©ZEGU Press 2024

About the Journal

JOURNAL PURPOSE

The purpose of the *Kuveza neKuumba - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Design, Innovative Thinking and Practice is* to provide a forum for design and innovative solutions to daily challenges in communities.

CONTRIBUTION AND READERSHIP

Planners, engineers, social scientists, business experts, scholars and practitioners from various fields.

JOURNAL SPECIFICATIONS

Kuveza neKuumba - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Design, Innovative Thinking and Practice

ISSN 2957-8426 (Print)

SCOPE AND FOCUS

The journal is a forum for the discussion of ideas, scholarly opinions and case studies of multidisciplinary perspectives of design and innovative thinking. The journal is produced bi-annually.

Guidelines for Authors for the Kuveza Nekuumba Journal

Articles must be original contributions, not previously published and should not be under consideration for publishing elsewhere.

Manuscript Submission: Articles submitted to the *Kuveza neKuumba - Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University Journal of Design, Innovative Thinking and Practice are* reviewed using the double-blind peer review system. The author's name(s) must not be included in the main text or running heads and footers.

A total number of words: 5000-7000 words and set in 12-point font size width with 1.5 line spacing.
Language: British/UK English
Title: must capture the gist and scope of the article
Names of authors: beginning with the first name sand ending with the surname
Affiliation of authors: must be footnoted, showing the department and institution or organisation.
Abstract: must be 200 words
Keywords: must be five or six containing words that are not in the title
Body: Where the authors are more than three, use *et al.,*
Italicise *et al., ibid.,* words that are not English, not names of people or organisations, etc. When you use several authors confirming the same point, state the point and bracket them in one bracket and ascending order of dates and alphabetically separated by semi-colon e.g. (Falkenmark, 1989, 1990; Reddy, 2002; Dagdeviren and Robertson, 2011; Jacobsen *et al.,* 2012).

Referencing Style: Please follow the Harvard referencing style in that:
— In-text, citations should state the author, date and sometimes the page numbers.
— the reference list entered alphabetically, must include all the works cited in the article.

In the reference list, use the following guidelines, religiously:

Source from a Journal

Anim, D.O and Ofori-Asenso, R. (2020). Water Scarcity and COVID-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa. *The Journal of Infection*, *81*(2), 108-09.

    Banana, E, Chitekwe-Biti, B and Walnycki, A (2015). Co-Producing Inclusive City-Wide Sanitation Strategies: Lessons from Chinhoyi, Zimbabwe. *Environment and Urbanisation*, *27*(1), 35-54.

Neal, M.J. (2020). COVID-19 and Water Resources Management: Reframing Our Priorities as a Water Sector. *Water International*, *45*(5), 435-440.

Source from an Online Link

Armitage, N, Fisher-Jeffes L, Carden K, Winter K *et al.,* (2014). Water Research Commission: Water-sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) for South Africa: Framework and Guidelines. Available online: https://www.greencape.co.za/assets/Water-Sector-Desk-Content/WRC-Water-sensitive-urban-design-WSUD-for-South-Africa-framework-and-guidelines-2014.pdf. Accessed on 23 July 2020.

Source from a Published Book

Max-Neef, M. (1991). *Human Scale Development: Concepts, Applications and Further Reflections,* London: Apex Press.

Source from a Government Department (Reports or Plans)

National Water Commission (2004). Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Water Initiative. Commonwealth of Australia and the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. Available online: https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/water-reform/national-water-initiative-agreement-2004.pdf. Accessed on 27 June 2020.

The source being an online Newspaper article

The Herald (2020). Harare City Could Have Used Lockdown to Clean Mbare Market. *The Herald*, 14 April 2020. Available online: https://www.herald.co.zw/harare-city-could-have-used-lockdown-to-clean-mbare-market/. Accessed on 24 June 2020.

From Imagination to Reality on Child Spaces for Recreation: Insights and Foresights on Zimbabwe

Samson Mhizha[1]

Abstract

Much research on the importance of physical and recreational activities and play among children exists globally, though little has been done in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. More importantly, there is limited research evidence and policy dialogues on the importance of planning for child spaces for recreation and play in Zimbabwe. The main objective of the current study is to explore challenges and policy implications for recreational and play spaces in urban Zimbabwe. The study employs a literature review approach and reviews relevant studies from 1980 to 2023. The main challenges discussed include rapid urbanisation without development, little research, ambivalent policy and legal framework, corruption, politics of urban planning, invasions of play and recreational spaces, the prevalence of sedentary lifestyles and lack of scientific knowledge on the importance of physical activities. There is a dearth of public policies on the promotion of children's play and recreational opportunities, with the situation in communities compounded by a weak public capacity to plan, implement and enforce the promotion of recreational and play facilities.

Keywords: play, open space, resilience, town planning, urbanisation

INTRODUCTION

Globally, there is widespread recognition that play is vital for children's health, physical, social and emotional development

---

[1] Department of Applied Psychology, University of Zimbabwe, Harare, Zimbabwe; Future Africa Research Leadership Fellowship at Future Africa, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5958-0834

and overall well-being (Lester and Russell, 2010; Adjei-Boadi *et al.*, 2021; Lambert *et al.*, 2019). Consequently, children's right to play is popularised under Article 12 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (Adjei-Boadi *et al.*, 2021). For Adjei-Boadi *et al.* (*ibid.*), these two international instruments reckon the children's rights are "to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts." Moreover, there is mounting global appreciation of the role of children's recreational facilities and open spaces, especially in Target 11.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on sustainable cities which says: "By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities" (UN General Assembly, 2015:22).

The United Nations mandated all nations, developed and developing, to ensure that their children, among other populations, have access to recreational spaces, playgrounds and open spaces since they are critical in assuring good health and physical and emotional benefits such as reduction of stress and depression (Shoari *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, evidence has shown that greening of open urban spaces for play helps in reducing violence and crime (Mcdonald *et al.*, 2023), enhancing social cohesion and networks (Bille, Jensen and Buitenwerf, 2023), reducing the probability and risk of obesity and overweight (Dadvand, Gascon and Markevych, 2019; Islam, Johnston and Sly, 2020), increasing physical activity (Dadvand, Gascon and Markevych, 2019; Islam, Johnston and Sly, 2020) and improving mental well-being (Bille, Jensen and Buitenwerf, 2023).

