

**JUSTICE AND THE URBAN POOR IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE:**

**AN ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE**

by

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## **Abstract**

Poverty has continued to be an enormous challenge for Africa. Immoral political decisions and tactics have led to the continued suffering of the landless poor in the city of Harare. With no consideration for the dignity of people, the government of Zimbabwe through Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Reject Filth) demolished shelters belonging to the poor in the city a decade and half ago. To this day, most of the victims of this destruction still lack adequate accommodation. The majority urban poor have been excluded from the community and inhabit shanty towns around Harare. Deprived of justice, the poor are alienated from their right to land, nourishment and dignified life. This complete disregard for life and African community values ought to be challenged. Ubuntu moral theory presents necessary guiding principles for human progress that achieves genuine harmony and equality among all people. In light of the experiences of deadly but preventable poverty in Harare, the will-to-live for all requires confirmation. Every human being is endowed with irrevocable intrinsic worth. The elimination of poverty requires practical philosophical resolutions that are driven by sincere respect for human life.

## Introduction

The question of urban poverty is a huge problem for most countries particularly in Africa. Harare presents one such example where not only the numbers but also the levels of urban poverty have continued to rise to this day. There is no doubt that Zimbabwean politics has contributed immensely to the continued suffering of the people including the most vulnerable who constitute the urban poor. Homeless with no formal employment, the urban poor in Harare are struggling to survive. As early as 2005 the *United Nations Report of Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe* argued that in a progression known as the ‘urbanization of poverty’, an increased number of people are searching for better living standards in towns and in cities such as Harare. Overwhelmed with the crisis of economy and the urban poor, and driven by other ulterior motives most of which had to do with politics and power, the government of Zimbabwe initiated Operation Murambatsvina in 2005 a program that led to demolition of structures considered to be illegal (UN Report 2005: 7). Operation Murambatsvina left the poor homeless with scanty means of survival. Large groups of people began to settle on land not serviced around Harare for example, at Hopley Farm from the year 2005 (Zindoga and Kawadza, 2014). It is also important to note that with time, some of the shanty settlements were encouraged by politicians in their effort to have masses of supporters in various areas of the city for their own selfish quest for political office. Bogus housing cooperatives owned by individuals who were politically connected to influential political leaders also made the situation worse for the urban poor. For almost two decades, the rule of law in Zimbabwe has been passive for groups of people who have been politically connected to influential political rulers. Hence, even government land around the city ended up in private hands through corruption. Living in areas not serviced around Harare, the lives of the urban poor are marked by daily hardships. The urban poor

inhabit slums that are poorly located, with no proper schools, no easy access to clean water and which lack other essentials such as properly constructed sewerage.

## **Research problem**

The continued suffering of the urban poor in Harare is a challenge requiring attention. In the absence of justice, the urban poor are robbed of human dignity. The urban poor have been left homeless beginning from the Operation Murambatsvina in 2005. Also, thousands of those who used to work in both the formal and informal sectors have lost their livelihoods as a result of the economic meltdown experienced over the past two decades. The suffering of the urban poor has continued to increase due to this melting down of the economy of Zimbabwe. The problem of marginalization faced by the urban poor in Harare and specifically their exclusion from land as a birthright has not been given due attention. Hence, an ethical and philosophical assessment of this problem inspired by the theory and philosophy of ubuntu will be undertaken. Ramose (1999: 52) argues that, “to be a human being is to affirm one’s humanity by recognizing the humanity of others [...].”

This research seeks to argue a case for justice and safeguarding of human dignity for the urban poor in Harare. It lays down arguments that illustrate how the government of Zimbabwe has neglected and even perpetuated injustices against the urban poor beginning specifically from the crisis of Operation Murambatsvina. The examination concludes by suggesting possible solutions to address the injustices.

## **Philosophical paradigm adopted**

According to Beaney (2014), method is, “The art of arranging a series of thoughts properly, either for discovering the truth when we do not know it, or for proving to others what we already know.” This study critically argues a case for justice and protection of human dignity for the urban poor of Harare. Hence, the study affirms Gyekye’s (1997: 7) argument, that investigating the African experience is an authentic task of philosophy. Using conceptual analysis, the study analyzes the concept of justice taking into consideration the experiences of the urban poor in Harare. The examination of challenges faced by the urban poor begins with negative consequences of the notorious Operation Murambatsvina - a euphemism for the banishment of the poor from Harare in total disregard for their rights and dignity as people.

It is essential to underscore the argument that philosophy is, “a critical and systematic inquiry into the fundamental ideas or principles underlying human thought, conduct, and experience” (Gyekye 1997: 5). Philosophers inexorably grapple with challenges arising from human experiences and yearnings of diverse life plans. Gyekye (1997: 8) argues that, paying attention to experience is essential for the determinations of philosophical explorations to be pertinent to the resolution of problems being experienced in communities. Maladies such as poverty threaten the thriving of people in Africa and therefore call for definitive measures. There is no doubt that an encounter with African philosophy is capable of enhancing genuine constructive change, one that leads all individuals of Africa to become essentially conscious of, “their own interests, their own methods and strategies for recovery, for redress and for political and social reconstruction and economic development” (Schepen and Haenen, 2019: 336).

Gyekye (1997: 7) asserts that, “conceptual analysis is the critical and systematic examination of the fundamental ideas underlying human experience involving the clarification of those ideas.” That this is essentially the main task of philosophy needs to be emphasized. The cultural or political intellectual circumstances are of paramount importance to conceptual analysis. This leads Gyekye (1997: 7), to stress that philosophical or conceptual analysis is carried out without isolating the communal or historical or cultural circumstances. For this reason, the Nigerian philosopher, Oguejiofor (2019: 108) is correct that, to refer to *African* philosophy is an implicit declaration that philosophizing in the African continent ought to, “be attuned to its existential context or it must lose its value.” Consequently, philosophers cannot shy away from confronting challenges that bedevil their communities. Hence, examining the injustices being experienced by the urban poor in Harare is an authentic task of philosophy. A philosophical investigation pursues arguments that elucidate challenges and thereby assist in their resolution (Gyekye, 1997: 11). The problem of poverty in Africa has unremittingly degraded the dignity of numerous people.

Grounded on the indigenous politico-ethical principles of ubuntu, the chapters successively lay down arguments that illustrate how the government of Zimbabwe has neglected and even perpetuated injustices against the urban poor beginning specifically from the crisis of Operation Murambatsvina.

Chapter one provides the historical context within which the current problem for the poor in Harare is to be understood. This chapter provides an exposition of how the poverty is a direct consequence of poor politics, and a willful disregard for the humanity of the citizens of Harare.

Through Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Reject Filth) in 2005 a large number of people were left homeless. The inhumane eviction of the people triggered a downward spiral in the living standards of these people from which the majority have never recovered. This is a challenge that is yet to be addressed. From this standpoint, the chapter will demonstrate that the poverty in the city is a product of politics and a problem of justice.

Chapter two provides a philosophical examination of the historico-political and economic issues that have driven and continue to drive the growth of urban poverty in Harare. It begins with a conceptual analysis of meanings of poverty and urban poverty in particular. Although focus is on the current situation, the chapter traces the roots of urban poverty to the history of colonialism and segregation policies which were perpetuated into independence under the new political leadership through the reinforcement of colonial city divisions using social class among the blacks themselves. Urban poverty in Harare deepened in the past two decades due to the continued economic problems facing Zimbabwe.

Chapter three focuses on the notion of human dignity. It considers the intrinsic value of every human being and how this ought to be a directing principle for the establishment of justice, for the urban poor in Harare. A philosophical examination of the concept of human dignity is provided. Degrading living conditions and the deficiency of basic needs is antithetical to demands of inherent dignity. The chapter affirms the importance of human life and justice in the community. Seeking justice and denouncing every sort of injustice against every member of the community are essential prerequisites of the promotion of human life everywhere including in Africa.

Chapter four is an ethical critique of the condition of poverty in Harare. It focuses on the exposition of ubuntu and the debilitating and untenable moral evil of poverty. The current crisis of poverty calls for indigenous moral values and philosophies. Ubuntu, an unmistakably prime African moral theory endows a positive comprehension of politics and power as the will-to-live; and accordingly a positive way to confront the problems faced by society.

Chapter five presents a philosophical argument for practical possibilities of envisioning a city without poverty. This envisioning entails eliminating different forms of poverty, establishing dignity and justice for the suffering poor in the city of Harare. Appealing to the work of Amartya Sen and Mohammed Yunus on creating a world without poverty, practical resolutions offered by the chapter include the necessity to enrich the poor through enhancing their capabilities. Fair involvement in production and development are considered as vital resolutions in establishing a metropolis without poverty. For justice to flourish in the community, respect for dignity, harmony and equal opportunities for all people is required.

Chapter six is a brief conclusion of this research. It summarises the arguments presented in this philosophical study.

## **Chapter One:**

### **Poverty: A Creature of Politics and a Question of Justice.<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter provides the historical context within which the current problem for the poor in Harare is to be understood. By presenting the historical context of the problems facing the urban poor in Harare, the chapter is an exposition of how the poverty is a direct consequence of poor politics, and a willful disregard for humanity of the citizens of Harare. Through Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Reject Filth) in 2005 a large number of people were left homeless. The inhumane eviction of the people triggered a downward spiral in the living standards of these people from which the majority have never recovered. This is a challenge that is yet to be addressed. From this point of view, the chapter will demonstrate that the poverty in the city is a product of politics and a problem of justice.

#### **The injustice of Operation Murambatsvina**

Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Reject Filth) took place in 2005 and left many poor people of Harare homeless. Justice has still not been rendered to the urban poor who have continued to suffer in this city. Without being able to claim their right to justice, the poor are neither able to access properly developed land nor acquire decent housing in Harare. Transparency International (2011: 4) argues that through political corruption, prominent individuals grabbed

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<sup>1</sup> The title of this chapter is borrowed from an article by Ramose, M. B, (2004). 'Poverty: A Creature of Politics and a Question of Justice', in *International Journal of Humanistic Studies*, vol. 3: Accessed 30 September 2018: <<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/ijhs/article/view/32481> >, 36 – 53.

the land from the poor people through forced expulsions. Even though the government set up the Zimbabwean Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) in 2004, political constraints continue to hinder achievement of genuine development in the country. There is need to question deceitful political tactics that have been used as a weapon of perpetuating poverty among the desperate poor in Harare. Firstly, it is crucial to provide the historical background to the problem facing the urban poor in Harare beginning with Operation Murambatsvina which led to the destruction of numerous shelters considered illegal by the government of Zimbabwe.

After Zimbabwe got independence in 1980 not much effort was invested in the issue of housing for the poor and distribution of urban land in Harare. The International Commission of Jurists (1976: 12) points out that The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 in then Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, created a 'white area' that gave colonial settlers both geographical and economic advantages. The local African inhabitants of the then Rhodesia were not allowed to occupy land that was inhabited by the colonial settlers. The change to majority rule in 1980 led to the abandoning of colonial racial restrictions to the 'Right to the City' (UN Report, 2005: 20). Hence, huge numbers of people began to relocate from rural areas to urban areas. The UN Report (2005: 20) highlights that there was a rise of urban population in Zimbabwe from 23% in 1982 to 30% by the early 1990s. However, the government of Zimbabwe has not been fully able to meet the rising demand for housing in Harare. Unjustly, the urban poor have been abandoned to find means of survival by themselves. The right to land has been met with an unjust situation that does not allow them to own properly serviced land in Harare nor to possess properly constructed housing structures. Ultimately, the urban poor in Harare were left with no choice but to live in illegally constructed structures. The increase of urban population in Harare from 1980 led to the rise of illegal structures used as shelter by the homeless urban poor. Therefore, due to

increasing urbanization from 1980 Harare had seen a massive increase in illegal structures sheltering the poor.

Although, the government of Zimbabwe had initiated the Transitional National Development Plan in 1983 (Housing International, 2019) the desired results were not achieved. The Transitional National Development Plan was to focus on assisting poor families to own their own houses. “However, the implementation of this policy did not achieve the hoped-for results and housing co-operatives did not receive much support” (Housing International, 2019). Affirming the challenge facing the urban poor in Harare, the National Housing Delivery Policy of 2000 acknowledged a growing backlog of over one million housing units in Zimbabwe (United Nations, 2005). The Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing (Veritas Zimbabwe, 2018), is tasked to ensure that there is provision of housing and other services. While such a ministry does exist, like all other government operations over the past two decades, it has not made any difference as a result of the deteriorating political and economic climate in the country. Between the years 2000 and 2001 there was a radical land reform programme that targeted farms in Zimbabwe (Moyo, 2010: 258). However, this land reform did not consider the landless poor of Harare. The urban poor of Harare continued to struggle to access decent housing in the city.

To combat the increasing urbanization in Harare, the government of Zimbabwe initiated Operation Murambatsvina in 2005. Using colonial-era legislation and policies such as the Regional Town and Country Planning Act 1976 [Chapter 29:12] (‘Planning Act’) and the Housing Standards Control Act 1972 Chapter 29:08 the government of Zimbabwe proceeded its

hasty scheme of demolishing all structures considered to be illegal (UN Report, 2005: 57). However, this was a vicious act that led to severe exclusion and isolation of the poor population of Harare. After Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980 with President Robert Mugabe as leader, United Nations Report (2005: 15) notes that several crucial and unresolved challenges became the root causes of potential conflicts and, “arguably, laid the grounds for the circumstances which allowed for a disastrous clean-up operation to take place.” Such unresolved challenges included the land question and governance. Hence, ignoring the plight of the poor, through Operation Murambatsvina, the government of Zimbabwe demolished the shelter that served as the only sanctuary for the urban poor of Harare.

‘Operation Murambatsvina’ is a euphemism for the expulsion of the poor people from Harare in total disregard of their rights as a people. The *United Nations Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe* (2005: 7) writes that, “On 19 May 2005 with little or no warning, the Government of Zimbabwe embarked on an operation to ‘clean-up’ its cities.” This operation to clean up the cities got to be popularly known as ‘Operation Murambatsvina’. According to Ncube, Bate and Tren (2005: 4), Operation Murambatsvina is more correctly translated as ‘Operation Drive out the Filth.’ With the assistance of police and the army, the government of Zimbabwe destroyed illegal structures in cities around the country including the capital city of Harare. This was an agonizing experience for the poor people across the country but the hardest hit being Harare. According to UN Report (2005: 7), almost seven hundred thousand people in cities of Zimbabwe lost a building used as a home or source of income. The demolition also targeted structures used by vendors and other informal traders. Operation Murambatsvina robbed the poor of their means of survival. Being unable to claim neither land nor any other

space, these multitudes of people became not only homeless but also suffered the absence of basic necessities such as clean water, food and sanitation. It is essential to highlight that through Operation Murambatsvina, “The vast majority of those directly and indirectly affected were the poor and disadvantaged segments of the population” (UN Report, 2005: 7).

The demolition of illegal structures used as homes by the urban poor through Operation Murambatsvina left numerous people homeless and stranded. Ncube, Bate and Tren (2005: 6) assert that, “During President Mugabe’s Operation Drive Out the Filth, substantial brick homes as well as informal settlements housing the poor were bulldozed to the ground.” Here, one can ask if the move to destroy structures used by the urban poor can be justified as the only possible remedy for the rise in urbanization of Harare. Due to the economic crisis that was being experienced in the country at that point following from the consequences of the controversial land redistribution policy, a number of the urban poor of Harare had spent a considerable portion of their small income to construct their homes.

Those left homeless from the Operation Murambatsvina relocated to the margins of Harare on land not serviced and not legally acquired from town councils. Some politicians also took great advantage of the desperate situation of the displaced families and re-allocated them land in strategic areas in order to garner favorable votes during the election periods. However, these new marginalized settlements were established on land that lacked essential services. Places like Gazebo and Hopley currently hold huge numbers of the urban poor of Harare yet there is no significant development that has been committed to such places. Injustice has prevailed against

these urban poor who cannot afford to acquire legally serviced and developed land. The urban poor have continued to flock into shanty towns of Harare to establish their homes.

