans. The "new" lodges and restaurants represent the African sensibilities and subsequently identity in a contemporary global village. In the same breath, we may, however, be forced to make an aside that if places, whose primary function is for business or money making, are constructed and named using traditional sensibilities, how far are the cultural values given center stage?

There is no doubt that constructions and naming of the places are also a marketing strategy where owners draw from their culture, and there is no sure way of ascertaining whether this is a purely economic drive, cultural drive, or both. Whether owners are conscious to cultural values or not, in what has been characterized by the likes of Ngugi [2] as Africa's problem being led by the culturally eroded and neo-colonial elites, there is evidence of attempts to recreate the traditional African family based on the village concept. From the nature of buildings and their names, it cannot be divorced that locals share and communicate the traditional past through physical objects, space, and the various aspects therein such as artifacts, foods, music, and dance.

Perhaps, this is so because there has been a realization that indigenous identity is important for the survival of any people. Hence, the repackaging of new spaces is not only for cultural survival, but also for economic redefinition supported by heritage through vehicles such as vernacular architecture and names of these public spaces like lodges and restaurants. These are efforts in Zimbabwe to "Africanize" the urban terrain. Therefore, urban buildings and their names as well as studies of the same indeed can help greatly in packaging indigenous knowledge systems for the survival of African heritage. We note that the urban landscape/spaces can actually store and communicate the heritage as well as history of the African people if systematic packaging and support is rendered to initiatives such as discussed above. We should be on the lookout, however, that at the center of it, all should be value exerted on culture and heritage since tagging monetary figures on traditional values may see traditions being consumed without pedigree desires for conservation, and this may be detrimental to that which has been left of the African heritage.

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