Recreational spaces, open and green spaces and playgrounds have also been credited for spaces of relaxation and connection with nature (Veitch, Salmon and Ball, 2010). Nevertheless, Janssen and King (2015) and Lambert *et al.* (2019) have reasoned that children's creational activities are influenced by the environment and their perceptions of neighbourhood design, including factors like pedestrian facilities, aesthetics

and traffic issues. Janssen and King (2015) write that for children to enjoy play in recreational facilities, they consider its playability based on the presence of trails, very low-traffic streets, undeveloped green spaces, playgrounds and cul-de-sacs. Most of the research done by social science researchers on playability has been done in developed countries, especially in Europe, North America and Australia (Lambert *et al.*, 2019; Barr *et al.*, 2020). There are very few studies on the importance of play and physical activities in Africa, especially on planning for children's play and recreational spaces. However, it is worth noting that some recent academic outputs, for example, Oyeyemi *et al.* (2019 and Barr *et al.* (2020), on play and physical activities in urban areas in Africa have focused on adults, with little on play activities among children. In addition, in recent years, there have been efforts to participate in the universal Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth to generate national baseline data on physical activity and environments that enable physical activity (Ocansey *et al.*, 2014). Countries which have been involved include Zimbabwe, South Africa, Kenya and Ghana. Regardless of the huge knowledge of how crucial play is to children's development and growth, including their general social and mental well-being (Veitch *et al.*, 2010;;Wood, *et al.*, 2017; Bille, Jensen and Buitenwerf, 2023), there is a deafening silence on the matter both in terms of policy and scientific outputs. This article seeks to contribute to the limited knowledge of the importance of considering play among children during urban planning. It examines the extent to which playability features in Zimbabwe's urban design. This is against the backdrop of rapid urbanisation across Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular and the associated lifestyle changes and declines in physical activity (Barr *et al.*, 2020).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

RESILIENCE AND PHYSICAL SPACES
The current study shows that there is a relationship between resilience and ecology among children. Höltge *et al.* (2021) report findings from 14 countries showing that certain particular environmental contexts shape resilience. Though social and psychological factors influence resilience, the

physical environment in which children grow may shape the development of resilience processes. Ungar (2017) writes that there is a relationship between neighbourhoods and neurons via person-environment interactions. Resultingly, it is significant to appreciate the physical environments that may affect children's resilience (Ungar and Theron, 2020). Literature shows that physical environments with higher social cohesion can reduce child maltreatment (Abdullah *et al.*, 2020), while more socially interconnected neighbourhoods are linked to a reduction in stressful life events and lower levels of suicidal ideation, anxiety, depression and aggressive behaviour among children (Kingsbury *et al.*, 2020).

A qualitative study conducted in the US on environmental health experiences among children in urban areas showed that resilience was developed and had sub-themes such as trust, leadership, engagement, representation, trust and safety (Bogar *et al.*, 2018), while trust and safety helped them to develop resilience by navigating their local spaces and develop "cognitive risk maps" for finding safer spaces such as community gardens (*ibid.*). Scholars have shown increased interest in studying the relationship between people and their natural ecologies (Seymour, 2016). Studies show that children who spend more time in nature have improved well-being, health development and positive attitudes toward the environment (Gill, 2014). Indeed, even among adults, Wood *et al.* (2017) reveal that public green spaces were linked to increased mental well-being. Hatala *et al.* (2020) show that youths from Canadian indigenous tribes showed that they had a calming influence, offered a sense of hope and helped them deal with anger, fear and general difficulties and stress in their daily lives.

A study conducted in Africa shows that physical spaces and the safety of those spaces influenced how people adapted to their ecologies and how built ecologies are shaped (Watson, 2009). Watson (*ibid.*) reasons that town planning has customarily excluded the poor as is shown by the spatial planning in urban areas during apartheid in South Africa (Maharaj, 2020). Oosthuizen and Burnett (2019) conducted a study on youths in poor townships in Johannesburg and perceived their use of spaces and found categories of space based on activity and

safety: safe activity supportive, unsafe activity supportive, safe activity unsupportive and unsafe activity unsupportive. These scholars concluded that community mapping is useful as stakeholders can pick safe environments where they can conduct physical and sporting activity programmes for youth to increase participation (*ibid.*). The development of such spaces may aid in providing networks of activities that can promote youth resilience (Ungar and Theron, 2020).

Studies also provide evidence of the impact of one's physical neighbourhood on mental health and resilience. A South African study assessing the relationship between social capital and youth mental health utilising family social capital and neighbourhood social capital as its primary variables, outlines that family social capital, as measured by household income, decreased the odds of depression, while higher perceptions of crime in the participants' neighbourhoods increased the chances of depression (Somefun and Fotso, 2020). These findings suggest that although increased family social capital is associated with decreased mental illness, it does not necessarily promote increased mental well-being (*ibid.*).

A study based in Reservoir Hills in Durban, South Africa, a historically Indian middle-income area, examined community members' perceptions of safety regarding urban open spaces (Perry *et al.*, 2008). Parks and open spaces in the neighbourhood were viewed as unsafe by participants, who felt fearful of these spaces due to potential criminal activities, regardless of whether the spaces were well-maintained or not (*ibid.*). This contrasts with research globally, that generally indicates more green space is associated with lower incidences of illegal activity in urban environments (Shepley *et al.*, 2019). These contrasts echo Ungar and Theron's (2020) arguments that resilience must be understood contextually and locally produced, hence no two ecological systems are the same.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Recreational public places are important in developing countries as it is an integral part of child development as it allows children to express both positive and negative feelings.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IMAGINATION CHILD RECREATIONAL SPACES

The Blue Brain Teacher (2023) alludes that imagination is not just a playful escape, but a pivotal tool in a child's mental and emotional development. This fascinating cognitive process not only fuels creativity and fantasy, but also plays a central role in shaping children's understanding of the world around them. *The Blue Brain Teacher* (*ibid.*) posits that imagination is recognised as a critical cognitive process, integral to the development of social cognition in both infancy and childhood. It is important in adulthood as it generates new ideas from old ones and shapes thoughts about alternatives to current realities. Field (2016) avers that the landscapes designed for children are the stage on which innumerable dramas, comedies, games and imaginative play can unfold and designing spaces that promote imaginative play can help to support children's physical, emotional and social growth. Field (*ibid.*) observes that while few would argue against these efforts, it would be a disservice to the children if the designed spaces were meant only to develop their strength and balance at the expense of emotional and social skills such as creativity, empathy and cooperation.