The devastation of Operation Murambatsvina affected all groups from the destitute, the aged, those in poor health and little children. A number of the affected people were transported to Caledonia Farm, “a holding camp outside Harare [...] for more than 3,000 people” (Ncube, Bate and Tren, 2005: 6). There are no properly constructed learning institutions in areas that people affected by Operation Murambatsvina occupied. In Hopley for example, a number of school children walk several kilometers to schools in Chitungwiza while in Gazebo the pupils have to walk a considerable distance to reach schools in high density suburbs of Mabvuku and Tafara. Hospitals and clinics are also a challenge for them. Hence, Operation Murambatsvina displaced the urban poor into the fringes of the Harare community. Without properly functioning hospitals and clinics, residents of slums around Harare face great challenges in fighting against any form of ailment. Haakonssen (1993: 192) writes that, “The rules of justice form the basis of any significant scale of organized social living.” Demolitions of Operation Murambatsvina point out an injustice against the landless poor of Harare. The inhumane eviction of the urban poor from their shelter through Operation Murambatsvina has aggravated the suffering of these already marginalized people and this is a challenge that is yet to be addressed.

Going as far back as 2003 *The Habitat Agenda Goals and Principles, Commitments and the Global Plan of Action* (UN, 2003: no. 11) pointed out that a greater number of people than ever before are living in complete poverty and without sufficient shelter. To this day nothing seems to have changed particularly in Zimbabwe. It is essential to emphasize that, “Everyone has the

right to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing, housing, water and sanitation, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions” (UN Habitat Agenda, 2003: no. 11). In the shanty towns of Harare, it is noticeable that the poor continue to be at risk of epidemics such as cholera and typhoid, outbreaks related to unhygienic hazardous environments (UNICEF, 2017).

The United Nations’ Report of Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe (2005: 83) affirms that UN-HABITAT, through its Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and Good Urban Governance, has put in place ways and tools to assist developing nations like Zimbabwe to deal with disordered rapid urbanization without violating rights of concerned people. Although, UN-HABITAT has the proficiency to guide cities, “towards sustainable human settlements development, and this is needed in most African countries, its capacity is still limited to deal with the task because of inadequate funding” (UN Report, 2005: 80). The urban poor continue to be neglected and excluded in development. Affirming this, UN-HABITAT (Assessment Report, 2017: 5) argues that currently, “there is no reliable assessment of the numbers in urban poverty, however – those who face serious deprivation tend to remain undercounted.” UN-HABITAT (Assessment Report, 2017: 14) adds that, a number of countries are not prepared to handle present and looming challenges of urbanization. There is, “[...] growing manifestation of humanitarian crises and emergency situations in urban areas” (Assessment Report, 2017: 14). For example, the urban poor in Harare continue to suffer from the predicament of ever-growing poverty.

The Habitat Agenda is a worldwide call to action at all ranks (UN Habitat Agenda, 2003: no. 21). In doing so, the Habitat Agenda (UN, 2003: no. 21), gives, within a structure of goals and values and commitments, “a positive vision of sustainable human settlements - where all have adequate shelter, a healthy and safe environment, basic services, and productive and freely chosen

employment”. Hence, the Habitat Agenda guides all endeavors to turn the vision of sustainable human settlements into reality. In 2012 to measure the sustainability of towns, UN-Habitat created a tool called ‘The City Prosperity Index’. Due to demands from a number of governments across the world, UN-Habitat transformed City Prosperity Index into City Prosperity Initiative (The City Prosperity Initiative, 2016: 4). This is an initiative that offers developing countries like Zimbabwe, the possibility of creating indicators and baseline information essential in making developmental decisions. UN-Habitat (The City Prosperity Initiative, 2016: 3), argues that, “poor planning, the absence of effective governance and legal frameworks, fragile institutions, low capacity of local authorities, and the lack of a sound monitoring mechanism, diminishes the possibility to promote long-term sustainable urban development.” This has been one of the challenges facing the government of Zimbabwe. There has not been proper planning and governance that has sincerely taken into consideration the plight of the urban poor in Harare. Hence, the poor in shanty towns around Harare live a life of grueling hardships without ever being able to fully claim their dignity and the right to proper housing and serviced land.

In addition to the vicious effects of Operation Murambatsvina, the two decades-long crisis in politics, corruption, unregulated housing cooperatives and land barons led to illegal settlements mushrooming around Harare. The illegal structures rose due to increased demand for cheaper accommodation. Poor families could neither manage to buy developed land nor legally build their own houses in Harare.

On the other hand, a few rich individuals have been able to buy large pieces of land that they then develop into portioned residential stands. Under private companies such as Fidelity Company and Kennan Properties, the rich have been able to get huge pieces of land around Harare (Kennan Properties, 2019).

In response to the international fall-out arising from Operation Murambatsvina, the government of Zimbabwe began a programme called Operation Garikai (Operation live well) to rebuild and reconstruct (UN Report, 2005: 9). This scheme was begun as an effort to construct decent housing structures. However, as the government had very limited resources and capacity to meet the needs of the homeless population, nothing much took place. The government's poor planning, corruption, partisan politics and looting contributed to the failure of the programme. One can question the commitment of the government and the sincerity in seeing Operation Garikai succeed. The poor have remained poor and, in some cases have become poorer. The research statistics of UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Flash Appeal: Zimbabwe, 2019: 8), affirm that slum dwellers in Harare continue to lack basic services such as water and sanitation.

While the urban poor in slums of Harare continue to suffer from the devastating effects of Operation Murambatsvina, a few richer individuals and companies have been able to purchase large pieces of land in Harare. A piece of land in Harare measuring for example twenty acres can be for as much as three and half million United States dollars (Kennan Properties, 2019). Such large pieces of this urban land are then portioned into highly priced residential stands. For example, a piece of land measuring three hundred square meters in Southview costs around

twelve thousand American dollars, and renting a whole house in suburbs such as Greendale costs as much as two thousand five hundred American dollars per month (Gatsby Real Estate, 2019). The wealthy individuals buy such large pieces of land and then partition them into smaller residential suburbs that are serviced with water and sewerage. In the month of July 2018 Kennan Properties advertised Sunway City low density suburb land being sold for fifty-six thousand American dollars for each small partitioned residential stand (Kennan Properties, 2018). These residential suburbs cannot be afforded by most of the marginalized unemployed people of Harare. Comparatively lower rentals are in high density suburbs such as Hatcliffe, Budiriro and Mufakose. Renting a full house in Hatcliffe costs around three hundred American dollars (Darwin Properties, 2019). The urban poor of Harare are neither able to afford buying such land nor renting any of these properly built accommodations. As a result of the unavailability of affordable housing schemes, a number of people are building their own homes in slums.

### **Concept of Justice**

Justice is a fundamental pillar for the establishment of a harmonious community that enables each individual's entitlements and property to be regarded with due evenhandedness. According to Aristotle, justice demands one to live blamelessly with others in the community (*Nichomachean Ethics*, 5.1 1129b30–1130a13). Distributive and rectificatory justice are different ways to bring equality among a group of people. Transgressions in the community require rectificatory justice for resolutions. Distributive justice is realized in the dispensation of goods in the society (*Nichomachean Ethics*, V.2 1130b31-2).

Justice calls for equal consideration for people of the same characteristics (Mayhew, 2009: 532). In the community, a situation of inequality is reflected by an imbalance of what individuals have. Mayhew (2009: 532) points out that scholars who are in favor of the Aristotelian thoughts are for the view that not all individuals in the community should be granted authority. These scholars argue that leaders ought to have a high degree of wisdom in comparison to the masses of people. This is because achieving a well functioning community requires discernment skills. In times of challenge, a good leader should be capable of examining the situation without bias and be able to establish good judgment. Good leadership cannot be detached from being able to reach blameless judgment. However, Mayhew (2009: 532) argues that because every person is capable of reasoning, political leadership should not be entrusted to a few individuals. All individuals capable of properly reasoning deserve the opportunity to lead the community.

When one harms or immorally treats the other in the community then corrective justice is required. Young (2009: 462), points out that corrective justice reestablishes parity that would have existed before harmful conduct had taken place. Each person in the community deserves justice. Hence, no individual has supreme power over how people should be treated in the community. One's status or rank in the community cannot be used as a justification of committing misconduct in the community. Enabling the members of the community to reacquire what belongs to them is a means of achieving justice (Lebakeng, 2019: 7). Hence, justice can never be completely achieved until the unfortunate and suffering people in the community possess what they ought to have. Harmony and genuine development require sincere adherence to philosophy of justice. Both distributive and corrective forms of justice are essential for the context of the urban poor in Harare. There is need to correct the injustices being faced by urban poor in the city. This cannot be accomplished without establishing an African community that

honors human dignity. The urban poor in Harare are members of the community who have been denied their right to land and a dignified life. Injustices of severe poverty and seclusion are political ills that are persistently confronting the urban poor.

### **Political corruption in the city of Harare**

Transparency International (2011: 4) argues that due to unjust politics, illegitimate actions on the acquisition of land, “by elected leaders, public officials and the private sector may go unpunished as key national institutions are co-opted to serve the interests of the few.” According to Corruption Watch (2016), land is an essential campaigning instrument used by the ruling political party, ZANU PF in order to win elections. Land has not only been used as a political instrument in rural farm resettlements as in early 2000s, but over the years Harare has also been targeted by a number of political leaders. Due to rapid urbanization coupled with the housing challenges, demand for urban land has been intensified. This demand for land has made it a profitable political tool that is used unjustly against the urban poor of Harare. Again, while the population of Zimbabwean towns has continued to increase, it is essential to note that Harare holds most of the country’s urban population (World Population Review, 2019). Therefore, Harare plays an important part in political elections. Politicians are often competing for leadership positions in diverse areas around Harare. Urban vicinities are habitually strongholds for opposition political parties like the Movement for Democratic Change, now called Movement for Democratic Change Alliance. Most youths who have moved to Harare in search of a better life end up suffering from economic challenges and unemployment. The unemployed youth have been targeted by political leaders in Harare (Corruption Watch, 2016). Taking advantage of

the urban poor, the ruling party political leaders have bonded access to land in Harare with politics.

Corruption Watch (2016) points out that, in order to win back confidence from people, ZANU PF political leaders have decided to dish out about one thousand hectares of land in Harare and in Bulawayo to a chosen number of youths, notwithstanding this going against the set of laws pertaining to the acquisition of land through legally approved procedures accepted by the city council. In this way, without involving Harare municipal council and experienced land developers, Harare is constantly experiencing a formation of disorderly housing settlements on land lacking crucial developments such as proper roads or sewerage. Corruption Watch (2016) asserts that instead of resolving the urban land catastrophe through cooperating with local town councils to eliminate the excessive housing backlog, political leaders of the ruling party have devised their own way of distributing land in Harare in order to win polls. Belonging to the ruling party has therefore been a guarantee of accessing urban land easily. Mutondoro (2018: 4) affirms this by pointing out that, by controlling urban land and housing permits, political leaders in Zimbabwe manage and influence the outcome of elections. The ruling party in Zimbabwe has a record of manipulating available resources such as land for its own benefit. Therefore, Transparency International (2015: 3) argues that corruption is also reflected through an extremely entrenched structure of political patronage.

Transparency International (2011: 2) argues for the importance of appropriate land governance and the political economy of land in developing a country. However, corruption has infiltrated all essential segments of the political economy of Zimbabwe (Mutondoro, 2018: 3). The

acquisition of the urban land has been negatively affected by corruption in the politics of the country. Mutondoro (2018: 3) adds that tackling corruption in the situation of urban housing has taken an insignificant position on the policy agenda of the Zimbabwean government. The current government led by President Emmerson Mnangagwa is yet to take meaningful measures in addressing Harare urban land corruption. Transparency International (2011: 4) also argues that the absence of transparency and accountability leads to the establishment of political corruption in the land sector. For Mutondoro (2018: 3), the present government just as the previous one, is still “linked to noticeable and evident factors such as housing demolitions, land barons, illegal housing cooperatives, as well as multiple allocation of stands.” The issue of corruption in urban land acquisition continues to disadvantage the poor in the city. Corruption in the country has led to a selected few political leaders to illegally own and sell land in Harare at the expense of poor landless people. Mutondoro (2018: 10) argues that, remarkably this trend has been going on for several years in Zimbabwe. For example, the government of Zimbabwe received the Chitungwiza Land Audit Report around the year 2015. However, it has not taken advantage of the findings of that report on Chitungwiza to establish justice concerning irregularities on land allocation. Therefore, the lack of significant measures on the Land Audit Report on Chitungwiza which pointed out that corrupt political leaders working with housing cooperatives and council authorities allocated more than fifteen thousand stands illegally, is confirmation of how the government of Zimbabwe has not been justly performing its duty on urban land (Mutondoro, 2018: 8).

UN Economic and Social Council (1998: no. 3) argues that poverty is “a denial of choices and opportunities, it is a violation of human dignity.” The general deterioration of the rule of law in

Zimbabwe was a contributing factor that led to the crisis of disregarding the human dignity of the poor (UN Report, 2005: 56). Hence, the Government of Zimbabwe has not been committed to carrying out its obligation to guard the dignity of the populace, especially the urban poor of Harare. A city's land use patterns have essential bearing on the conduciveness of constructing settlements, principally for the helpless and poor people facing impediments in accessing housing and in determining the prospect of their shelter (UN Habitat Agenda, 2003: 8). The planning and management of land in the city of Harare has not ensured the dignity of the urban poor in the city. Poverty leads to the failure of individuals to participate successfully in society. Such impoverishment results in uncertainty, helplessness and exclusion of people from society. UN Economic and Social Council (1998: no. 3) adds that, poverty leads to vulnerability to aggression and it frequently entails inhabiting peripheries and fragile environments such as the shanty towns developing around Harare.

For Ramose (2002: 12), a person does not require the authorization of another to guarantee one's continued existence. Every human being has dignity that demands due justice. The desire to continue to exist is natural. For that reason, the naturalness of continued existence points to the fact that poverty is not natural. This means that the burdensome poverty crippling the lives of the population of the poor in Harare is human made. According to Ramose (2002: 13), poverty "is an analytical category for use by the economist or social scientist to define and determine an artificial relation to the natural sources for survival." Hence, one can argue that the occurrence of deadly poverty in Zimbabwe from the period of colonization is an illustration of poverty as artificial. There is therefore an urgent obligation to confront evils facing the poor as a result of poverty imposed on them.

Northern suburbs of Harare such as Borrowdale, Bluff Hill and Mount Pleasant developed by the colonial settlers before Zimbabwe's independence have remained for the rich and are inaccessible to the urban poor of the city. Just as The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 disallowed Africans in the then Rhodesia to acquire land in areas set aside for the Western conquerors (International Commission of Jurists Report, 1976: 12), the urban poor of Harare are precluded from accessing prime developed land due to poverty. Development in Africa shows a concentrated and seemingly unalterable tendency to reinvent and reproduce the accomplishments of the colonial captors. African politicians are yet to get rid of their representation as titular conquerors in the service of the former inheritors and beneficiaries of invasion in the unjust battles of the conquering of Africa (Ramose, 2002: 15).

*The Habitat Agenda Goals and Principles, Commitments and the Global Plan of Action* (UN, 2003: 47) highlights the need to develop and support the placement of an enhanced land-management system that deals expansively with increasing urban demands for shelter. Contrary to this goal, the inhumane challenges facing the landless urban poor of Harare have not been given due consideration. Harare still lacks genuine development that focuses on the urban poor. How can such life threatening poverty be given inadequate attention and consideration? The ways in which African politicians deal with life threatening poverty reflect the politicians' incompetence and how their prime concerns are not in tune with the reality of the suffering population. Not paying due attention to the magnitude of poverty by the African elite is a reassertion, possibly unconsciously, "of the non-African stereotype that to be African is to be without reason" (Ramose, 2002: 18). UNICEF (Zimbabwe National Budget Brief, 2018) notes

that Zimbabwe is one of the nations with limited transparency in its budgeting process since citizens' participation is not adequately coordinated. That means the real amounts that are budgeted for the development of the city of Harare will not be easily accessed. Political corruption continues to hamper development everywhere including in urban areas.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the historical background to the problems of the urban poor in Harare beginning with Operation Murambatsvina which led to the destruction of numerous shelters considered illegal by the government of Zimbabwe. Questionable political tactics have perpetuated poverty among the landless poor in Harare. This historical background to the challenge facing the poor revealed that the Harare city council has not been independent enough to play its role of monitoring the development of land around Harare. Ramose (1999: 52) argues that "to be a human being is to affirm one's humanity by recognizing the humanity of others [...]." A multitude of poor people became homeless and suffered the absence of basic provisions through Operation Murambatsvina. The poverty is a direct result of poor politics, a willful disregard for humanity, and an issue of justice. Marginalized and excluded from decent housing, the urban poor live in shanty towns that have mushroomed around Harare.