Yonzon, (2022) asserts that children's play has a central role in everyday educational reality of early childhood settings. As a common practice, play explorations act as tools for supporting children's development. Yonzon, (*ibid.*) alludes that for most infants and toddlers engaging in imaginary play, this constitutes a new reality. Fragkiadaki *et al.* (2021), observe that the early experience of imaginary play involving improvisation and extending stories as part of the institutional practice, poses continuous challenges for infants, toddlers and educators. Vygotsky, (1966) suggests that play is the main source of development in early childhood and children, giving meaning to things when in imaginary play. Vygotsky (=*ibid.*) further suggests that tools play an auxiliary role in individuals' mental functioning, creating a mediating activity which is considered a psychological tool. Play is understood as the most critical activity across home, childcare and school, allowing progressive and significant physical, social, cognitive and emotional development for children (Fleer, 2013; Garner and Bergen, 2015). Imagination play is important for children's ability to

move from modelled real-life actions, relationships with others and concrete objects in social relations to abstracting and enabling playful and symbolic use of objects.

METHODOLOGY

The study employs a literature review method to collect published studies in recreational spaces for children, both in a local Zimbabwean context and internationally. The literature search focuses on published studies in academic publications and a few media outputs. This study collated studies that focused on particular child spaces for recreation and play. The primary databases used to source international literature are the Web of Science and SCOPUS. Key words included in searches, in varying combinations, were "child spaces", "open spaces", "recreation", "children", "play" and "green spaces" (Pillay, 2023). Search results were screened to include only journal articles and book chapters. The publications are from 1980 to 2023. For more local literature from Zimbabwe and Africa, SCOPUS, Web of Science and SABINET African Journals databases were used. Search results were filtered for journal articles and book chapters. A few relevant media outputs have been included.

FINDINGS

DEFINING PLAY

It is important to define play and recreation. According to Lynch and Moore (2016), play is a primary occupation for children and is recognised as a universal human right. Gill (2021) says play is well-acknowledged as a major feature of a child's life while activities that delineate children's play can change with age and context. Play is defined differently by people from different contexts, hence the exercise is not easy and is worsened by trying to compare it to terms such as 'recreation' and 'leisure'. These terms share similar characteristics (including the involvement of some level of physical activities) and outcomes such as reduction in stress and improved health. Nevertheless, McLean and Hurd (2012) note that play can be distinguished from leisure and recreation, although the lines of distinctions can be blurred. While play can be broadly defined as an activity that is self-motivated and undertaken for intrinsic purposes,

leisure refers generally to how an individual uses his or her free time (Henderson, 2010, cited in Adjei-Boadi, 2021; McLean and Hurd, 2012). On the other hand, recreation is defined as activities undertaken during one's free time and these activities are generally voluntary and for pleasure purposes (Henderson, 2010, cited in Adjei, cited in Adjei-Boadi, 2021).

It is important to note that governments in developed countries invest heavily in the subject, that they even define play themselves. According to the Scottish Government (2013:12), "play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child". Not to be outdone, the Welsh Assembly Government (2002:3) reasons that play "is performed for no external goal or reward and is a fundamental and integral part of healthy development - not only for individual children but also for the society in which they live" Bartlett (1999) also defines play as children getting involved "passionately in their surroundings through exploration, manipulation, physical exuberance, experimentation and pretence, either alone or with others" For this study, play, leisure and recreational activities are used interchangeably as are playgrounds, open spaces and recreational facilities.

BELIEFS AND KNOWLEDGE ON PLAY AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES
It is important to note that looking at beliefs and knowledge of play is very critical. Governments, parents and stakeholders that value play will promote it and those that do not, will neglect it. Lester and Russel (2010) write that some adult caregivers take play as a socialisation process and have the role of impacting cultural beliefs and may promote it. Nonetheless, some adults believe that play is unsettling, threatening (assuming that children may be bullied) or of no value, leading to prohibitions and sanctions, yet children appreciate play greatly (*ibid.*). However, some parents do not promote play because of their hurried lifestyles, punishing work schedules, preference for their children to use devices like smartphones and their increased emphasis on academics over play (Ginsburg, 2007). Aribino and Muchemwa (2023) argue that in Zimbabwe, there is an emerging phenomenon of the development of new residential settlements such as gated

communities, high-density areas and new schools which do not have recreational spaces for children. They lament that it is clear that those in charge of developing those new suburbs and schools have no working knowledge of the importance of play for children (*ibid.*). According to Chitagu (2021), most local authorities no longer reserve land for child recreational centres because of their lack of understanding of the importance of play.

Moyo and Chipfupa (2021) conducted a study on parents and children in Binga District and report that only 10.8% of children who participated in their study were aware of their rights to play while only 0.7% of the parents interviewed knew that children had the rights to play. This means that most adults and parents in Zimbabwe, or at least in Binga, are not aware that children have a right to play. Alternatively, Čavojová, Šrol and Ballová Mikušková (2022) argue that the main challenge is the lack of scientific reasoning in planning, as scientific evidence is expected to help question unfounded beliefs and the efficacy of alternative policy options, and is instrumental in arriving at it ultimate scientific evidence-based policies.

Lack of proper knowledge on play is due to the unfortunate lack of scientific evidence in policy-making, possibly because of mutual scepticism between local scientists and policy-makers (Strydom *et aal.*, 2010) and poor funding for research for local scientists (Ganda, 2017). Stewart (2023) reasons that evidence-informed policies are very critical as they aim to improve societal outcomes and development, reduce harm, raise transparency and, therefore, also governance. Certainly, because of these benefits, there has been a noteworthy rise in investment in activities to increase the use of research evidence in policy in developing and developed countries in recent years (*ibid.*).