## **Chapter Two: Urban Poverty in Harare**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides a philosophical examination of the political and economic issues that have driven and continue to drive the growing urban poverty in Harare. In order to achieve this, the chapter will pay special attention to an analysis of the concept of urban poverty. Thousands of Harare inhabitants who used to work in both the formal and informal sectors have lost their livelihoods as a result of the economic meltdown experienced in the past two decades in Zimbabwe. For example an estimated number of 60,000 people live in Hopley Farm, one of the several informal undeveloped settlements that have mushroomed around the city (Mujuru, 2018). The majority of people in both formal and informal settlements have limited access to adequate housing, food, health care and other necessities.

### **The Problem of urban poverty**

What is urban poverty? The meaning or definition of urban poverty is contentious. Wratten (1995: 12) points out that the meaning of poverty is rarely made clear and the importance of urban poverty as a unique theoretical category is often not challenged. Poverty appears in various distinct shapes and forms; “absolute and relative poverty, chronic and transitory poverty, rural and urban poverty, youth and elderly poverty or voluntary and involuntary poverty” (Graft and Schweiger, 2013: 3). A number of definitions of poverty focus on the deficiency of basic provisions needed for human survival and wellbeing. Yet, Wratten (1995: 12) argues that there is no accord on what should be regarded as basic human requirements and how one can identify

the basic human needs. Despite this viewpoint that there is no consensus on a definition of urban poverty there are two chief approaches that offer definitions for urban poverty (Masika, Haan and Baden, 1997: 2). These two main approaches are conventional economic and anthropological interpretations. The conventional economic approach to urban poverty makes use of for example, income, consumption or a variety of other social indicators to categorize poor groups against a general index of material welfare (Wratten, 1995: 12). Alternative interpretations permit local difference in the definition of poverty, and extend the meaning to include views of non-material deficiency and social differentiation. These alternative approaches to poverty have been developed by scholars working with poor rural communities in the global south. Anthropological interpretations place great value on qualitative aspects such as liberty protection; self-worth; close and non-exploitative communal relations; decision-making independence; and legal and political rights (Masika, Haan and Baden, 1997: 3).

The debate on urban poverty takes place on distinct planes in the North and South world (Wratten, 1995). Development writings have historically focused on disproportions between the rural poor and better-off urban inhabitants, and the relationships between urbanization, the increase of capitalism and poverty (Wratten, 1995: 18). Poverty examination in the North has been concerned with the challenges of inner-city or marginal urban social accommodation, or with joblessness and income disparities. Masika, Haan and Baden (1997: 10) argue that, “Lack of access to secure and safe housing is a central feature of urban poverty.” Not much attention was put on the urban–rural divide. During the colonial phase the view that poverty in the South could be diminished through urbanization did not achieve the expected results (Wratten, 1995: 18). Hence, development planners began to challenge the postulations of this two-sector

expansion model during the 1970s. It is important to highlight that, “After decades of modernization policies, the benefits of growth had not trickled down to the rural areas where the mass of the population still lived (Wratten, 1995: 18).” Lipton (2008: 245) is of the view that numerous resources distributed by state action to city inhabitants could have obtained a higher return in rural areas. Hence, for Lipton urban bias was responsible for rural poverty.

The view of urban bias became widespread among progressive groups during the 1970s and 1980s (Wratten, 1995: 18). This led to the promotion of poverty alleviation arrangements that focused on improving livelihood of the rural inhabitants in Third World countries. Hence, beginning in the mid-1980s, Structural Adjustment regulations promoted these efforts through ending financial assistance provided to urban consumers and increasing prices to market levels that benefited more the rural producers (Wratten, 1995: 18). Urbanization and urban expansion have increased in a number of developing countries (Masika, Haan, and Baden, 1997: 2). However, Third World countries have remained with tremendous differences in the degree and intensity of poverty within the urban subdivision.

It is problematical to conceptualize urban poverty as a distinct class from rural poverty. There are two challenges that confront the conceptualizing of urban poverty differently from rural poverty. The first challenge is that the definition of the category is not governed by any fixed rules. Secondly, a dualistic spatial categorization may have the unwanted effect of “straight-jacketing discussion about the structural causes of poverty and diverting attention from national and international level (rather than city level) solutions” (Wratten, 1995: 20).

Defining 'urban' is challenging because there is no general criterion for considering whether a settlement is a town or a rural community (Wratten, 1995: 20). Therefore, a strong case can be made for considering the urban–rural separation as a range instead of an inflexible dichotomy. Human settlements plainly are made up of a broad range that cannot simply be reduced to two groups (Wratten, 1995: 20). There are connections between the functions of cities, towns and rural areas, which means that the difficulties of one section cannot be understood separate from the other. Between town and countryside interdependence is present in areas such as rural–urban migration and population increase; and amenities for education, health care and recreation. Hence, people may move back and forth between the zones throughout their lives and there are prevalent trading arrangements between the two. This is the case of Caledonia, a shanty town close to Harare. In 2018 The Zimbabwe Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing directed that Caledonia be transferred back to Goromonzi Rural District Council after having been changed to become part of the Harare City Council two years earlier (Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, 2018). Though Caledonia is said to be part of Goromonzi, the inhabitants of this location perform most of their activities in Harare.

The connection between urban and rural provides essential living strategies to the populace in these two zones (Masika, Haan, and Baden, 1997: 3). Focusing on whether urban poverty is more intense than rural poverty takes away concentration from structural determinants that have an effect on the life opportunities of the poor in both segments (Wratten, 1995: 20). These may include the allocation of land, possessions and human capital; and government social and macro-economic regulations. A number of these essential underlying factors cannot be dealt with sufficiently by urban-level involvement alone. “The acknowledgement of diversity in life-

chances within urban settlements means that we have to disaggregate within the city in order to analyze and explain poverty” (Wratten, 1995: 21).

Wratten (1995: 21) argues that when the city is examined as a sequence of interrelated but heterogeneous neighborhoods, the dichotomous classifications of urban and rural become less applicable. In this way, attention can be placed on a variety of spatial zones such as inner-city, suburb and peri-urban or other types of classifications such as tenure nature, home type, race and social class. Therefore, taking into consideration the above problems of conceptualizing urban poverty, Wratten (1995: 21) argues that specific distinctiveness of poverty are closely recognized with urbanization. The four challenges that characterize urban poverty are: urban surroundings and health dangers; defenselessness that is a consequence of profitable exchange; social variety, disintegration and misdemeanor; and susceptibility ensuing from the interference of the state and police.

In this research, urban poverty will be firstly understood as failure by the people in Harare to access developed land, adequate food, health care and other necessities. The urban poor in Harare lack the funds to access these essential provisions. Secondly, the understanding of poverty to be used in this research is based on anthropological interpretation of poverty. This means that poverty is comprehended as being isolated and excluded from the community. Living on the margins of the city of Harare, the urban poor are excluded from the community and are denied their intrinsic worth.

According to the capability approach, poverty is morally wrong because it is fundamentally linked to a lack of important freedoms that can be understood as indispensable conditions for exercising autonomy (Graft and Schweiger, 2013: 4). On the other hand, the recognition approach differentiates between three basic and universal forms of recognition which are social esteem, love and rights, which form the intersubjective requirements for creating and sustaining self-assurance, self-respect and self-worth. Hence, according to the recognition approach, poverty is morally wrong because it is a deficiency of one or more forms of recognition and is linked to experiences of disrespect (Graft and Schweiger, 2013: 4).

Discussing the capability and recognition approaches jointly offers unique responses to the normative question why poverty is ethically wrong. Making use of these two approaches, Graft and Schweiger (2013: 10) argue that poverty is ethically wrong; firstly, if it is personally experienced as injurious; secondly, if it is linked with forms of disrespect or hinders the potential of self-realization; and thirdly, if it opposes important implicit or explicit normative claims, which are rooted in community. From this, one can put together a recognition-based concept of poverty that merges descriptive and normative characteristics. Poverty can therefore be understood as existing under circumstances that are connected with feelings of disparagement and humiliation, as these conditions, “do not allow the experience and gain of socially prevalent forms of recognition and therefore hinder undistorted self-realization (Graft and Schweiger, 2013: 10).”

What determines an individual as poor in Zimbabwe? Manjengwa, Matema and Tirivanhu (2016: 26) argue that, “many in Zimbabwe relate poverty to assets, which are often seen as

indicators of wealth or an ability to avoid poverty.” The United Nations, Administrative Committee on Coordination (UN, ACC, 1998: no. 3), highlights that, essentially, “poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, it is a violation of human dignity.” Individuals suffering from poverty do not have the necessary capacity to participate successfully in a given society. A general method used to assess poverty is based on earnings or expenditure levels (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2014: 9). One is regarded poor if his or her expenditure or earning level does not reach the lowest amount needed to meet fundamental requirements. Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2014: 9) points out that “This minimum level is usually called the poverty line.” Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2014: 9) points out that a general scheme used to assess poverty in Zimbabwe is based on earnings or expenditure levels. Hence, an individual is regarded as poor if his or her expenditure or earnings level is beneath a minimum level essential to meet basic needs. It is through income that people can meet the expenses of basic necessities and other properties. Therefore those regarded as poor in Zimbabwe are individuals who do not have adequate sources of income to afford basic necessities and properties such as accommodation.

The wealth index is a setting attribute that is used in Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) as an agent for gauging the long-standing standard of livelihood of families (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency, 2014: 10). Wealth index is created through combining data on asset ownership and housing characteristics (World Food Programme, 2017: 4). It is crucial to point out that the wealth index weighs comparative wealth and is not a complete assessment of poverty or wealth. Due to inequality accelerated by

economic suffering, the inhabitants of Harare are denied a chance to fully thrive in order to attain their full potential.

### **The historical roots of urban poverty**

Urban poverty in Harare has its roots in the history of colonialism and segregation policies but was perpetuated into independence under the new political leadership through the reinforcement of colonial city divisions now using social class among the blacks themselves. The post-independence government of Zimbabwe failed to confront the challenges of segregation, the predominantly unsolved issues and inequalities that were instituted during colonialism. Both Harare's physical form and urban space have been prejudiced by the city's political influences.

In 1890 the Pioneer column, the white colonialists, established Fort Salisbury, Harare (Austin, 1975: 11). In order to subdue the majority black population on the conquered territory, the white settlers introduced a number of discriminatory policies. The established strategies unjustly formalized and maintained separation between races. These discriminatory policies dictated where the indigenous black population could live and what freedoms Africans could have. The International Commission of Jurists Report (1976: 10) affirms that significant conditions of colonial segregation in the then Rhodesia relate to the possession and occupation of land, so as to guarantee physical division of the races as far as achievable, and the positions of education, employment and political activity, so as to limit the progression of the Africans in such a manner as not to jeopardize the interests of the white settlers. Several land restitution claims involving land evictions during the epoch of the white colonial government are yet to be addressed (Human Rights Watch, 2002).

Salisbury, now Harare was set up as a colonizers' settlement in 1890 around a fortress and governmental offices for the British South Africa Company (Brown, 2001: 321). Two years later in 1892 the first settlement for African laborers was established. The establishment of the first African laborers' settlement was followed by the enactment of a regulation in 1906 which permitted the setting up of distinct black residential areas (Brown, 2001: 321). It became mandatory for all black laborers not residing at their location of work to live in these places such as Mbare township located three kilometers South of the city center. It is important to highlight that, from this point in time, Harare urbanized along austere segregated lines.

Native reserves were discriminatorily put in place by the British South Africa Company in 1894 and 1895. These native reserves restricted land accommodating the indigenous black populace especially in rural areas. The native reserves were afterward significantly enlarged in 1898 and 1904. However, the initial legislative permit to the separation for the whole country between blacks and whites was established by the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 (ICJ Report, 1976: 12). This Act was superseded by the even more inequitable Land Tenure Act of 1969.

The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 split Zimbabwean land into four subdivisions; the African regions, the European area, the forest regions, and unassigned land which was to be distributed at a later point in time. Steadily, the municipal area was developed for the white settler populace. Brown (2001: 321) points out that the first main subdivision external to the municipal region was at Avondale, 6 km north of the city centre. In 1934 Avondale was included in the municipality. It is during this colonial time that Harare's well developed low density suburbs such as Avondale and Marlborough were established for the white settlers while poorly structured high density

suburbs such as Mbare and Highfield were set up for the black Africans. Those regions with geographical and economic benefits were concentrated in the white settlers areas. The Africans were forbidden to purchase or dwell on land in an area set aside for white settlers. The Land Tenure Act of 1969 designated fertile expanses of land for Europeans, while the black majority received unproductive limited land (ICJ Report, 1976: 13).

While the white settlers in Harare were busy developing their own settlements, the deficiency of African accommodation was escalating and, by 1935 a rise in slum dwellers just outside the city compelled the settler government to set up a second township for 2500 people on the state-owned Highfield Farm, nearly eight kilometers South-West of the city centre (Brown, 2001: 321). To this day these guiding principles segregating races, imposed by the colonialists are embossed on the urban fabric of the city of Harare, but only now they follow a class line. The rich live in formerly white areas and the poor have remained in their designated areas.

Black African workers in Zimbabwe were subjected to impoverishing low income occupations during the colonial period. Confirming this standpoint Manjengwa, Matema and Tirivanhu (2016: 28) point out that in Rhodesia, the white settlers established a, “colonial development template in which men earned little in urban areas and women farmed below subsistence in rural areas (Manjengwa, et al., 2016: 28).” The colonial government established a variety of regulations that ultimately disadvantaged a number of indigenous Zimbabweans. In 1934 the Rhodesian government enacted Industrial Conciliation Act (Manjengwa, et al., 2016: 28) which limited Zimbabwean natives to low paying jobs while putting white settlers at an advantage. An Amendment to this Industrial Conciliation Act was put in place in 1959 further restricting the

indigenous workforce to little income. Hence, Manjengwa, Matema and Tirivanhu (2016: 28) argue that the black working class in Harare suffered income poverty during the colonial epoch of Zimbabwe. According to the International Commission of Jurists Report (ICJ, 1976: 19) the education policy of the Rhodesian government was geared to the economic and social regulations that aimed to maintain the success of the white minority. Therefore, without European education, many black workers in the city of Harare performed low level jobs. These low paying jobs such as being cooks, gardeners and general laborers in companies, meant that the majority black people inhabiting Harare remained poor and restricted to staying in poor urban areas.

The injustices relating to land and unequal treatment contributed to the necessity for the black majority people of Zimbabwe to embark on an armed struggle. Zimbabwe then achieved independence from the white settlers in 1980. Hence, Nyandoro (2012) argues that albeit challenges over rights to individually or collectively own pieces of land existed in pre-colonial period, these were deepened during the colonial era mainly due to the reason that customary tenure was restructured and reinvented.

With the relaxation of regulations after Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980 a number of people migrated to Harare. Rural to urban migration and population growth increased pressure on available urban services in Zimbabwe. The Country Analysis Report for Zimbabwe (2010: 45) states that, “Because of population growth and rural to urban migration, sewerage pipe bursts caused by excessive pressure are now common.” There was a 30% increase of urban population in Zimbabwe by the early 1990s (UN Report, 2005: 20). Due to the prevailing economic crisis

and high levels of urban poverty, the urban poor ended up constructing backyard structures for accommodation. As the pressure on Harare resources and services increased, the government decided to destroy all housing shelters considered illegal in 2005 under Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Restore Order) which demolished illegal structures inhabited by the urban poor of Harare. This scheme left the poor homeless and led to the establishment of shanty towns such as Hopley.

The right to land is still denied to urban dwellers of Harare despite the land being one reason for the liberation struggle and a fundamental right. The urban poor of Harare are still not able to afford highly priced developed land, housing and vital services in the city. Even though Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980 the discriminatory colonial structures are still an issue. It is therefore important to emphasize that the historically segregated racial origins of Harare have continued under the new political leadership with those divisions now using social class among blacks themselves. At present, Harare has a total population of close to 1.6 million people (World Population Review, 2019). The neglecting of the urban poor has not changed but it has in actual fact intensified. The wealthy populace mainly lives in the Northern suburbs of Harare such as Borrowdale and Glen Lorne. The urban poor are largely found in high density suburbs and shanty towns that are mushrooming around Harare.

### **Zimbabwe's economic problems and poverty in Harare**

Urban poverty in Harare deepened in the past two decades due to the continued economic problems facing Zimbabwe. A decade before the intensification of the economic crisis, the Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) adapted in the 1990s had failed to achieve its

fiscal objectives (Alwang, Mills and Taruvinga, 2002: 1). Insufficient revenues within the government hindered the achievement of adequate strategic assignment of capital in order to yield more income. The absence of sufficient revenues within the government has been a limiting factor in confronting the rising levels of poverty within the city of Harare. Insufficient revenues have hindered the required investment within the country. Affirming this point, Alwang, et al., (2002: 4) argue that from the 1990s, differences between the revenues and incomes of the Government of Zimbabwe jeopardized the feasibility of investing in public programs and trimming down poverty in the country. It is important to comprehend the eventual negative results of the macroeconomic performance on the living standards of people in Harare.

The discontent of the people led to opposition to the government through riots and strikes in 1998 (OECD, 2002: 313). Responding to the displeasure of the people, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) now called Movement for Democratic Change Alliance (MDC Alliance) was founded as a political party in September 1999 by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). Food shortages triggered by the land reform program led to macroeconomic instability within the country. Across the whole country the poverty level increased. These escalating poverty levels had a negative impact on all social sectors including health and education.

Confronted with persistent macroeconomic regression, the government of Zimbabwe put in place additional economic adjustment programs to deal with the economic crisis. The Zimbabwe Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP) was introduced in 2000. This Millennium Economic Recovery Programme aimed at stabilizing the economy by instilling confidence in the

financial system, increasing the rate of privatization to lure investment and provision of enhanced infrastructure services. The other economic adjustment programs include Macro-Economic Policy Framework (MEPF) (2005-2006), Zimbabwe Economic Development Strategy (ZEDS) (2007-2011), Medium Term Plan (MTP) (2010-2015), and Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) (2013-2018).

The Government of National Unity formed in early 2009 and which lasted for almost four years, yielded little positive economic growth in Zimbabwe. The principal mandate of the Government of National Unity (GNU) was to invest in developing and setting up an economic recovery strategy and plan (Kanyenze, Chitambara and Tyson, 2017: 4). Subsequent to a few years of recovery 2010 - 2014 Zimbabwe's economy in 2015 undertook a downward trend which led to a decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth (World Bank, 2019). The little positive growth of the economy achieved during the GNU was short lived and the Zimbabwean economy remained in deep crisis.

In order to achieve economic growth, the government put in place the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) from October 2013 to December 2018. This agenda set four strategies centered on, Social Services and Poverty Eradication; Value Addition and Beneficiation; Food Security and Nutrition; and Infrastructure and Utilities (Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation, 2013: 6). However, through decades of global isolation, Zimbabwe has not been able to secure globalization dividends. "This deprived the country of the much needed access to international capital markets, technology, trade spin offs, among others, perpetuating low economic growth and

standards of living, as well as poverty (Zimbabwe Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, 2018: 170).” Due to skyrocketing inflation, the urban poor are constantly confronted by price increases of all goods including basic necessities. Poverty levels have continued to increase.

The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2014: 23) pointed out that with more than seventy-six percent of, “households already poor and having limited access to services, access disparities are observed.” The rise in the share of children among the urban poor has led to an increase in the dependency ratio. For that reason, the government has an enormous challenge to provide services, yet the state has low earnings. The Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (2014: 23) argues that humanizing the situation of the urban poor calls for strengthening the quality and effectiveness of public expenditure, promoting equity based budget allocation, encouraging public expenditure reviews and pro-poor interventions.

Over the years and in order to counter the growing poverty and suffering of the people, the government introduced Poverty Alleviation Action Programmes. These consist of diverse community security measures such as, the Community Action Project and the Enhanced Social Protection Strategy. However, the schemes have not been successful in overcoming poverty. Among the reasons for the failure is insufficient planning. Limited planning has led to disintegration of responsibilities and inefficient replication of efforts among government ministries. With no social protection funds and no decent work for the poor, a huge number of urban poor of Harare have continued to live on the margins of society with no solid hope of genuine development.

Zimbabwe Millennium Development Goals Progress Report (2012: 18) argues that poverty in Zimbabwe has its origins in the cumulative results of the continued economic deterioration that the nation went through before the creation of Government of National Unity in 2009. Hyperinflation of two hundred and thirty-one million per cent per annum in July 2008 also meant that the population in Harare became poorer and could not afford to purchase decent housing (Zimbabwe Millennium Development Goals Progress Report, 2012: 18). However, the hyperinflation experienced in Zimbabwe had considerable negative effects on the cost of living and the standard of public service provision through government's inability to fund any meaningful development projects. It is apparent that the government of Zimbabwe has not been able to combat poverty across the entire country both in rural areas and in urban areas.

### **Poverty challenges in Harare**

Due to the fact that most of the urban poor are not formally employed and do not have adequate income, affording essential human needs such as housing, food and education is a challenge. The depressed economy has not been able to generate significant employment in Harare. As a result of limited opportunities of earning income, vending is common in Harare both in the city centre and in the residential suburbs. The municipal police of Harare are involved in constant clashes with vendors who crowd illegally on the streets of the city centre.

Water is not easily accessed within the suburbs of the city of Harare. Over a million people in the capital city face a water crisis (Water Crisis Fact Sheet, 2019: p 1). While the water is not

easily accessible, residents of Harare have often raised concerns over the quality and safety of the same water from the City of Harare.

Although measures have been put in place to prevent deadly epidemics, such as vaccinations among the urban poor in Harare and mobile clinics, the hyperinflation facing the country has led to a sharp increase in medical costs making it harder for the urban poor to access health care. The country's hyperinflation reached 175.66 % in June 2019 (Trading Economics, 2019). While nongovernmental organizations have often assisted with the provision of drugs especially during outbreaks of life-threatening diseases, the health system in Harare has remained a challenge for the urban poor.

While new housing projects have been growing in Harare, poverty has excluded the large majority from accessing any serviced land for housing leaving them vulnerable to unscrupulous land barons and corrupt housing cooperative operatives. The poor in Harare face these problems despite the fact that the government owns the land.

Due to the high cost of schooling and lack of access to schools especially in shanty towns around Harare, an increasing number of people in the city cannot afford formal education. This lack of formal education is leaving the urban poor ignorant with inadequate critical skills to participate in and understand the evolving economic, political and community changes in Harare. The inability to afford formal education is one of the major problems facing the urban poor in the capital city.

The prolonged poverty in Harare means that the landlessness of current residents is being transferred to the younger generations. Younger generations among the urban poor in the city lack adequate opportunities to development. With no proper employment and income in these past two decades, younger generations in Harare are suffering from poverty that has been passed on to them from the older generations before them. Just as their older generations, these young poor people lack the means to afford land, housing, food and other necessities.

The poor in Harare remain a community that has been denied the opportunity to develop. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2011: 187) is correct that for nations experiencing persistent poverty and economic crisis, policies that concentrate on poverty reduction at the margins are inadequate. That is the situation in Zimbabwe. Moreover, “it is not only the lack of access to assets that holds the poor back; equally important is the fact that the poor’s assets tend to be insecure, unprotected and less productive than they could be” (UNDP, 2011: 199).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has critically discussed the problem of poverty and urban poverty in particular by paying special attention to an analysis of the concept of urban poverty. Thousands of Harare inhabitants who used to work in both the formal and informal sectors have lost their livelihoods as a result of the economic meltdown experienced over the past two decades. In their article *Can Zimbabwe End Poverty by 2030?*, Etukudo and Chinomwe (UN Zimbabwe, 2019) argue that elimination of poverty in all its forms and magnitude has continued to be an enormous burden for the

government. Living on the margins of society the urban poor of Harare have been alienated from their right to land, housing, food, health, education and dignified existence.

## **Chapter Three:**

### **Human Dignity and Poverty**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the notion of human dignity. It considers the philosophical importance of the worth of every person and how this ought to be a guiding principle for the establishment of justice for the urban poor in Harare. There is need for African scholars to define and assist to bring about a community of abundance, of shared concord and of dignity (Oruka, 1972: 5). This is a call made almost half a century ago, yet it is still of relevance in African communities today. The willful disregard of the humanity of the neglected and marginalized poor in the city is an injustice that requires to be challenged. The urban poor are a people whose worth is equal to that of any other person and therefore deserve justice. Seeking justice, equal life opportunities and denouncing every sort of injustice against every member of the community are prerequisites for the promotion of human dignity.

#### **Notion of human dignity**

Focusing on the importance of human dignity is central to creating just societies. The concept of 'human dignity' is made up of two words 'human' and 'dignity' (Lebech, 2004: 1). The descriptive term qualifies the noun, thereby establishing the sort of dignity as that for the human race. Lebech (2004: 1) points out that, 'human' is etymologically connected to the Latin word for earth which is *humus*, in such a way that 'human' refers to what is 'earthly' as a qualifying word, or an 'earthling' as a substantive. Generally speaking, 'human' means what is appropriate to rational beings, referring specifically to their compassion and their imperfection. An examination of the word dignity can begin with its etymological root, the Latin 'dig- nitas'

interpreted as worth (Schachter, 1983: 849). The word ‘dignity’ comes from the Latin noun ‘decus’, which refers to adornment, dissimilarity, honor and magnificence. Generally speaking, dignity signifies the standing of one who deserves respect due to his or her rank, and it signifies, “that which in a being (in particular a human being) induces or ought to induce such respect: its excellence or incomparability of value” (Lebech, 2004: 1). Dignity means intrinsic worth (Schachter, 1983: 849). Dignitas is comprehended to be self-imposing, essential by desirable quality of itself; and even if it relies on something else that has given it, or that assures its standing, it is understood to oblige itself, in and through the power given (Lebech, 2004: 1).

Lebech (2004: 1) highlights that, the words ‘human’ and ‘dignity’ when used in juxtaposition create the phrase ‘human dignity’, which means the rank of humans entitling them to high regard. Human dignity refers to people’s highest value, or “to the fact that they are a presupposition for value, as they are those to whom value makes sense” (Lebech, 2004: 1). Conceptions of human dignity, articulate specific understandings of the inner (ethical) nature and value of an individual and his or her right (political) associations with community.

The two phrases dignity of the human person and human dignity are now used as an expression of a fundamental worth acknowledged in a wide sense by the whole human race (Schachter, 1983: 848). Human dignity appears for example in the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations; Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Article 13; the Helsinki Accords in Principle VII; and the Constitution of Zimbabwe in Part 2 under Fundamental human rights and freedoms. “Every person has inherent dignity in their private and public life [...]” (Constitution of Zimbabwe,

2013: 29). However, Schachter (1983: 849) argues that there is no explicit definition of the expression, dignity of the human person, in intercontinental instruments or in state law. Therefore, the meaning of dignity of the human person has been left to instinctive comprehension, influenced in great degree by cultural aspects.

Devoid of a rationally vivid general idea of the meaning of human dignity one cannot easily refuse an erroneous use of the concept, nor can one lacking understanding of its significance draw precise propositions for appropriate conduct (Schachter, 1983: 849). Dan-Cohen (2011: 1) affirms this by arguing that there are several concepts of dignity in circulation, too different even to be considered as dissimilar conceptions of one notion. This necessitates establishing meaning for human dignity. Intrinsic worth is a single lexical meaning of dignity (Schachter, 1983: 849). This is the reason why United Nations Charter uses the two synonyms, dignity and worth, for the same concept. The other instruments make use of the phrase, inherent dignity or intrinsic worth (Schachter, 1983: 849). Kant's influence on the contemporary use of the thought of human dignity is broadly renowned (Meyer, 1987: 319). For Kant there are positions of dignity construed by the customary rules and expectations of the present community; and there is also a type of native or natural dignity possessed by every person, a dignity not in and of itself given meaning by any communal or conventional chain of command (Meyer, 1987: 329). The Kantian injunction to treat every person as an end, not as a means is in general what is required in respect for inherent dignity. Kant (1785: 429) points out that, act that you treat people, whether in your own self or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, in no way simply as a means. Respect for the intrinsic worth of each individual means that people are not to be treated simply as objects of the will of others.

There are four different accounts of human dignity which are the Cosmo-centric account, the Christo-centric account, the Logo-centric account, and the Polis-centered account. The dissimilarities between the four accounts make it apparent that the basic worth of people is understood to be composed of varying things.

In the cosmo-centric framework people are understood to have basic worth due to the reason that they have authority for example over their enthusiasms and brute animals (Lebech, 2004: 9). For the goal of preserving ethical authority, people attain virtue, and it is by this acquirement that they are capable of participating in communal life, of enacting laws and establishing community. Secondly, in the Christo-centric account, people are understood to have essential worth because they are fashioned in the reflection and resemblance of the Supreme Being, and therefore replicate the designer-Supreme Being from whom all things have their being and worth (Lebech, 2004: 9). Dan-Cohen (2011: 3) argues that, the resemblance can be understood in a variety of ways, though one striking theme views it in terms of the awareness of good and evil. The basic value of people is additionally avowed and reinstated by the embodiment of the Son of the Supreme Being as human being, his death and resurrection. Thirdly, in the logo-centric framework, human beings have dignity due to the fact that they have reason, or, in the Kantian articulation, for the reason that they are competent of understanding the inference of the ‘universalisability’ of any of the maxims of their actions (Lebech, 2004: 9). Fourthly, the polis-centric account of human dignity was the consequence of the political experience of ‘reason’ being used ideologically by individuals in authority, to make suppositions as to who was to be considered reasonable (Lebech, 2004: 10). The polis-centric framework defines virtue in relation to the purpose it has in community for example, its helpfulness.

Human dignity as the primary value of people is universal, yet each conception of human dignity is conditioned by unlike features of human reality: “human nature; God-relatedness; the faculty of reason; or recognition within society” (Lebech, 2004: 10). This is because the four conceptions each comprehend the person as consisting in diverse elements, and as a result takes the fundamental worth of the human being to consist in dissimilar features of its being. However it is important to highlight that essential worth pertains to the human being and not simply to one’s faith, reason, nature, or rank. Dan-Cohen (2011: 9) highlights that human dignity is the supreme worth of each person. “To account for the content of human dignity we are referred back to the experience of its fullness in love, kinship and friendship” (Lebech, 2004: 10). Through this, one is trained to identify with the vital attributes focused on by the varying accounts of human dignity. Ultimately through this learning, one learns what it means to be a human being.

What is the relationship between justice and human dignity? According to Schachter (1983: 851), one is led more profoundly into the examination of human dignity when he or she considers its relation to the material requirements of people and to the ideal of distributive justice. Economic and social structures cannot be excluded from an investigation of the requirements of dignity. It is important to emphasize that, dignity, “requires recognition of a minimal concept of distributive justice that would require satisfaction of the essential needs of everyone” (Schachter, 1983: 851). Significant equality is a needed condition of respect for the intrinsic worth of people. ‘Each person is as good as every other’ can therefore be regarded as a plausible adage. Gyekye (2010) insists that each person longs for dignity and justice.

Associations of supremacy and subordination are adversative to the basic idea (Schachter, 1983: 851). Thus, huge differences in wealth and power need to be eliminated to keep away from such associations. Degrading living circumstances and deficiency of basic needs such as those experienced by the urban poor in Harare are antithetical to or incompatible with respect for inherent dignity. Human dignity cannot therefore be separated from justice. Accordingly, in examining the relationship between justice and human dignity it is essential to point out that particular individuals with the capacity for communal relationships do not actualize it and instead use it wrongly (Metz, 2010: 93).

The broad idea of human dignity is that of an excellent ultimate worth that every or almost every person in the biological sense has so long as one is alive (Metz, 2010: 93). Fulfilling one's duties of relating harmoniously with others is crucial in comprehending one's dignity in an African community. Metz (2010: 93) argues that, a person has dignity, "*in virtue of her capacity for communal relationships*, i.e., for relations of identity and solidarity." Therefore, while the Western concept of dignity focuses on the capacity for autonomy, the African understanding of dignity centers on the capability for harmonious or communal relationships. Hence, in seeking justice and human dignity for the urban poor in Harare through international organizations such as United Nations, African values on human life should not be considered as inferior to those from Western countries.