Ganda (2017), as did NEPAD (2014); reports that in 2014, Zimbabwe had a budget of only US$24 million covering salaries and capital expenditures for universities when single universities in the West budgeted for more than US$3 billion per year for research expenses only (Zalaznick, 2023). In psychology, in the West, research is perhaps the most satisfying

and lucrative divisional field, ahead of all other divisions, while in Zimbabwe, one wonders whether there is a field known as research psychology. For that reason, there is evidence that although almost 90% of all children and adolescents live in developing countries, only about 10% of research on mental health in children comes from these countries (Kieling *et al.*, 2011; Dorsey *et al.*, 2015; Sharma *et al.*, 2022). For that reason, people in developing countries do not appreciate the importance of play because there is little research being conducted there. Ganda (2017), having worked in the higher and tertiary education ministry at director level, observes that challenges for cutting-edge research in Africa, especially in Zimbabwe, include: lack of funding (research is not a priority for budget decision-makers); poor investment in education to PhD level (focus being on basic education); skills migration to overseas institutions; and limited international collaboration. He concludes that the lack of cutting-edge research and the absence of evidence-based policy-making, are major hindrances to development in Africa.

LACK OF PLAY AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

According to Manyanga *et al.* (2018), physical inactivity, the fourth leading cause of death worldwide, together with obesity, is increasing globally. In developing countries like Zimbabwe, childhood obesity often co-exists with undernutrition (stunting, wasting and underweight), leading to a "double burden of malnutrition" (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, there is limited literature and mostly unpublished data on physical activity for Zimbabwean children (*ibid.*). Generally, physical activity levels for Zimbabwean children are lower than elsewhere (*ibid.*). Manyanga *et al.* 2023 and the WHO (2022) write that physical activities for children are associated with several benefits that include improved academic performance, adiposity profiles, cognition and mental and physical health. Though there have been calls to increase physical activity (Makaza *et al.* 2016; Makaza *et al.* 2018) and minimise recreational screen time among children and adolescents in Zimbabwe, the present findings indicate that there have not been significant improvements between 2016 and 2022 (Manyanga *et al.* 2023).

Manyanga posits that there is need for more targeted public health messages, delivered in school settings, promoting various forms of physical activity, encouraging 'breaking sitting time' and promoting active transportation (regardless of the belief that affluent people should not use public transport in Zimbabwe). Rural children are more active than urban ones due to less access to recreational screens and a lack of vehicular transportation to school.

Pencil *et al.* (2023), as did the WHO (2000), note that overweight and obesity are significant public health concerns, with approximately 5% to 16.5% of adolescents in Africa being obese. Zimbabwe is one of the countries with a rising and unresolved obesity prevalence of 36.6% among adolescents since 2015 (Mukora-Mutseyekwa, Nengomasha and Adjei, 2019). Obesity leads to an increase in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as Type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM), cardiovascular diseases and hypertension, which are currently part of Zimbabwe's biggest health threats (Kamvura *et al.*, 2022). Zimbabwe is experiencing a nutrition transition where the consumption of obesogenic foods is high in urban areas and energy-dense foods associated with Western lifestyles have been adopted (Matsungo and Chopera, 2020]. The causes of obesity are multifactorial, including individual, environmental and societal factors.

Socio-cultural perceptions and beliefs fuel the increase in overweight and obesity (Pencil, Matsungo and Hayami, 2021). In many African countries, including Zimbabwe, it is commonly believed that healthy people should not be skinny as it symbolises poverty and ill-health (Renzaho, 2004; Reese-Masterson and Murakwani, 2016; Pencil and Hayami, 2021). In Zimbabwe, where physical activity education is part of the school curriculum (Manyanga *et al.*, 2023), increasing adolescents' physical activity levels should be achieved through both organised and recreational sports activities.

CORRUPT COUNCIL AND NATIONAL PUBLIC OFFICIALS
In Zimbabwe, there is an outcry that local authorities are taking advantage of the rising need for residential stands and are sacrificing space reserved for children's recreational facilities

and blamed that on greedy local authority officials (Dube and Chirisa, 2012; Marongwe, Mukoto and Chatiza, 2011; Muchadenyika, 2015; Aribino and Muchemwa, 2023). Muchadenyika (2015) writes that at one time the Movement for Democratic Chanage (MDC) party dismissed all their Chitungwiza councillors having found them to be very corrupt. Marongwe, Mukoto and Chatiza (2011) are disturbed to note that one minister responsible for the local government, once identified a piece of land reserved for recreational purposes in the city and influenced council officials to submit to him an application for change of land use and then approved the process himself and paid just US$2 300 for this stand measuring almost 20 hectares situated in the leafy Borrowdale suburb. In addition, Chatiza and Gotora (2021) write that land earmarked for recreational parks and other uses had been subdivided by land barons without even following appropriate channels. It occurred that individuals and council officials who identified any piece of land, developed it and claimed ownership, had the right to develop it.

Mate, Oosterom and Mpofu's (2023) use of urban space is influenced by authoritarian politics that reflect broader trends in urban politics in Zimbabwe. Since the electoral successes of the MDC in urban areas, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has selectively and strategically used patronage, surveillance, repression and legal manoeuvring to subvert MDC-dominated city councils (Muchadenyika, 2015). Markets are sites of urban ruling party patronage, with ZANU-PF brokers (referred to as 'space barons') granting access to vending spaces in exchange for real or feigned support to ZANU-PF (Ndawana, 2018; Oosterom and Gukurume, 2022). Informal traders occupy and use urban space in a decidedly illegal way as they use open and recreational spaces against their original uses (Mate, oostero, and Mpofu, 2023).

POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK
There exist laws and policies in Zimbabwe that have mixed signals on play and physical activity, with some promoting it, while others are silent on the subject. Circular No. 17 of 2004 by the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and Housing set the parameters for regulating housing development in

Zimbabwe using three facets: Planning, Infrastructure and House Construction (Marongwe, Mukoto and Chatiza, 2011; Chatiza, 2012). The Circular, among other standards, directed that each local government authority can set the percentage of area for recreational areas although the national minimum area was put at 5% of the planning area (Chatiza, 2012:14). The Child Rights Barometer (2018) writes that Zimbabwe's constitution upholds the rights of persons with disability and the Disability Act was made law in 2014. Internationally, Zimbabwe ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability in 2013 (*ibid.*).