### **Poverty and human dignity**

Reaffirming human dignity in the face of dehumanizing poverty is an essential task for philosophy. This need is still pressing and essential for African communities such as Harare

where numerous people are suffering from severe poverty. Undignified life and the misery of hunger are continuous problems facing Africa. Lotter (2011: 130) argues that poverty is an inhumane state and therefore must be eliminated and not simply diminished. Poverty as a lack of economic capabilities makes it difficult for its victims to progress and organize their capacities to participate in communal life, immobilizes people from contributing their total input in employment, reduces their choice of activities as members of the community and limits them from making use of prospects they would otherwise qualify for (Lotter, 2011: 131). Deprivation of economic capacities means that specific things, conditions, support and resources to attain what is required to engage in a standard human life are not available to promote their life's project. Community members living in poverty are disabled in their pursuit, "to live a life worthy of humans as defined by their society" (Lotter, 2011: 131).

Looking for authorization from another human being to continue to be alive is to regard that other person as the creator of life having exclusive power to make a decision if we may maintain life (Ramose, 2003: 555). However, such treatment cannot be awarded to any person. Each person has an equal right to be alive due to the reason that life is gratuitous for all people. However, life is threatened by poverty, the poor are not able to sustain life. Suffering from poverty leads the poor to live inhumane lives. Poverty strips the dignity of people by not allowing them to have an experience of life. The poor, lacking food and other basic necessities, ultimately experience a shortened life.

Justice in the community should lead to the development of every member towards sufficiency. The flourishing of community is diminished by the existence of poverty. Coetzee (2003: 397) points out that it is chiefly the duty of the political order, to watch over the respect of justice, ethical values and the application of the guiding moral principles, in search of economic action

which is sincerely human. Coetzee (2003: 397) argues that there is no other communal establishment that exerts as much authority on the economy as the government. Wilkinson (2003: 451) argues that socioeconomic disparities between groups of people threaten the fairness of communal arrangements. Such disparities are a confirmation of injustice to particular members of the community. Due to limitations resulting from poverty, the poor members of the community end up not being able to fully benefit from development. Justice is best understood by investigating the community arrangement within which it is formed and distributed (Coetzee, 2003: 327). This is because justice is appropriate to all characteristics of life; “there is no area of life, private or public, which is not subject to the scrutiny of justice” (Kinoti, 2010: 129). Presbey (2000: 7) argues that most philosophers would agree that the elimination of poverty, hunger, injustice, insularity and dreadful environmental conditions should be the main concern of all communities and individuals. Hence, it is essential to affirm that justice is the standard that directs every authority interested in assisting disputing groups of people (Kinoti, 2010: 130).

Kinoti (2010: 130) affirms that justice ensures an ideal society with community existence that benefits from development, concord, benevolence and harmony. Community members exhibit their sense of justice through subscribing to those manners and modes of behavior that are thought to be sensible ways of accomplishing prosperity and harmony. Each individual should endeavor to be as self-reliant as possible. However, poverty and lack of knowledge incapacitate people to take advantage of their individual rights and prospects (Rawls, 1971: 179). While liberty is represented by the total scheme of the liberties of equal citizenship, the value of liberty to people and groups relies on their ability to progress their goals within the structure the system defines. Coetzee (2003: 328) argues that in a situation where there is a dissonance between

communal goods or between their distributive patterns, it has to be demonstrated that an adjustment from one position to another characterizes a benefit towards the harmonization of interests.

Anguish and loss of life due to absence of shelter, food and health care are detestable (Singer, 1972: 231). Humankind has the obligation to ensure that no one is denied an opportunity to live an essentially healthy life. Oruka (1997: 99) highlights that it is essential for philosophy to widen its occupation on the morals of people's lives and the circumstances for the enhancement of the world for human existence. The 'right to human minimum' is a moral obligation for all people worldwide (Oruka, 1997: 130). This right stipulates that it is an obligation of each person and every country to assist in eliminating severe poverty in the world and to ensure that all people have the means to live above the survival point (Oruka, 1997: 130). The word 'duty' needs to be stressed in dissimilarity to other terms such as charity. In regard to assistance in form of charity, scholars such as Singer hold the view that each individual with excess of wealth to his or her indispensable needs should be giving the bulk of it away in order to assist people suffering from poverty so severe as to be life-threatening (Singer, 1999: 63).

Seeking justice and denouncing every sort of injustice against every member of the community are prerequisites of the promotion of human life. It is therefore crucial to affirm the importance of human life and justice in the community. Severe poverty in Harare is an injustice facing the urban poor. Ramose (2003: 744) argues for the protection of the right to life for every person. The discussion on one's right to life cannot be detached from the right to sustenance. This

understanding of right to life is not restricted to a selected few but includes the urban poor of Harare whose life requires protection and enhancement.

The demands of distributive justice need to be met on the comprehension that this notion presupposes that: people are of equal worth in regard to their humanness; and the relative insufficiency of resources that may be attained and possessed in order to actualize a person's right to life (Ramose, 2003: 745). The humanness of the urban poor of Harare needs to be affirmed. There is no individual who has a greater and special right to life than the rest of the community members. Hence, it should not be permissible for a particular individual or group of people to claim exclusive right to available means of survival in the community. Due to insufficiency of available resources, regulations of distribution ought to be created and observed in order to satisfy every person's claim to the right to life. This inadequacy of resources points to the landless poor who are economically disadvantaged and are neither able to afford housing nor other essential requirements of life.

The absence of properly observed regulations leads to inequality that is often suffered by the weaker persons, the urban poor. Distributive justice demands norms of distribution of the available basic resources in order to ensure each person's continued existence. Therefore, Ramose (2003: 745) maintains that "the right to life is prior to the establishment of a community or society." "Recognition of the equality of all human beings," is highlighted on the founding values and principles of the first chapter of the Constitution of Zimbabwe (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013: 16). The concern for justice and rights arises at the founding of community. Hence, injustice facing the urban poor of Harare who are denied an opportunity to afford a

decent life in Harare needs to be challenged. Since the urban poor in Harare cannot afford to purchase land for example, they are considered landless and live under severe poverty.

The right to life of the urban poor in Harare should be valued above all discriminatory structures that were begun by the colonial government in the then Salisbury. It is important to emphasize that the right to life is not a construction or an establishment of any particular government or state. Everyone has this right to life and no individual deserves situations that threaten the right to live. Having a right to life should lead to unhampered access to food and other basic necessities that are essential for the protection of life. Therefore, it is important for every community to maintain structures that safeguard and direct the right to life (Ramose, 2003: 745). The urban poor are hindered from accessing essentials that promote life due to the experience of severe poverty. The government of Zimbabwe acting in the name of the state has the duty to ensure the protection of the fundamental human right to life. Hence, the continual existence of the urban poor who are facing severe poverty in Harare is an injustice because the government is not performing its duty of safeguarding their right to life.

In questioning the injustices being faced by the urban poor in Harare, it is essential to not center on only one need or lack being experienced by this suffering populace of the city. Ramose (2003: 746) firmly argues that, “All other ‘traditional’ fundamental rights or basic liberties revolve around and derive their proper significance from the right to food.” Hence, the categorization and classification of human rights does not essentially guarantee a hierarchization of human rights. The tendency to put in place ranks and categories on individual’s rights is an alleged genealogy of rights that matches to a greater degree to particular stages of constitutionalization and the setting up of industries in Western countries (Ramose, 2003: 746).

In examining the injustices on the lives of the urban poor in Harare, there is need to focus on African values that fully promote life in an African manner. African philosophy is called to perform its function in reshaping an African modernity that is both, “reflective and respectful of the Being of the African in this global arena” (Mungwini, 2014: 23). In the West there is a connection for example, between the circumstances of the economy at a specified moment and the beginning of particular rights. In this way, rights are considered to be a creation of the economy. Ramose (2003: 746) adds that the West seems to want to oblige this disputed consideration of rights upon other continents in the name of globalization, democratization and universalization of people’s rights. Underlying this inclination is having a separation between particular human values and a doctrinaire unilinear commencement of human history. However, this fragmentation of the individual diverts from the fact that at every instant in time, a person is a totality and not a set of portions that have to be fixed together to form a hypothesis of rights. Hence, Ramose (2003: 746) argues for the foursome of human rights as the underpinning of the ontological constitution of being alive. These four are: human rights to living, liberty, work, and possessions. An all-encompassing consideration of human rights is essential. From this ontological understanding, one should realize that these rights complement one another. Due to the fact that the Zimbabwean state does not and cannot construct this foursome of rights, even within the circumstance of the state, this group of four rights should not be infringed upon.

Howard and Donnelly (1986: 803) emphasize the point of view that for the state to be involved in issues of individual’s freedom, particularly the right to choose and direct one's own existence would be to consider the life schemes and ideals of one group of people as more important than of others. The importance of every member of the community ought to be valued in every

circumstance. Poverty cannot be used to justify treating the urban poor as a low ranking group of people. It is important to highlight that the state merely has the duty of recognizing this foursome of rights. Such recognition of these rights is the only political alternative that a state is entitled to (Ramose, 2003: 746). Hence, an individual's freedom, particularly the right to choose and direct one's own existence, necessitates the norm of equal respect. This needs to be affirmed in the face of the current inhumane suffering that the urban poor in Harare are going through. Persistently living in severe poverty, the urban poor are not able to claim their full right to life.

To deny the urban poor the right to live a dignified life is to disallow these deprived people the right to freedom. Yet freedom is essential for each rational being in the community. A person needs to be free to consider the best way to live and to contribute one's positive creativity in the building of the community. When provided with the right opportunity for growth and development, each human being is capable of enriching the community in diverse ways. Regarding the urban poor as people of equal worth with every other person should enable these deprived people to have an opportunity to participate in the building and development of justice in the African community.

Advancement in the community should be guided by targets because a community is made up of rational people (Gyekye, 1988: 19). These targets should be values that promote the human dignity of every member of the community. The flourishing of the community depends on an unambiguous design of values and how the same principles are put into practice in the everyday activities of the people. Human dignity is a basic value of the community. Living together and

achieving genuine harmony requires the community to value the matchlessness of every person. This matchlessness of every individual is everyone's dignity and it does not depend on one's wealth or poverty. The urban poor have the same intrinsic worth that is found in all human beings. Diminishing this intrinsic worth of the urban poor should not be acceptable in an African community such as Harare. To be a person is to have human dignity (Lebech, 2004: 10).

### **The landless urban poor**

The government of Zimbabwe has not been able to put forward successful actions to counter the deprivation of the urban poor in the largest city of the country, Harare. The continued existence and expansion of slums that are mushrooming around Harare is a confirmation to the argument that the government of Zimbabwe is failing to fully uphold dignity of the desperate poor of the city. According to *The Habitat Agenda Goals and Principles, Commitments and the Global Plan of Action*, empowering all humans, particularly those belonging to helpless and destitute groups, specifically people living in poverty, "to participate equally and effectively in all activities related to human settlements is the basis for civic engagement and should be facilitated by national authorities" (UN Habitat Agenda, 2003: 5). The Habitat Agenda presents a structure to enable government authorities to take responsibility for the encouragement and creation of sustainable human settlements. In doing so, the urban poor will be able to regain their dignity.

According to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UN-HABITAT adequate housing needs to meet seven essential demands. These seven demands are affordability; habitability; accessibility; protection of tenure; accessibility of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure; cultural sufficiency; and location (OHCHR and UN-HABITAT, 2009: 4). Firstly, when considering affordability, housing is insufficient if the price of attaining

it jeopardizes the inhabitants' gratification of other individual rights (OHCHR and UN-HABITAT, 2009: 4). Secondly, shelter is not satisfactory if it does not provide physical protection from bad weather and other structural dangers. Protection of tenure points out that housing is not sufficient when the inhabitants are not safeguarded from enforced ejections such as Operation Murambatsvina of 2005 in Harare. Unavailability of properly built sewer system, clean water and energy for cooking render housing to be considered inadequate (OHCHR and UN-HABITAT, 2009: 4). Housing is not considered sufficient when particular known needs of the disadvantaged people are not regarded. Not taking into consideration the expression of cultural identity makes housing not adequate. On Location, UN-HABITAT points out that, shelter is not good enough if it is separated from employment possibilities, hospitals, schools, and other common facilities, or if situated in unhygienic or risky areas (OHCHR and UN-HABITAT, 2009: 4).

OHCHR and UN-HABITAT (2009: 4) highlights that security from enforced evictions is an essential constituent of the right to sufficient shelter and is directly connected to protection of tenure. "Forced evictions tend to be violent and disproportionately affect the poor, who often suffer further human rights violations as a result" (UN-HABITAT OHCHR and UN-HABITAT, 2009: 5). A number of housing cooperatives have played a role in furthering injustice suffered by the landless poor in Harare. Subsequent to an assessment of its housing policy, in April 2016 in order to reorganize housing administration of waiting lists and backlogs, the Harare City Council barred housing cooperatives from taking up any new state land (Center for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa – CAHF, 2018: 275). However, many housing cooperatives have

continued to sell land. Due to recurrent injustices, “Courts are still inundated with land disputes between home seekers and cooperatives” (CAHF, 2018: 275).

It is important to point out that, while Zimbabwe’s formal urban areas are well considered and planned, current expansion on the built land has advanced through the informal system led by a multiplicity of actors, including the state, politically privileged authorities and land barons (Infrastructure and Cities for Economic Development – ICED, 2017: 19). In the absence of justice, these actors are involved in illegal extensive alteration of common urban spaces, green belts and state land of low value to introduce housing schemes. Hopley and Gazebo are among the shanty towns that have mushroomed around Harare. The occupants of these new urban developments are not only a poverty-stricken populace but are victims of injustice.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter examined the concept of human dignity in relation to the suffering of the urban poor in Harare. With the continued suffering of the urban poor, a genuine African community that promotes justice and human dignity cannot be realized. This willful disregard of the humanity of the neglected and marginalized poor in the city is an injustice that requires a genuine resolution. It is fundamental to regard the humanity of the urban poor as of equal worth to that of any other person. The injustices and poverty facing the urban poor are against indigenous politico-ethical principles of ‘ubuntu’. Graness (2017: 313) argues that, behavior that is in accord with the guiding principles of *ubuntu* ethics is oriented towards building harmony and diminishing differences and, thus, contributing to the development of society. The subsequent chapter will present a philosophical discussion of ethics of ubuntu in relationship to poverty.

## **Chapter Four:**

### **Urban Poverty and the Ethics of Ubuntu**

#### **Introduction**

Through the ethical critique inspired by the indigenous philosophy of ubuntu this chapter challenges the inhumane suffering of the urban poor of Harare. As pointed out in the previous chapters, the urban poor in Harare have continued to be confronted by dehumanizing poverty and denied their right to full life as they live at the margins of society with inadequate essentials of life such as land for housing and food. Such crisis of poverty and brokenness being experienced from within Africa can be understood as an opportunity for African countries to take hold of the situation to examine their local cultural resources and to structure their indigenous ontologies and moral values to the current realities (Dauda, 2017). Ubuntu, a prime African moral theory presents ethical principles that challenge the injustice being faced by these community members of Harare and offers potential solutions. In this exposition of ubuntu attention will be drawn to debilitating moral problems confronted by the people including the scourge of corruption.

#### **Moral foundations of an African community**

Wiredu (2002: 287) argues that a community that does not have a, “modicum of morality must collapse.” Morality performs an indispensable function in the existence of community in Africa or any other place. Wiredu (2002: 287) is of the view that, morality involves not only the ‘de facto’ compliance to the necessities of the harmony of people’s concerns, but also engages conformity to those requirements of solidarity, “inspired by an imaginative and sympathetic identification with the interests of others even at the cost of a possible abridgement of one’s own interests.” The interests of the community as a whole are crucial. “African conceptions of

morals would seem generally to be of a humanistic orientation” (Wiredu, 2002: 287). The Akans of Ghana affirm this point of view by the saying ‘*Onipanaobia*’ which means that it essentially the human being who has worth (Wiredu, 2002: 287). The word (*o*) *bia* refers to that which is worth and required. Consequently, the adage ‘*Onipanaobia*’, leads to the understanding that all worth originates from human interests; and that fellowship of people is the most vital of human requirements. What can be regarded as good in general is that which advances the interests of people (Wiredu, 2002: 288).

The basic doctrine in understanding morality from the Akan point of view is that a human being has three elements that come from three sources (Wiredu, 2002: 289). These three elements come from the Supreme Being, and from both parents of the individual. From the Supreme Being is the life principle, a fragment of divine matter; blood principle originates from the mother; and charisma principle is from the father (Wiredu, 2002: 289). Due to the fragment of the divine matter that can be found in each individual, all people belong to the universal family. The contributions from the mother and father of a person are the basis of membership in particular communal units.

Wiredu (2002: 291) emphasizes that, the ultimate moral deficiency consists in the absence of feeling which is the origin of all self-centeredness. To such an individual whose acts reflect being unmindful of others in the community, Wiredu (2002: 291) points out that the Akan maxim applies, ‘*Etuawoyonko ha aetuadua mu*’, (Sticking into the body of your community member, it might just as well be pressing into a log). Wiredu (2002: 291) argues that the imperative implied is that one needs to put himself or herself into the skin of the other members

of the community in mutual associations and realize if one can reflect the outcome of one's planned action with level-headedness. The maxim presents the first principle of all morals which is sympathetic impartiality (Wiredu, 2002: 291). This principle is the foundation of the golden rule among the Akan. Wiredu (2002: 291) highlights the golden rule in the Akan community, '*Nea wo yonko de ye wo a erenye wo de no mfanye no*' (Do not do to another person what is not tolerable if it were performed to you). It is essential to point out that this establishes, "[...] a solid foundation for the definition of moral worth in its most edifying sense." Having unselfish concern for others in the community is key to how one should inter-relate with the rest of people. What Wiredu describes about the Akan is generalizable to the greater part of the African community including the inhabitants of Zimbabwe.

Appealing to the notion of cultural panopticism, Mungwini (2017: 148) argues that there is 'self-surveillance' that is built on the cultural hypothesis that particular actions and ways of thinking are not proper for the suitable formation of a person. Each person has the task of achieving expected ethical demands. Through the continual presence of watching community members, each person assumes the duty to perfect mechanisms for judging oneself according to what is approved as the fitting way of conduct (Mungwini, 2017: 148). Through being in the community one builds the expected character. Hence, Mbiti (1970: 141) argues that "I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am." The person is deeply rooted in the community. In this way, one's ethical principles do not only focus on oneself but on the fulfillment of the community as a whole.

According to Menkiti (2017: 468), even though there is tension that is often caused by the differences of *ours* and *theirs* in the community, there is as well this aptitude that individuals have to place themselves in the other individual's shoes. Ubuntu leads to a convincing philosophical argument that, "there is a family atmosphere, that is, a kind of philosophical affinity and kinship among and between the indigenous people of Africa" (Ramose, 2002: 230). In view of that, one can therefore argue that ubuntu provides the moral basis to challenge the grave poverty being experienced by the urban poor in Harare.

### **Ubuntu as a Philosophy and moral theory**

Fundamental to comprehending Shona ethics is the notion of *hunhu*. Hunhu is called *ubuntu* in Nguni vernaculars of the people in the Southern part of Africa. It is essential to highlight that ubuntu is considered as the basis of African ethics. Hence, ubuntu is "a philosophy that sets a premium on human relations" (Samkange and Samkange, 1980: 34). Ubuntu ethical theory is central in comprehending an individual as a person with character that is wholly realized in the community.

The people of present day Zimbabwe "shared a culture and worldview which can historically be traced to the expansion of the influence of the Karanga and their rule across the plateau" (see Mungwini, 2017: 55). These people are the ones who are referred to as the Shona. The Shona, the major ethnic association in Zimbabwe is typically split into smaller groupings on the basis of contemporary dissimilarities (Beach, 1994: 185). These groups include the Korekore and Zezuru among others. Albeit small differences in the local traditions existed among the Shona, the governing communal ontology and metaphysical principles were the same.

The ubuntu word in Nguni languages, *hunhu* in Shona literally means humanness (Metz, 2011: 533). Metz (2011: 537) adds that to think that -‘*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*’-, is only an empirical assertion that people’s well-being is causally dependent on others, is to limit the essence of the maxim. Instead, the maxim is a normative account of what humans ought to most value in life. Personhood and humanness are considered to be value-laden concepts. Hence, Metz (2011: 537) writes that “One’s ultimate goal in life should be to become a (complete) person, a (true) self or a (genuine) human being.” Shutte (2001: 30) affirms this by arguing that “Our deepest moral obligation is to become more fully human. And this means entering more and more deeply into community with others.” Albeit the objective is personal fulfillment, there is no room for selfishness. Individuals in the community value the equal existence of every other person.

Ramose (2002: 230), affirms that ubuntu is the core of philosophy in Africa. Both ontology and epistemology in Africa originate from ubuntu. Ubuntu leads to the notion of be-ing. For that reason, *ubu-* “as enfolded be-ing is always oriented towards unfoldment [...]” (Ramose, 2002: 230). Hence, there is a persistent actual expression through specific mode and structures of being. Consequently, *ubu-* is directed towards *-ntu* at all times. From an ontological understanding, *ubu-* and *-ntu* are neither conflicting nor split realities. However, *ubu-* and *-ntu* are equally foundational in the view that, “they are two aspects of be-ing as a one-ness and an indivisible whole-ness” (Ramose, 2002: 230). The completeness of being is anchored in the existence of these two elements. Put together, *umu-* and *-ntu* turn into *umuntu*, the human being.

It is essential to point out that, *umuntu* is the specific entity which continues to perform an investigation into truth, being, knowledge and experience.

The verbal communication of *umuntu* directs and focuses the whole epistemological field towards the ontology of *ubu-* (Ramose, 2002: 231). This directing and focusing of the whole epistemological field is done through the contemporaneous and binding coupling of *ubu-* and *umuntu* through the maxim, '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*' which translates to mean that to be a human is to confirm one's humanness through realizing the humanity of the rest of the members of the community (Ramose, 2002: 231). Ubuntu, comprehended as being human; a compassionate, respectful and courteous attitude to other people constitutes the core significance of this dictum.

When the speakers of the Nguni language say, '*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*', and those who speak Sotho-Tswana utter '*Motho ke motho ka batho babang*', they are not simply making an observed assertion that persons' survival or welfare are causally reliant on other people (Metz, 2011: 537). A person should aim to become a total person, a genuine self or a true individual. It is important to point out that, total personhood is not understood as simply offered at the very start of one's life, but is attained as one progresses in the community (Menkiti, 1984: 173). The contention that 'a person is a person through other persons' is an invitation to improve one's personhood, an instruction to attain *ubuntu* or *botho*, to display humanness (Metz, 2011: 537).

Metz (2011: 538) argues that to be able to identify with each other is basically for individuals to consider themselves as members of an identical group. Conceiving oneself as a member of a

particular community enables one to take pride or experience disgrace in the group's actions, as well as for people to be involved in shared schemes, harmonizing their way of living in order to achieve shared goals. Metz (2011: 538) points out that to demonstrate solidarity is for individuals to engage in reciprocated aid, to behave in ways that are logically anticipated to promote each other. The attention a person gives to others for example in the form of compassion, politeness and friendliness is a code of behavior embodied in ubuntu (Samkange and Samkange, 1980: 39). Through solidarity people are able to sympathize with the rest of the community members and are led to assist them for their own sake (Metz, 2011: 538). Failure to demonstrate solidarity is due to not being interested in each other's development. Animosity in the form of lack of sympathy and brutality towards any other person is a problem that hinders solidarity.

Metz (2007: 334) argues that the most promising hypothetical formulation of an African ethic to be found in different writings is that "*An action is right just insofar as it produces harmony and reduces discord; an act is wrong to the extent that it fails to develop community.*" However, this hypothetical formulation is in some way reminiscent of Western ethical theories such as that of Immanuel Kant. Kant's theory calls one to act in such a way that all humanity is treated as an end in all situations and never as means only (Kant, 1785: 47). One can also argue that, Kant's view of regarding people as an end in itself involves treating them not merely as something of unreserved merit, but also as something of incomparable importance (Kerstein, 2002: 72).

One ought to behave in a manner that promotes the flourishing of the community including the poor. Ubuntu is, "a philosophy that sets a premium on human relations" (Samkange and Samkange, 1980: 34). Identifying with the rest of the community members especially the urban

poor, in order to achieve common positive goals, leads to solidarity. Selfishness, anger and longing for vengeance destroy the harmonious living of members of the community. The most justified normative theory of the proper way to act that has an African derivation is the prerequisite to create harmony and to diminish dissonance (Metz, 2007: 340). In a distinct manner from moral theories such as Kantian and utilitarianism, ubuntu moral theory encourages one to act in a way that is affable to the rest of the community members. Accordingly, ubuntu when construed as an ethical theory, stipulates honoring relations of sharing a way of living and being concerned for others' quality of life (Metz, 2014: 71).

The Shona aphorism, “*kuva munhu muvanhu* (to live at all is to live well with others and for others)”, is the dictum that expresses the fundamental character and definitive objective of Shona morality (Mungwini, 2017: 145). In this way, this maxim presents a normative gauge of existence and the state of being a person among the Shona. One's humanness is realized in relationships with others in the society. Mungwini (2017: 145) adds that *Kuva munhu chaiye* which translates to, “to be a true human being”, is in ethical concerns, the model that every Shona person need to work towards and a *telos* for which parents and the rest of people in the community are expected to contribute considerable effort in its achievement. All people in community have to strive for this ideal notwithstanding their previous flaws. Therefore one can argue together with Mungwini (2017: 145) that, “To become truly human is measured by the acquisition of virtues of character and qualities of personhood that are considered appropriate by the community.” The Shona put community at the center of their values, becoming a genuine person can only be accomplished in the situation of a community through specifically the human being's aptitude to promote communal welfare and not weaken it. Vitality of the community is

increased by good individuals, whereas bad individuals toil to weaken and tear down the vitality (Mungwini, 2017: 145).

The goodness of a person is seen by how he or she is there for the community. Mungwini (2017: 145) argues that one who has ubuntu is a virtuous individual, a person with praiseworthy character. A virtuous person is a model from whom others can also learn how to develop virtues. The *telos* of ethical instruction among the Shona is the development of character. Albeit the prime duty of shaping the character of the youthful is on parents, each community senior member has a responsibility of educating the young. Moral excellence is a result of one's upbringing in the community. However, one should note that people change, and entirely attributing people's character to their parents cannot be justified in particular instances. Hence, even though not each parent is reflected in the character of their offspring, the affirmation of, "the fact that moral education is through experience, habit and imitation is critical" (Mungwini, 2017: 145). In the community, virtuous character is shown by being truthful, compassionate and responsible.

The failure to fully adhere to ubuntu moral theory has continued to disadvantage the poor in African communities. Morality is a shared mission and all people are, "involved in each other's failings and flourishing" (Menkiti, 2019: 280). The immorality of African political leaders has persistently driven the weak to the margins of the society and heavily burdened the poor. While African morality promotes progression of virtuous life in the community, Harare is among communities marked by immoral practices of corruption, one of the serious maladies responsible for the people's suffering. In the city of Harare, political corruption continues to compromise

true progress. The poor have continued to live an undignified life in deep poverty. In order for the city to overcome corruption, ubuntu moral theory ought to guide development and progress in the city of Harare.

### **Harare and the curse of corruption**

The motto on the coat of arms of the city of Harare is, “-Pamberi Nekushandira Vanhu-”, in English language it is, “Forward with Service to the People” and this translates to a rallying call to work for people (Manyenyeni, 2018: 1). The motto is a statement of commitment which captures the driving philosophy of the city fathers. Such a motto should be regarded as a solution to the current challenges of poverty in the city. Ramose (2002: 235) confirms that, “To posit excellence as an aim and to actually achieve it is by every test a rational act.” Being genuinely engaged in positive actions for the people of Harare should result in development and diminishment of poverty. However, multitudes of people in Harare have been confronted by severe and dehumanizing poverty for the past two decades.

How is it then possible that there is such lack of service delivery in the city of Harare yet the fathers are guided by a motto that is grounded in ubuntu? The services provided by the city fathers in Harare are not in harmony with the motto. The urban poor have continued to face challenges in accessing housing, healthcare, and education among other services. In 2018 only a small number of suburbs in Harare got partial renovations and few new facilities (Manyenyeni, 2018: 20). However, most of the high density suburbs and shanty towns around the city continue to have limited facilities of education and health. This is contrary to high quality school and medical facilities in low density suburbs. The disparity between services available for the rich

and the poor in the city do not reflect a harmonious community that values the existence of every member. Marginalization of the urban poor is perpetuated by urban planning that is biased in favor of the rich. The urban poor continuously live as victims of corrupt civic leaders. Due to poverty, the urban poor are not able to participate in activities that favor those few individuals with wealth.

The exclusion and marginalization of the urban poor in Harare is in contradiction to the driving philosophy of the city fathers. While the driving philosophy of the city fathers lays emphasis on the need for the authorities to work for people in order for development to take place, this has not yet been accomplished in marginalized high density suburbs and shanty towns around Harare. Most of the urban poor in Mbare, Mufakose, Highfields and other high density suburbs lack dignified housing. In shanty towns around Harare, most of the housing is constructed using cheap and locally made materials. “But morality requires first and foremost respect for others’ dignity rather than for one’s own” (Dan-Cohen, 2011: 7). The urban poor living in Caledonia and the rest of shanty towns around Harare continue to live without basic necessities. This marginalization and exclusion contravenes ubuntu demands of harmoniously living together in community regardless of one’s wealth status in the community. All human life is of equal importance and poverty does not diminish the significance of each individual. Nussbaum (2003: 2) points out that ubuntu is awareness of people’s inborn longing to avow our, “fellow human beings and to work and act towards each other with the communal good in the forefront of our minds.” The urban poor are denied the opportunity to be fully integrated in community. The absence of sufficient transparency and accountability at the Harare City Council, has resulted in, “officials apparently failing to prioritize effective service delivery and the residents continue to

fall victim to this mal-administration” (Combined Harare Residents Association, 2018). The problem of corruption in the city continues to enrich just a few administrators.

When considering corruption, one ought to pay attention to its deep and multifaceted meaning (Genaux, 2004: 13). There are nine definitions explored by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1997). One can put these definitions into three groupings. The first definition considers corruption as an experience of physical spoilage through rotting or falling into pieces (Genaux, 2004: 13). In this sense, corruption refers to lacking completeness due to corrosion. Secondly, the *Oxford English Dictionary* regards corruption in moral terms, that is, the crumbling of morality. The third definition is concerned with diversion from the state of pureness. An establishment such as government that is no longer upright in performing its obligations is an example of this third kind of corruption. Hence, Genaux (2004: 13) highlights that in the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s entry for the word corruption, there is only one definition that can be used in political concerns. The applicable definition is the one in the third category which regards corruption as a distortion of integrity in one's performance of communal commitments for favor or bribery.

Corruption has significant negative influence in the functioning of the society and politics. The success of the state and management of community goods or resources are destabilized by corruption (Genaux, 2004: 15). This is affirmed by Heidenheimer (1989: 12) who considers the term corruption to be associated with the decay of a particular arrangement. Being altered by corruption, the government is not able to properly function and benefit everyone in the community. This moral decay has continued to impoverish people in African communities.

It is crucial to point out that corruption as moral decay represents the direct opposite of African morality. One needs to realize that in Africa, morality is related to truth and that, “honesty as a highly prized virtue is a measure of truth” (Mungwini, 2017: 122). Disregarding African moral values, corrupt governments in Africa abuse the true meaning of their authority by hindering the poor from accessing community resources. In this sense, corruption distorts true African moral standards in the community. Although public resources belong to the community and should benefit every member of the society, the poor are excluded from accessing essential requirements of life. Accordingly, corruption can be best understood as a consequence of civic authorities’ irregular activities that are not aligned to established regulations (Huntington, 1968: 59). Fraudulent politicians in Harare and other African communities adulterate the government system to serve their own interest at the expense of the suffering poor. Corruption is a form of moral spoilage that has exacerbated the problem of poverty in the community.

Corruption has continued to take a variety of forms in the city of Harare. Towards the elections the poor are made to believe by fraudulent politicians that they can lose their urban pieces of land if they choose particular political candidates. In Chitungwiza, politically allied land barons unlawfully distributed more than 15 600 residential pieces of land (Mutondoro, 2018: 8). Political leaders with access to funds of the government are often in courts due to mismanagement of public resources. Political wrangling in the city has made the lives of the poor worse off. Transparency International (Zimbabwe: Overview of Corruption, 2015: 3) observed that in the health sector money is used for other purposes that have nothing to do with the wellbeing of people. When corrupt leaders in the city influence policies for their own benefit

it is the poor who continue to suffer. Without any source of income due to unemployment, the poor in the city do not have the means to pay bribery in order to get favors. The Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC), a body which is supposedly to counter corrupt activities, has not been successful at halting corruption within Harare and the whole country at large. Consequently, the poor in the city continue to live in deep poverty without proper shelter, food and healthcare services.