Section 83 is dedicated to the rights of persons with disability and obligates the state to take appropriate means within the limit of resources available to enable persons with disability to participate in social and recreational activities (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the Zimbabwean government promulgated a policy on persons with disability (GoZ, 2021). The policy asserts that children with disabilities should have equal access and opportunity with other children to participate in play, recreation, leisure and sporting activities, including in the school system and directed relevant stakeholders to develop national guidelines for ensuring inclusion of children with disabilities (GoZ, 2021).

In 2019, the Zimbabwe government set out the national human settlement policy. The policy developed the national human settlements policy which stipulated that human settlements are areas where people live, work and play and the inhabitants thereof have the obligation to contribute to the planning, development and management of their areas (GoZ, 2019). The government of Zimbabwe (*ibid.*) laments that approved layout plans have been violated to the extent that beneficiaries have been building on undesignated land such as recreational stands and open spaces and indicated that those settled on recreational facilities will be relocated and the land's original purposes restored. The government (2019), in the policy, promised to set up policies to cater for many purposes, including recreational purposes. Additionally, the Zimbabwe government developed the school health policy in 2018. The policy, among other things, sought to provide recreational and

safe play facilities in schools and specified that safe schools should include safe playground spaces (GoZ, 2018). Nonetheless, no other laws and policies spelt out the children's rights to play in Zimbabwe.

NEGLECT OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Chiweshe and Dandah (2021) affirm that most recreational facilities in most urban areas in Harare are in a sorry state and unsuitable for crying out for repairs and maintenance from local authorities. These local authorities have been reallocating businesses, churches or housing premises on lands originally set for recreational purposes, showing the high levels of corruption in the country (*ibid.*). Over the years, the impacts of bad governance, corruption, economic crises and lack of upkeep have led to the deterioration of recreational infrastructure.

Chiweshe and Dandah (*ibid.*) lament that recreational spaces such as the Stoddart Hall in Mbare, Harare, are in a bad state due to lack of upkeep. The two scholars note that most government and local authority facilities lack maintenance due to no maintenance budgets and, therefore, the country cannot host international sporting events. The sorry state of the facilities means sports development and tourism are affected. Perhaps the worst council is Chitungwiza, where council officials engaged in illegal land deals involving selling playgrounds and recreational spaces to home-seekers, with some houses being built very close to grounds' touchlines (*ibid.*). Traditionally, Zimbabwe has used sports to spread health messages in the fight against HIV-AIDS and malaria. Community sports are avenues for unemployed youths to build survival, livelihoods and resilience through leisure and gambling (*ibid.*).

Mangizvo and Rupiya (2021) claim that recreational parks are an important visual element of the urbanscape, traditionally marked by their open access, recreational value and horticultural design. Urban parks came into being in the mid-19th century in the United Kingdom as a response to the intolerable living conditions of Victorian industrial cities (Tzoulas and James, 2004). The parks have important functions and are places where city residents may experience the beauty

of nature, breathe fresh air and have receptive recreation in the form of music and art appreciation. Harare Gardens located in the city of Harare in Zimbabwe, is an example of a park that was not well-maintained during the late 1990s through to 2010 because of limited financial resources. As a result, it has become a haven for muggers, prostitutes, vagrants and street kids (Mbiriyamveka 2010). The Gweru Civic Centre Park was also said to be in a poor state with the local authority neglecting it as the vegetation wilted while the infrastructure in the park is being vandalised.

INVASION BY SPACE BARONS
The trend is furthermore influenced by authoritarian politics that reflect broader trends in urban politics in Zimbabwe. Since the electoral successes of the MDC in urban areas, ZANU-PF has selectively and strategically used patronage, surveillance, repression and legal manoeuvring to subvert MDC-dominated city councils (McGregor 2013; Muchadenyika 2015). Markets are sites of urban, ruling party patronage, with ZANU-PF brokers (referred to as 'space barons') granting access to vending spaces in exchange for real or feigned support to ZANU-PF (Ndawana 2018; Oosterom and Gukurume, 2022).

Dube and Chirisa (2012) opine that Africa is haunted as it faces a myriad of challenges including, among others, urbanisation, rapid unemployment and poverty, despite the continent's large natural and human resources endowment. Dube and Chirisa (*ibid.*) also reason and quote Kessides (2006) by saying Africa's problems are widely attributed to, and aggravated by, the ever-increasing growth without development commonly described as 'counter-urbanisation' Dube and Chirisa (*ibid.*) further state that recreational and public open spaces have been invaded by innovative unemployed youths and adults.

IMPORTANCE OF RECREATIONAL PARKS
Parks are also established to provide fresh air, greenery, contact with nature and a framework for people from all parts of society to mix and socialise. They provide opportunities for people to engage in sedentary behaviour as they sit and relax while enjoying nature (Cohen *et al.* 2007). Parks are renowned for improving the environmental quality of urban areas (Edwards

and Tsouros 2006). They contribute towards air and water purification, at the same time; they are important in wind and noise filtering and microclimate stabilisation (Chiesura, 20043). The urban green, which includes garden parks, also helps to reduce urban temperatures (Dubbeling *et al.*, 2009).

Urbanites are, therefore, inclined to appreciate this moderation in temperatures in parks and may visit parks just to enjoy the coolness. Parks, by their very nature, attract a high concentration of birds and other wildlife in their vicinity. They, therefore, compensate for the lack of natural habitat in urban environments and, in a way, contribute to the conservation of biodiversity (Goddard *et al.,* 2009). Naturalists find comfort in such environments. As Jim (2004) postulates, cities with high-quality and generous green spaces in the form of urban parks and gardens, epitomise good planning and management. Such cities provide a healthy environment for humans at the same time bestowing pride on its citizenry and government.

It is also apparent that urban parks provide social and psychological services to urban residents. A visit to the park may reduce stress (Hansmann *et al.* 2007). A park experience may enhance contemplativeness, rejuvenate the city dweller and provide tranquillity and a sense of peacefulness (Hami *et al.,* 2011). They offer more than the visual enhancement of scenery. They offer psychological benefits, therapeutic and spiritual qualities (Krenichyn, 2006). Studies reveal that the mere presence of greenery in the form of trees, grass and flowers, is powerful enough to confer psychological benefits (*ibid.*).

Recreational spaces are often undervalued by city officials in the fast-growing cities of developing countries, thereby detracting from sustainable development. Therefore, sustainable planning of open spaces and recreational facilities in cities demands greater attention and care to ensure healthy and vibrant lifestyles for all residents (Khan, 2019:1). Recreational facilities encompass various types of facilities. The major types of facilities that draw particular attention to city planners while preparing physical or layout plans for cities include open spaces, parks, playfields and children's playgrounds. In the

case of Zimbabwe, the stipulated planning standards and provisions regarding open space facilities for cities are generally understood and applied within the context of operative master plans, structure plans or any other relevant local development plan. It must be borne in mind, however, that these statutory plans are prepared and administered in terms of the Regional Town and Country Planning Act (Chapter 29:12 of 1996) andallied legislation and statutory instruments – that impinge on land-use planning and development control. Recreational facilities are recommended to be within walking distance from residents' homes and should cater for all age groups of the beneficiary population.

General guidelines for open spaces prioritise safety and integration, instead of segregation of play areas for different ages, environments and access for people with special needs. Arguably, a review of planning standards for densified residential areas in Harare demands an analysis of the city-wide open space requirements based on socio-spatial and economic audit profiles of both existing and envisioned recreational facilities in the city.

PLANNING IN AFRICA AND URBANISATION

The challenges Africa is facing include unemployment and poverty (UN-HABITAT, 2006-7) and these have not spared its modern cities. This is despite the continent's vast human and natural resource endowments (e.g., diamonds in Marange, Zimbabwe; copper in Zambia; and oil in Nigeria). Indeed, Africa is experiencing a resource curse, as the continent remains underdeveloped and impoverished despite the abundance of natural resources (Mlambo, 2022). Cities in Sub-Saharan Africa are buffeted by novel challenges on a day-to-day basis. These challenges are widely attributed to and aggravated by the ever-increasing growth without development, commonly described as 'counter-urbanisation (Dube and Chirisa, 2012; Crankshaw and Borel-Saladin, 2019)). Local authorities in this region are thus in a fix. Rapid urbanisation in the region is a cause for concern; its shockwaves have a nesting effect (Dube and Chirisa 2012). Along the same lines, Kamete and Lindell (2010) note that unlike in developed countries, where urbanisation, economic development and industrialisation, occurred

simultaneously, in Africa, there has always been a mismatch between the very lethargic economic growth and rapid urbanisation. Resultingly, proper urban life promoted through proper urban planning and reality, that is essentially informal housing, work and lives, caused conflicts linked to illegality, and extra-legality in urban land use became more severe that urban planning systems in Africa became less useful (Kamete and Lindell, 2010).

Muchadenyika (2015) notes that scholars have dealt with the urbanisation of poverty and the informalisation of cities that has led to the deterioration and neglect of recreational areas. Academic views on African urbanisation are diverse. Some scholars reason that the phenomenon of urbanisation without development has made African urban areas hopeless, irrecoverable and degrading places, while authorities note these African towns are marked by limited formal employment, unregulated growth, lack of affordable and decent housing, acute environmental degradation, lack of social services, neglected and failing infrastructure, criminality, pauperisation and poor urban management and rising inequalities.

DISCUSSION
The study defines play and recreation as the primary occupation of children and is recognised as a universal right. The study reveals that the difference between play, recreation and leisure can be difficult to distinhuish. The study defines play as children getting involved passionately in their surroundings through exploration, manipulation, physical exuberance and pretence alone or with others. The study reveals that there are different beliefs and knowledge about play with adult caregivers viewing play as a socialisation process which has the role of impacting cultural beliefs and promoting them. The study shows that there has been the emergence of new residential areas with schools which do not offer social amenities such as recreational facilities that socialise children. In support of this study, McCormack (2023) posits that the continuation of the creation of urban centres that lack recreational facilities continues to reduce the chance of psychological and physical fitness of residents.

The study indicated the lack of reserved recreational areas by local authorities and planners. Similar to the present study, Bakar (2016) observes that in most developing countries, there is a lack of recreational facilities and this causes lower participation in recreational activities. The study reveals that lack of proper knowledge backed by scientific evidence in policy-making, has led to poor regional and town planning that has overlooked the importance of play and recreational facilities (Mazhindu and Munanga, 2022). The study observes underfunding and poor investment as the causes of a lack of cutting-edge research which is also leading to the absence of evidence-based policy-making. Consistent with the study is Katowa-Mukwato (2018), who observes that lack of evidence-based research has caused urban problems in Ethiopia, as policy-makers are not wellinformed on the need for social amenities. Lack of evidence-based findings on the importance of recreational facilities is leading to the deterioration of the health of people due to the lack of physical activities.

The study reveals that there is lack of play and physical activity that is becoming, together with obesity, the leading cause of death worldwide. The study shows that child obesity co-exists with malnutrition and physical activity levels for Zimbabwean children are lower than elsewhere. The study reveals that there has been a surge in on-screen play activity among children and adolescents in Zimbabwe. The lack of play and physical inactivity has led to obesity in children across Zimbabwe. In support of the study is Pradinuk (2011), who notes that physical inactivity is inversely correlated with the risk of obesity in children as they do not burn enough calories. Consistent with the study is Bhargava (2016), positing that there is an association between lack of physical activity and overweight and obesity among school-going children as there are no recreational activities. The lack of play is causing multiple problems among children because there has been a surge in on-screen activity rather than physical activities.

The study reveals that there has been corruption in council and national public offices with officials taking advantage of the need for residential stands by people. This has led to the distribution of spaces reserved for recreational facilities. Similar

to the study, *The Herald* (2021) reports that there has been mushrooming of businesses around recreational facilities and parks in Zimbabwe due to corruption by public officials extorting money from unsuspecting business people, giving rise to illegal dumpsites. The study shows that there has been the grabbing of land reserved for recreational facilitiesby land barons, turning them into residential stands. The study also shows that informal traders usurped recreational facilities for their businesses. The study notes that there has been negligence of sports and recreational facilities in Zimbabwe. Due to corruption in local authorities, sports and recreational facilities have been converted into residential stands and churches.