Dauda (2017: 489) points out that, ubuntu demands self-control, discipline, and a firm sense of responsibility and truthfulness in opposition to the current worldview based on corruption. Encouraging the development of these virtuous qualities offers solutions to the current injustices facing the urban poor. Ubuntu presents important moral dynamics for reconsidering national and wide-reaching conflict resolution, as well as the pressing potential of reinstating goodness and accountability in community issues, and proper governance (Dauda, 2017: 489). Due to corrupt political interferences in the city of Harare, in 2017 the then mayor of Harare, Manyenyeni (2017: 5) argued that the council, “[...] cannot exercise authority over those who we are supposed to lead. They enjoy unlimited political protection from any of their professional and administrative shortcomings.” Such negative political interferences have resulted in the city council being ineffective in performing its duties of development and confronting poverty in Harare.

### **The ubuntu ethics as the will-to-live**

The concept of the will-to-live is taken from the work of the Latin American philosopher of liberation, Enrique Dussel. Dussel (2006: 13) highlights that all people are group animals and

communal by origin. Communities have persistently been endangered by their susceptibility to death and to extermination. In order to remain alive, groups of people preserve an innate desire to remain living. “This *desire-to-live* of human beings in a community can be called a *will*” (Dussel, 2006: 13). The will-to-live is the originary propensity of every person, and Dussel (2006: 13) presents this point of view as a counteractive to Schopenhauer's catastrophic formulation and the dominating inclination of the will-to-power of Heidegger and Nietzsche. Nietzsche (1967: 37) argues that, there is not anything to life that has worth, apart from the amount of power - supposing that existence itself is the will to power. However, Dussel (2006) argues that instead of using classic scholars' definition of power as domination, current social movements need from the onset a positive comprehension of political power, which nonetheless takes into consideration that this power is often besmirched and altered as domination (Dussel, 2006: 13). The will-to-live is, “that positive essence - that content as a force and as a capacity to move, to restrain, and to promote” (Dussel, 2006: 13). The desire to live drives people to circumvent death, to delay it, and to remain within human life (Dussel, 2006: 13). Ubuntu offers a positive understanding of politics as the will-to-live.

It is through relating with others in the community that one transcends to a great desire to live, the will-to-live. *Ubuntu* is the aptitude in African culture to communicate sympathy, reciprocity, dignity, harmony and humanity in the interests of constructing and preserving community with justice and shared compassionate (Nussbaum, 2003: 2). Sharing a manner of life, being concerned with others' quality of life, identifying with and showing solidarity toward the other people is in essence an association that those who speak English refer to as friendship or a wide sense of love (Metz, 2010: 84). Respecting friendly relationships and caring for the rest of

people's quality of life leads to harmony in the community. In this sense, the will-to-live is achieved by everyone as a community thereby guaranteeing life even for weaker and poor members of the community.

To remain alive, one is required to comprehend or to create the means of continued existence to gratify human needs. Such human needs are negativities, "hunger is the *lack of food*, thirst is the *lack of drink*, cold is the *lack of heat*, ignorance is the *lack of cultural knowledge*, [...]" (Dussel, 2006: 14). A community with ubuntu values should be able to recognize these negatives and assist those in need. These negatives should be negated by the availability of basic goods. This means that food repeals hunger; to negate the previous negation is to affirm life (Dussel, 2006: p, 14). For Dussel (2006: 14) to-be-able to take hold of and employ such goods like food to ensure the means for continued existence is power. An individual who is-not-able is a person who does not have the capability to-be-able to replicate or advance one's life through the accomplishment of the required mediations. From such understanding, in terms of the content and incentive of power, the will to-live of the community members is the basic determination of the meaning of political power (Dussel, 2006: 14). This means that politics is a commitment that organizes and supports the creation, reproduction, and improvement of the lives of people. Ubuntu values should inform the politics for all members of the community to be able to access human necessities.

Africans need to find solutions to the challenges facing the people of the continent of Africa (Nkrumah, 1961: xi - xiv). This is yet to happen in Africa. Dauda (2017: 476) argues that the increasing challenges of poverty, pandemics, religious fundamentalist rebellion, the North-South

divide and ignorance in the newly independent African countries have tested and confirmed, “Western developmental orthodoxies, white-male dominated worldviews, and the liberal models of political, economic, and social philosophies as flawed and outdated.” The breaking down of old biased worldviews is an occasion for African countries to consider their cultural uniqueness and to adjust indigenous ontology and moral philosophy to current realities (Dauda, 2017: 476). There is a firm rationale to develop and to put into practice political and theoretical frameworks that have their foundation in the variety of cosmologies available in the Global South.

Metz (2011: 538) argues that, “African moral ideas are both more attractively and more accurately interpreted as conceiving of communal relationships as an objectively-desirable kind of interaction that should instead guide what majorities want and which norms become dominant.” The pursuit to attain concordant associations is articulated in Shona as *kugarisana savanhu* which means living as genuine people, or *kuwadzana* which can be translated to mean existing well with each other. These are all diverse articulations of the concept of ‘living well with others.’ This needs to be emphasized in the face of challenges facing the urban poor. Menkiti (2004: 324) notes that solidarity is key in defining features of an African community. Through identifying with each other, people achieve their life goals in harmony.

Ubuntu moral theory is rooted in an outstanding Southern African assessment of community and points out that one's actions are flawed not simply insofar as they injure people, but rather to the degree that they are neither friendly nor lack respect for friendship or the aptitude for it (Metz, 2011: 540). Hence, actions similar to trickery, compulsion and mistreatment do not honor shared relations. Dauda (2017: 489) affirms that ubuntu demands restraint, a firm sense of

responsibility and truthfulness. Through ubuntu, African scholars can construct different conceptual models of politics in which the principles of solidarity, harmony, openness, and modesty are esteemed (Mungwini, 2018: 178). Ubuntu has the potential for rethinking national and worldwide resolution on poverty, as well as the imperative panorama of restoring integrity and answerability in public relationships, and proper governance on the continent of African.

The ‘will-to-live’ ought to continue to be emphasized as a confirmation of the essence of humanity which continues to be denied by the city fathers of Harare who persist in neglecting the life of the most marginalized. The weak and impoverished members of the society require genuine assistance to flourish. Dussel (2006: 14) is clear about this that, politics is about affirming the life of the marginalized. Mungwini (2018: 178) affirms this by putting forward the argument that if politics is about affirming the importance of life, then it should not be anything but ubuntu politics grounded on standards of mutual aid and the defense of the ‘will-to-live’ of every individual in the society.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter has challenged the inhumane living of the urban poor in the city of Harare through an ethical critique that is inspired by African philosophy of ubuntu. Ubuntu, as a pivotal African moral theory presents ethical principles that challenge the injustices being faced by the community of Harare. The affirmation of the will-to-live of all people rich and poor is essential for achieving a community that genuinely values life.

## **Chapter Five:**

### **Recommendations on the Restoration of Justice and Dignity to the Poor**

#### **Introduction**

Can we have a city without poverty, even as scriptures say the poor will always be with us? Achieving a city without poverty is achieving justice for the poor. This chapter presents a philosophical argument for practical possibilities of envisioning a city without poverty. This envisioning entails eliminating forms of poverty and establishing dignity and justice for the suffering urban poor in the city of Harare. The idea of creating a world without poverty has been argued for by Amartya Sen and Yunus Muhammad among others, but closer to home this has also been a recurring theme in Mogobe Ramose's philosophical work. As discussed in the previous chapter, Ramose's (1999) *Philosophy through Ubuntu* is an attempt to place humanity at the centre of our philosophical contemplation and to transform philosophy into an enterprise mediated through the quest to assert people's common humanity including human dignity.

#### **Capabilities approach and the urban poor**

To be a human being in an African community is to assert one's humanity by recognizing the humanness of others (Ramose, 1999: 52). Yunus (2008: 17) affirms this point of view by arguing that people are concerned about each other and have a natural desire to transform lives of others suffering from poverty. The human race desires to overcome challenges such as poverty and misery. From these natural instincts, a number of people are willing to donate tremendous sums of money to charity for the establishment of nongovernmental organizations and nonprofit

organizations. Groups of volunteers with different expertise perform community service and other tasks for little or no salary at all.

Sen (2003: 4) argues firstly that, “economic prosperity is no more than one of the means to enriching the lives of people.” It is a fundamental misunderstanding to give economic prosperity the standing of an end. Secondly, even as a means, simply improving average economic wealth can be ineffective in the quest of the most important ends (Sen, 2003: 4) Therefore it is essential to evaluate change in community in terms of the prosperity of human life. The capability approach considers life ‘functionings’ or a set of doings and beings (Sen, 2003: 4). This approach relates the assessment of the excellence of human life to the consideration of the capability to function. A functioning is an accomplishment, while a capability is the aptitude to accomplish (Sen, 1987: 36). Being able to accomplish one’s life goals is important in the life of each individual in the society. Hence, bringing change to the lives of the poor requires consideration of practical ways of enabling everyone in the community to have the capacity to reach their life goals. Sen (2003: 4) points out that the capability approach has roots in thoughts of Karl Marx, Adam Smith and Aristotle.

Through the functionings, an individual is viewed as active participant of life. The functionings include having nourishment, self-respect, participating in community life and appearing in public without shame. Smith (1776: 676) points out that a poor person can be embarrassed to show his or her poverty in public. The assertion is that the functionings are a constituent of an individual's being. This means that the search for avenues to enrich people needs to be attached to functionings such as being able attain nourishment and self-respect. One can therefore argue that

a functioning is an accomplishment of an individual. What an individual manages to accomplish illustrates a fraction of the condition of that person in his or her community. The capability of a given individual is a derivative concept. It reflects different doings and beings one is able to achieve. Capability reveals an individual's lack of restrictions to decide between dissimilar ways of living (Sen, 2003: 5).

According to Sen (2003: 8), "The capability set represents a person's freedom to achieve various functioning combinations." For the reason that freedom is necessarily vital, an individual requires unlimited alternatives to be able to choose his or her preferential option without any restriction. Choice is an essential characteristic of human life. Since freedom is understood as being merely instrumentally crucial, the concern in the capability set lies in the point of view that it presents the person with prospects to accomplish different worthy states. One can therefore argue that, accomplished states of life are in themselves worthy, not the opportunities, which are important merely as avenues to reach an individual's goal.

The ability for one to exercise his or her freedom is significantly influenced by the education that person has received. Sen (2003: 12) argues that educational expansion leads to four positive effects in the community. Firstly, increased education can aid efficiency in the community. Secondly, broad sharing of educational progression can be instrumental in enhancing the sharing of the collective national earnings among a variety of people in a given country. Thirdly, one who has better education can be of assistance in the transfer of earnings and capital into a range of peoples' lives. The fourth positive effect resulting from educational expansion is that one becomes more capable to make informed decisions when choosing diverse types of lives that an

individual can lead (Sen, 2003: 12). These four positive effects of education are vital and lead to progression of genuine human development.

Enhancing the capabilities of Africans stuck in poverty is a way to enrich the poor. The urban poor should be given an opportunity to realize their potential. Eliminating poverty requires that the poor be able to participate at all levels of the economic activities in the country. In this way, the status of the poor should become equal to that of the rest of the community. Human dignity is deeply ingrained in the right of life as the most essential human right in society (Cloete, 2019: 94). Ensuring that the poor have access to food and have self-respect does not only promote life but restores the dignity of these suffering people. Everyone in the community deserves respect and a dignified life. The continual rise of prices of basic commodities in Zimbabwe has deepened poverty levels of the vast majority of urban poor who are surviving through self-employment. This should be countered by measures that ensure that the poor access food and other basic necessities for survival.

Without proper education the poor not only lack enhanced skills for entrepreneurship and production, but through ignorance they are also deprived of the capacity to make informed life decisions. There is need to enable the urban poor to acquire schooling. Vocational training and other centers of education need to acquire a vision for eliminating poverty. Education ought to enlighten the urban poor in such a way that they become competent to question their experience of injustice. One can therefore argue that education will enable the urban poor to demand justice and dignity.

## **Fair participation in production and development**

Capitalism is flourishing and global trade has increased over the years, yet not every person has benefited. Yunus (2008: 1) argues that although poverty is spread evenly around the world, particular sections of the world suffer its worst effects.

Unregulated markets in their existing form are not intended to resolve community problems, “and instead may actually exacerbate poverty, disease, pollution, corruption, crime, and inequality” (Yunus, 2008: 2). Although globalization as a general business standard is capable of achieving a number of benefits for the poor, there is need for continued inspection and guiding principles to avoid the system being destructive. Local small business holders are likely to be forced off the market by already established multinational investments. The norm that the most powerful takes everything should be replaced by regulations that guarantee that the poorest have a place in the market (Yunus, 2008: 2). Regulations in the community should not be in favor of one group, but need to serve interests of all the people. Poverty should not be allowed to continue to exist in the community. Guiding principles of the community need to be those that promote justice and equality among all members of the community.

In Africa, “human-society is seen as a necessary framework for mutual aid for survival and, beyond that, for the attainment of reasonable levels of well-being” (Coetzee, 2003: 369). It is important to emphasize that justice cannot flourish in the community when selfishness is promoted. Realizing the needs of the vulnerable urban poor and working towards equality is more important than seeking to enrich oneself at the expense of others. Yunus (2008: 9) argues that there is need for a concept of social business to counter the negative functioning of

capitalism. Social business is set up to achieve particular community goals and recognizes the multidimensional nature of human beings. This is one of the ways of eliminating problems brought by capitalism. It is essential for businesses not to aim for huge profits at the expense of the poor in the community. A business that only focuses on maximizing profit without paying attention to the full nature of people is not capable of solving injustice and poverty problems in the community.

Local and national markets require regulations to safeguard the life of the urban poor. Without regulations, the rich gain greater advantage over the poor. Uncontrolled search for profit leads to international corporations to abuse the poor through underpayment of wages and taxes; pollution; and campaigns that promote damaging or unnecessary goods (Yunus, 2008: 2). Wealthiest countries in North America, Europe and portions of Asia have received enormous benefits from a free market system. In order to earn huge profits, some of these foreign businesses have concentrated their efforts on luxury goods that are unnecessary for the preservation of life. Hence, in order to resolve the problem of poverty, instead of merely targeting financial gains, it is important for the free market to focus at challenges of hunger and other issues of the marginalized people.

Anti-poor approach and pro-poor approaches are considered unique policy choices. The policy makers may aim to draw the poor people into the functioning of the economy. However, Yunus (2008: 5) argues that in such conceptualization, the poor community members are regarded as objects. The prospective of the poor, especially children and women is missed. Paying attention only to the needs of the poor such as food, accommodation, health care and job creation leads

one not to realize that the poor people can be independent actors in the economy. The urban poor have the potential to be self-employed entrepreneurs and to make available jobs for other poor people in the community.

The danger of policymakers focusing their endeavors on well-established institutions such as government organizations needs to be emphasized. A number of multilateral and bilateral donors operate through the government. Yet one can argue that the government organizations are contributing to creating or sustaining the urban poverty. “Institutions and policies that created poverty cannot be entrusted with the task of eliminating it” (Yunus, 2008: 5). New institutions that are genuinely designed to resolve the problems of the urban poor need to be put in place. In order to significantly make an impact in the lives of the urban poor, policy makers should be open to all parts of the community and use the resourceful competence that is found outside the government.

Establishing social business that aims to assist the urban poor is an option that recognizes the different aspects of human nature and the importance of everyone in the community. The organizational structure of the social business is generally the same as that of profit maximizing business (Yunus, 2008: 9). But the unique character of social business is found in its objectives. The main object of this kind of trade is to assist people especially the disadvantaged such as the urban poor of Harare. Accumulated profits and resources are channeled to improve the life of those who are suffering. In doing so, social business targets the upliftment of the disadvantaged members of the community. Instead of seeking only profit, other ways of pursuing investments that yield social benefits in the city ought to be examined.

Yunus (2008: 10) asks the question, “How can the products or services sold by a social business provide a social benefit?” There are a number of ways that such products and services can establish social benefit for the poor. These ways include creation of affordable nourishing food products for a targeted market of poor and underfed members of the community. Such products can be cheaper because they are not sold for the sole reason of attaining the most possible financial gain. Another example could be a social business that provides cheap health care and medical insurance. The poor in Harare cannot afford private health care due to exorbitant fees charged. With the crisis of public service doctors going on prolonged strikes, the poor are left vulnerable. Provision of affordable health care that is not profit driven needs to be a priority in Harare. Enhancing the lives of the urban poor demands that they be enabled to access life necessities such as water and health facilities. Social business in renewable-energy systems sold at lower prices to the poor who do not have access to electricity especially in shanty towns is a practical step towards diminishing their suffering.