The study reveals that parks are an important part of the urbanscape but they have not been maintained, thus they have deteriorated. Similar to the study, Razak (2016) observes that parks play an important role in the urban landscape as well as helping people relax and reduce psychological pressure. The study reveals the importance of recreational facilities as these provide fresh air and greenery to urban areas as well as purification for water, while reducing urban temperature. The study shows that parks provide social psychology by providing peaceful areas to urban dwellers to reduce stress. In support of the study, Ellis and Schwartz (2016) observe that parks provide access to recreational opportunities values, spur local economies, combat crimes and protect cities from environmental impact. The study shows that Africa lacks regional and urban planning, even with endowments in natural resources, the continent has remained behind. In support of the study, Simon (2015) observes that in Ibadan, Nigeria, there has been poor planning and housing is encroaching on recreational facilities. Consistent with the study is Ajayi (2022), who alludes that there is lack of planning for appropriate amenities in urban open spaces.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Child and planning-related policies and laws in Zimbabwe offer mixed signals regarding the recreation and play opportunities for children. Some are clear that planners should offer recreational facilities or open spaces for children's play, while

others are silent. This tallies with the lack of research on the area, the view that a healthy and prosperous person should not be skinny and the negative views on active transportation. Most universities in these countries do not consider themselves to be research centres, but graduate-churning institutions, hence the lack of scholarly contributions. Policy-makers, corporate key stakeholders and, sometimes, scholars themselves, do not deem universities as centres for research. Zimbabwe boasts very high literacy rates but very poor research knowledge-generation.

Perhaps the worst finding from the study is that some local councils and national public officials are driven by a lack of knowledge and corrupt tendencies to not set aside recreational facilities by diverting that land to other purposes. Evidence shown in this study implies the likelihood of worsening of current challenges for children, unless conscious efforts are made to address them. Evidence suggests a growing incidence of sedentary lifestyles, less physical activity and increasing health challenges associated with obesity among children and youth in Zimbabwe. Children from rural areas appear to have better physical activities. However, the importance of play remains an overlooked area of research in the planning literature, though it has vital benefits for the mental and physical well-being of children. Future research could engage with the wider interdisciplinary play literature by expanding the scope of the review to include journals including, but not limited to, play, sociology, environmental psychology and early childhood education discourses.Future research can be transdisciplinary, involving local and national planning officials, corporations and academics to focus on age-inclusive and support urban areas. For the planning and play nexus to mature, research must go beyond disciplinary boundaries, age-based assumptions and normative arguments to engage with questions of how planning can create change and meaningfully foster play.

- Local authorities should engage the community on how public facilities, such as garden parks, could be improved and encourage residents to voluntarily participate in planting, maintaining and protecting the park and other green sites. There is need to educate urban residents on the viability and importance of

recreational facilities. The facilities could be utilised to bestow environmental and health awareness and literacy on the residents through taking responsible action.

- The disused and dilapidated recreational facilities should be revamped so that they meet residents' needs. Children's playgrounds must have safe equipment that meets their needs. Recreational facilities should provide for a wider spectrum of activities. They should host functions such as book fairs and cultural and music expos.

REFERENCES

Abdullah, A., Emery, C. R. and Jordan, L. P. (2020). Neighbourhood Collective Efficacy and Protective Effects on Child Maltreatment: A Systematic Literature Review. *Health Soc. Care Community, 28*, 1863-1883. doi: 10.1111/hsc.13047.

Adjei-Boadi, D. *et al,* (2021). Neighbourhood, Built Environment and Children's Outdoor Play Spaces in Urban Ghana: Review of Policies and Challenges. *Landsc Urban Plan,* 218:104288. doi: 10.1016/j.landurbplan.2021.104288. PMID: 34887606; PMCID: PMC7612076.

Aribino, N. and Muchemwa, C. (2023). New Affluent Suburbs and Lack of Knowledge. Where is the Play Centre For Children? *The Herald,* 15 August, 2023.

Barr, A.L. *et al,* (2020). Socio-demographic Inequities Associated with Participation in Leisure-time Physical Activity in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Individual Participant Data Meta-analysis. *BMC Public Health, 20*:927. doi: 10.1186/s12889-020-08987-w.

Bartlett, S. (1999). Children's Experience of the Physical Environment in Poor Urban Settlements and the Implications for Policy, Planning and Practice. *Environment and Urbanisation, 11*(2):63-74.

Bille, R.A., Jensen, K.E and Buitenwerf, R. (2023).Global Patterns in Urban Green Space are Strongly Linked to Human Development and Population Density Urban for Urban Green, 86 (2023), Article 127980, 10.1016/j.ufug.2023.127980

Bogar, S. *et al,* (2018). More than Gangsters and Girl Scouts: Environmental Health Perspectives of Urban Youth. *Health Place, 54*, 50-61. doi: 10.1016/j.healthplace.2018.08.006

Čavojová V., Šrol, J. and Ballová Mikušková, E. (2022). How Does Scientific Reasoning Correlate with Health-related Beliefs and Behaviours During the COVID-19 Pandemic? *Journal of Health Psychology. 27*(3), 534-547. doi:10.1177/1359105320962266

Chatiza, K. (2012). Review of the Planning Regulations and Plan Approval Processes in the City of Harare. The City of Harare, Dialogue on Shelter and Zimbabwe Homeless People's Federation.

Chatiza, K. and Gotorah, P. (2021). The Varying Shades of Settlement Informality in Zimbabwe's Urban Areas and How this Impacts Public Sector Regularisation Attitudes and Responses. *Journal of Urban Systems and Innovations for Resilience in Zimbabwe-JUSIRZ, 3*(2), 38-67.

Chiesura, A. (2004). The Role of Urban Parks for the Sustainable City. *Landscape and Urban Planning, 68*, 129-138.

Child Rights Barometer (2018), Zimbabwe — Measuring government efforts to protect girls and Boys. Retrieved from World Vision International Homepage, accessed on 15 November 2021.

Chiweshe, M. and Dandah, G. (2021). Sport and Leisure Promotion in Urban Zimbabwe: Instrument for Sustainable Development and Resilience-building. *Journal of Urban Systems and Innovations for Resilience in Zimbabwe 3*(10), 171-193.

Cohen, D.A.. *et al.* (2007). Contribution of Public Parks to Physical Activity? *American Journal of Public Health, 97*(3), 509-514.

Crankshaw, O. and Borel-Saladin, J. (2019). Causes of Urbanisation and Counter-urbanisation in Zambia: Natural Population Increase or Migration? *Urban Studies, 56*(10), 2005-2020. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098018787964

Dadvand, P., Gascon, M. and Markevych, I. (2019). *Green Spaces and Child Health and Development. Biodiversity and Health in the Face of Climate Change.* Cham: Springer.