Although the urban poor in Harare are involved in trade at low levels in their communities, this is not adequate to improve their poor living standards. The goods and services provided by the urban poor on market lack proper standards essential for competition. As a result, the urban poor in Harare have an insignificant participation in the production and development of goods and services. Ramose (2002: 235) highlights that the people of Africa are determinedly in pursuit of concord in every aspect of life. Injustice and disharmony cannot be regarded as normal conditions of a community. Therefore, one would agree with Mungwini’s (2019: 71) sentiment that, the pursuit of justice in Africa ought to be for all members of the community and needs to be realized in every dimension of life including the economy. It is necessary to seek ways that promote trade activities that are non-discriminatory in the community. This improvement should

assist the urban poor to produce quality products that are capable of competing with products from long standing investors.

It is essential to advocate for the urban poor whose lives have been marked by continuous political, economic and social disappointments over the past two decades. Accordingly, Mkhwanazi (2019: 46) declares that there is need for philosophy to point out what needs to be achieved in face of our current experiences in Africa. The philosophical role of enlightening the urban poor about possible avenues to justice and development should not be undermined. There is need for the people of Africa to have motivation to embrace a new perspective for a better future. In order for development to take place in Africa, philosophers and politicians need to face the problem of reconciling libertarian morals and mercantilist philosophy (Wamala, 2002: 71). The principles of mercantilism support for example economic programs that put limits on individual's choice of spending while libertarian morals promote people's freedom to employment, health and other essentials. Mercantilist attitudes that debase individuals to mere instruments that can be used for the progress of the bigger state need to be challenged. Leaders in Africa should not undermine the freedom of the poor for the sake of exaggerated nationalism.

There is need for sturdy determination for poverty to be eliminated in the African continent. Ramose (2002: 14) argues that poverty being experienced in Africa is deadly though preventable. Due to the deeply entrenched colonial system in Africa, the determination to eliminate poverty needs to cut across all structures of African communities including universities. Ramose (2002 15-17) highlights that weaponry and idolization of investors are examples of unnecessary needs imposed on Africa by foreign powers. Hence, notwithstanding that it is now almost forty years

since Zimbabwe gained independence, Mungwini (2019: 61) still laments that the mission of decolonization is yet to be realized in Africa. For Africa to progress in eliminating poverty there is need for Africans to fully reclaim freedom from foreign powers. However, one can argue that with the search for justice and the demand for the New International Economic Order for example, Africa is beginning to reaffirm its indisputable right to subsist (Ramose, 2002: 18). The coming together of the people to seek resolutions to current challenges is a possible sign of hope for the future. For the reason that we are human beings we ought to, “be identified by the desire to improve the world in which we live together” (Mungwini, 2019: 74). This entails paying attention to practical resolutions of diminishing deadly but preventable poverty being suffered by numerous people in communities around Africa such as Harare.

A holistic envisioning of a city without poverty requires the combination of Mogobe Ramose, Amartya Sen and Yunus Muhammad’s lines of thinking. There is reason to be optimistic about overcoming the current deadly poverty in Africa (Ramose, 2002: 18 - 20). The arguments raised by both Sen and Yunus distinctively enhance each other. Sen’s capability approach to poverty lays emphasis on making the poor competent in activities that diminish poverty. For example through education, the poor are able to make better choices and healthiness is a necessary achievement (Sen, 2003: 12). Yunus’s thought of ameliorating the suffering of the poor is based on establishing fair participation in production and development (Yunus, 2008 1-19). Hence making use of the opinions of these three scholars leads to a holistic proposition for creating a city without poverty in Harare.

Several scholars over the years have pointed out distinct weaknesses of the capability approach. One of the criticisms is that the area under discussion and configuration of Sen’s capability

approach is under-theorized to be a wholesome hypothesis of justice (Wells, 2019). This criticism points out that the capability approach does not specify the most essential capabilities thereby making it challenging to vividly characterize the kind of life that can be regarded as ideal. Other scholars accuse the capability approach of being too individualistic. Charles Gore is among the scholars who argue that Sen's approach does not pay attention to standards of society as a whole, the focus is placed on the wellbeing of an individual (Wells, 2019). However, despite these problems, the implementation of capability approach can still make a significant difference in Harare.

### **Governance and the urban scheme**

In order to overcome evils in the city, political power should not be detached from ethics; leaders of the city need to be philosophers or be able to philosophize genuinely (ReV.473c11-d6). Plato holds the view that it is philosophers that are truly capable of being concerned about the good of the city when they are in leadership position.

The urban system needs to become a genuine community where justice, dignity and harmony are experienced. Howard and Donnelly (1986: 803) argue that since the human person is a social animal, a person's potential, and even one's uniqueness, can be developed and articulated only in a communal context. The community requires the state to promote and safeguard everyone's life including that of the poor. However, in a number of African countries including Zimbabwe, the modern state presents specific grave threats to human dignity. Through the enforcement of a specific vision for good living or the entrenchment of advantaged disparity, the state does not promote equality and respect of all members of the community (Howard and Donnelly, 1986:

803). Confirming this point of view, Hoffmann and Metz (2017: 161) point out that dynamic dispossession of others is regularly carried out by institutions that include the state and privately owned corporations. Through Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Reject Filthy) in 2005 the government of Zimbabwe demolished thousands of shelter belonging to the urban poor in Harare with no proper scheme to resolve the plight of these suffering people.

Restoring justice and dignity to the life of the urban poor requires the government of Zimbabwe to work towards eliminating discrimination and inequalities originating from the administration of colonialists in Africa, divisions that have continued to be reinforced by creation of wealth classes in Harare. Africans have not yet fully realized the justice they fought for during the colonization period. Kaulemu argues that the results of independence have been poor due to two factors (Kaulemu, 2008: 36). Firstly, the colonial masters who granted Africa independence have not totally taken out their rule but instead have returned back in varying forms. Cloete (2019: 95) affirms this by arguing that though Africa has attained independence, one can argue that African governments have continued with the practice of, “protecting and perpetuating the economic interests and privileges of the former colonial conqueror”. The second factor is that the Africans themselves are to blame for interiorizing unjust systems that were used during the colonial era (Kaulemu, 2008: 36). A number of African political actors have not played a positive role in the development of the continent. Dishonesty, exploitation and insincerity in engaging urban poverty issues continue to be experienced in Harare. Divisions implanted by white settlers during the colonial period now continue to exist in the form of class or wealth separations. The affluent in Harare live in spacious developed land while the poor are found in high density suburbs and shanty towns where conditions of living are unbearable.

It is essential for the urban poor of Harare to demand accountability from the government. The state ought to treat each individual, including the poor, as a moral and political equal (Howard and Donnelly, 1986: 803). Dishonest practices by the government officials and other political leaders are an obstruction to the elimination of poverty in the city. Through a discourse facilitated by the rule of law the urban poor should demand dignity and justice towards elimination of poverty. True development demands responsible community political leaders who are devoted to the progress of the community. Masolo (2019: 139) states that people are not duty-bound to comply with unjust moral principles. It is critical for incompetence within the government of Zimbabwe to be confronted in order to achieve justice for the urban poor.

The urban poor should have a role to play in the policy making processes of the city and the country. Policies should be life promoting and just for all people in the community. A city without poverty cannot be achieved without proper guiding principles. In order for true guiding principles to be achieved, there is need for freedom of expression of ideas in Africa. Being free from oppression allows people to willingly make use of their competences in developing the community. Wamala (2002: 67) argues for the importance of freedom of expression in advancing the community. Challenging each other's ideas is essential in the pursuit of human development. African communities should not continue to be guided by foreign standards. A community that is not fearful of different ways of thinking is a society that promotes diversity and the development of everyone. Treating individuals with new ideas as threats to the community needs to be rejected. Hence, guaranteeing freedom of self-expression for the urban

poor and everyone else will encourage participation in matters of achieving justice, human dignity and elimination of poverty in the city.

In as much as governments of any given country ought to be capable of doing much to address the challenge of poverty and injustice for the urban poor, the government of Zimbabwe alone is not capable of positively addressing community problems facing the urban poor. This is because “governments can be inefficient, slow, prone to corruption, bureaucratic, and self-perpetuating” (Yunus, 2008: 3). Gyekye (1997: 25) argues that, the problem of corruption is present in all postcolonial African countries. It is problematic to attempt to eliminate poverty without dealing with malpractices of governments. The people of Africa should call for the remodeling of government structures. New government structures that do not impoverish the lives of people should be put in place.

Since government alone is not able to offer resolutions to problems facing people (Yunus, 2008: 4), the contribution of other organizations in working towards elimination of urban poverty is required. Through nonprofit organizations a number of people are able to contribute towards resolving problems such as poverty. These nonprofit organizations include philanthropic foundations, not-for-profits, charitable organizations and nongovernmental organizations. Yunus (2008: 4) argues that “Charity is rooted in basic human concern for other humans.” However, the past years have reflected that nonprofits are an inadequate response to problems facing people (Yunus, 2008: 4). Charity has the shortcoming of depending on incessant contributions from munificent individuals. When funds fall short, the assistance of nonprofit organizations

ceases to exist. Therefore, the urban poor should not be led to depend entirely on charity but should be empowered to be able to sustain themselves and develop in the community.

Creation of equal opportunities and promotion of people-centered entrepreneurship will assist to establish justice for the urban poor in Harare. Wolff, et al., (2015: 50) confirm that redistribution of earnings and wealth is a distinct resolution to poverty. Most of the deprived community members of the city of Harare are involved in informal employment. Therefore, the government of Zimbabwe can examine ways of increasing what the urban poor earn through their informal employment in the exchange of goods and services. However, enhancing the prospects of poor individuals to earn for themselves through schooling and work establishment will often be an ideal resolution since it is capable of being maintained; and encourages growth of one's self-respect and other characteristics of the flourishing of the person (Wolff, et al., 2015: 50).

Initiating free and low-priced vocational training in the poor neighborhoods can benefit the large numbers of unemployed urban poor of Harare to find ways of making a living. Education significantly influences one's capacity to exercise freedom (Sen, 2003: 55). Currently there are inadequate training centers that impart vocational and other necessary skills for trade. Due to the lack of funds a number of urban poor are not able to enroll in such vocational schools. Hence, through equipping the urban poor of Harare with vocational skills, they could begin to earn some income and be able to afford necessities for their day to day survival in the city.

## **Creating access to urban land**

The question of equal opportunity to land needs to be resolved in the city of Harare. After Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980 there has not been an effort to resolve the challenge of landless poor urban dwellers in the city. The urban poor do not have the means to purchase land in the city of Harare. The unjust taking away of land from Africans by the white colonialists in Zimbabwe is one of the reasons that led to the armed struggles that won independence in 1980. It is therefore mandatory that the government of Zimbabwe honor the expected achievement of independence. Achievements from independence should not be enjoyed by just a few individuals. The urban poor should not continue to live in overcrowded shanty towns where living conditions are miserable. Land is the birthright of every individual born in the country. Since the government now owns the land, it is essential that the landless poor are offered land in Harare. Mawondo (2008: 17) points out that distributive justice looks at the division of goods and services in a particular community. While retributive justice looks backward, distributive justice is forward looking. The primary point of view that needs to be emphasized is that distributive justice necessitates seeking ways of resolving disagreeing requirements on goods and services (Mawondo, 2008: 17). Access to land can be promoted without necessarily guaranteeing everyone to have access to the same area. The access that the rich have can be replicated even among the poor if affordability is considered and where necessary the government can subsidize or offer that land freely to those who cannot afford.

New ways that guarantee that the urban poor have equal opportunity to developing sections of the city need constant promotion and monitoring. Distribution of Harare land should not be focused on yielding profit at the expense of the urban poor. Enabling the poor to play a role in

the development of land is a way of empowering them. Instead of solely relying on machinery to prepare the land for development in Harare, the urban poor could use their labor in such developments. As a substitute for payment for such labor, the poor can then be granted benefits that are equally purchased by the few rich such as better sewerage and water system in the city.

### **Respect for life**

The failure to address the problem of deadly but preventable poverty is an evil and a devaluation of human life. Therefore, life in the community cannot fully flourish when there are members who are suffering from the misery of poverty. Being disinterested in eliminating poverty is detrimental to the cultivation of virtues that stabilize community. In Africa, community is developed through assisting one another (Coetzee, 2003: 369). The growth of people in community from infancy to old age requires them to learn essential virtues such as compassion and justice. Each person has the responsibility of helping the other to overcome suffering. Therefore, the lack of interest in diminishing poverty that continues to incapacitate numerous people takes away a crucial practical way of forming virtuous and compassionate individuals in the community. Virtue requires repeated practical performances of good activities such as helping the poor. The point being made here is not a justification for the continual existence of the poor in order for people to practice compassion. However, the presence of suffering individuals in the community is itself a call to be compassionate. Justice cannot flourish in a community that does not promote human dignity, harmony and equal opportunities for all people.

Developing an African city without poverty requires genuine ethical emphasis on the importance of justice and dignity of the urban poor. The poor need to be liberated from the burden of

poverty. Ultimately, philosophy should assist in pointing to practical steps towards a better Africa, a continent where life flourishes and is nourished.

## **Conclusion**

The chapter has presented a philosophical argument for practical possibilities of envisioning a city without poverty. Ramose (1999: 52), highlights that to be a human being in an African community is to assert one's humanity by recognizing the humanness of others. Ignoring the distress of the marginalized urban poor is immoral and disrupts coherence in community. "Development cannot be considered in isolation from what it means to be African, who we are, what we are and what we hope for" (Casimir, et al., 2014: 166). Therefore it is important for the injustice causing poverty to be eliminated in order for the African community to flourish.

## **Conclusion**

This research sought to present a philosophical argument for justice and protection of dignity for the urban poor grounded on the indigenous politico-ethical principles of ubuntu. Due to policies implemented by the government such as Operation Murambatsvina (Operation Reject Filth) in 2005 and because of the economic crisis bedeviling the whole nation, the urban poor have continued to suffer ever deepening poverty. With this rise of masses of the poor in Harare, numerous challenges have also resulted. The experience of poverty and marginalization has made it difficult for them to have access to basic human requirements that include proper shelter, food, healthcare and education among other necessities. Accordingly, this philosophical pursuit argued for the realization of justice and dignity for the poor. The existence of poverty is a confirmation of moral decadence in the society.

Beginning particularly from the crisis of the notorious Operation Murambatsvina, the research exposed the injustice and poverty levels for the marginalized population of the urban poor of Harare. Operation Murambatsvina was the inhumane destruction of shelter and built structures belonging to the poor in the city. While the poor have been confronted with the challenge of poverty, the government of Zimbabwe has neglected and even perpetuated injustices against the urban poor. Right from 1980 when Zimbabwe gained independence, no significant attention has been paid to the urban poor. The philosophical examination of the historico-political and economic issues that have driven and continue to drive the growth of urban poverty in Harare confirmed that poverty in Harare deepened in the past two decades due to the continued economic problems facing Zimbabwe. The poor members of the society have become poorer over the years. After this argument, the research focused on the notion of human dignity by considering the intrinsic value of every human being and how this ought to be a directing

principle for the establishment of justice for the urban poor in Harare. The research presented ubuntu moral theory as a constructive comprehension of politics and power as the will-to-live that is required to confront poverty. In order for the society to flourish and progress towards eliminating poverty, there is need for practical resolutions against the immorality of deadly but preventable poverty. Enriching the poor through enhancing their capabilities; fair participation in production and development; resolving the biased urban scheme; and enabling the poor to access land which is itself a birthright are among some of the practical solutions offered.

The indifference and inattentiveness to the suffering being experienced by the poor is not only an evil but it is a threat to the promotion of the intrinsic worth of all human beings. Elimination of poverty ought to be one of the goals of development in the African continent and the entire world. Africa has enormous potential for successful development. The role of the ubuntu moral theory in human progress needs to be emphasized. Cloete (2019: 93) correctly affirms this by arguing that, “Guided by the collective wisdom of past generations, the community of the living are obligated to commit their lives and their legacy to future generations.” It is important for African philosophy to continue to examine ways of confronting moral problems such as the experience of deadly but preventable poverty facing people in communities across the world.

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