Dorsey, S. *et al.* (2015). Qualitative Study of Mental Health Problems among Orphaned Children and Adolescents in Tanzania. *J Nerv Ment Dis, 203*(11):864-70. doi 10.1097/NMD.0000000000000388. PMID: 26488916; PMCID: PMC4633702.

Dubbeling, M. *et al* (2009). Building Resilient Cities. *Urban Agriculture Magazine, 22*, 3-11.

Dube, D and Chirisa, I. (2012). The Informal City: Assessing the Scope, Variants and Direction in Harare, Zimbabwe. *Global Advanced Research Journal of Geography and Regional Planning, 1*(1), 5-6.

Edwards, P. and Tsouros, A. (2006). Promoting Physical Activity and Active Living in Urban Environments: The Role of Local Governments. Copenhagen, Denmark: World Health Organisation.

Ganda, W. (2017). Accessing Quality Research to Enable Evidence-Informed National Policy: Experiences from Zimbabwe. *Field Exchange 54*, 19. www.ennonline.net/fex/54/researchpolicyzimbabwe

Gill, T. (2014). The Benefits of Children's Engagement with Nature: A Systematic Literature Review. *Child. Youth Environ. 24*, 10-34. doi: 10.1353/cye.2014.0024.

Gill, T. 2021. *Urban Playground: How Child-Friendly Planning and Design Can Save Cities.* London: RIBA Publishing.

Ginsburg, K.R. (2007). American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Communications; American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-child Bonds. *Pediatrics, 119*(1), 182-91. doi: 10.1542/peds.2006-2697. PMID: 17200287.

Goddard, M.A., Dougill, A.J.. and Benton, T.G. (2009). Scaling Up from Gardens: Biodiversity Conservation in Urban Environments. *TREE*, 1175: 1-9.

Government of Zimbabwe (2019). Zimbabwe National Human Settlements Policy. Ministry of National Housing and Social Amenities. Harare.

Government of Zimbabwe (2018). Zimbabwe School Health Policy. Harare: Government of Zimbabwe

Government of Zimbabwe (2021). National Disability Policy Zimbabwe. Harare: Government of Zimbabwe.

Hami, A. *et al.* (2011). Users' Preferences of Usability and Sustainability of Old Urban Parks in Tabriz, Iran. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences, 5*(11), 1899-1905.

Hansmann, S., Hug, S.M.. and Seeland, K. (2007). Restoration and Stress Relief through Physical Activities in Forests and Parks. *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening, 6*, 213-225.

Hatala, A.R. *et al.* (2020). Land and Nature as Sources of Health and Resilience among Indigenous Youth in an Urban Canadian Context: A Photovoice Exploration. *BMC Public Health, 20*, 1-14. doi: 10.1186/s12889-020-08647-z.

Höltge, J. *et al.* (2021). A Cross-country Network Analysis of Adolescent Resilience. *J. Adolesc. Health 68*, 580-588. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.07.010.

Islam, M.Z. Johnston, J. and Sly, P.D. (2020). Green Space and Early Childhood Development: A Systematic Review. *Rev. Environ. Health, 35*, 189-200.

Janssen, I., King, N. (2015) Walkable School Neighbourhoods are Not Playable Neighbourhoods. *Health and Place,35*, 66-69.

Jim, CY. (2004). Greenspace Preservation and Allocation for Sustainable Greening of Compact Cities. *Cities, 21*(4), 311-320.

Kamete, A.Y. and Lindell, I. (2010). The Politics of 'Non-Planning' Interventions in African Cities: Unravelling the International and Local Dimensions in Harare and Maputo. *Journal of Southern African Studies, 36*(4), 889-912.

Kamvura, T.T. *et al.* (2022). Barriers to the Provision Of Non-Communicable Disease Care in Zimbabwe: A Qualitative Study of Primary Health Care Nurses. *BMC Nurs, 21*, 1-12.

Kieling, C. *et al.* (2011). Child and Adolescent Mental Health Worldwide: Evidence for Action. *The Lancet, 378* (9801), 1515-1525.

Kingsbury, M. *et al.* (2020). The Protective Effect of Neighbourhood Social Cohesion on Adolescent Mental Health Following Stressful Life Events. *Psychol. Med. 50*, 1292-1299. doi: 10.1017/S0033291719001235.

Krenichyn, K. (2006). The Only Place to Go and be in The City': Women Talk about Exercise, Being Outdoors and the Meanings of a Large Urban Park. *Health and Place, 12,* 631-643.

Lambert, A. *et al.* (2019). What is the Relationship between the Neighbourhood-built Environment and Time Spent in Outdoor Play? A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16*(20), 3840. doi: 10.3390/ijerph16203840.

Lester, S. and Russell, W. (2010) Children's Right to Play: An Examination of the Importance of Play in the Lives of Children Worldwide. Working Paper No. 57. The Hague, The Netherlands: Bernard van Leer Foundation

Lynch, H., Moore, A. (2016) Play as an Occupation in Occupational Therapy. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 79*(9), 519-520.

Maharaj, B. (2020). The Apartheid City. *Urban Geogr. South Afr. 1*, 39-54. doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-25369-1_3.

Mangizvo, V. R. and Rupiya, L. (2012). Urban Parks: An Abandoned Priority – The Case of Civic Centre Gardens in Gweru City, Zimbabwe, *Journal of Human Ecology, 40*(3), 261-266, DOI: 10.1080/09709274.2012.11906545.

Manyanga T. *et al.* (2016). Results from Zimbabwe's 2016 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. *J Phys Activ Health, 13*(Suppl 2), S337-S342.

Manyanga, T. *et al.* (2023). Indicators of Physical Activity and Nutritional Status among Children and Adolescents in Zimbabwe: Findings from Three Global Matrix Initiatives. *J Exerc Sci Fit. Apr. 21*(2), 202-209. doi: 10.1016/j.jesf.2023.02.001. Epub 2023 Feb 9. PMID: 36843675; PMCID: PMC9944127.

Manyanga, T. *et al.* (2018).Results from Zimbabwe's Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health. 15*(2), 433-435.

Marongwe, N., Mukoto, S. and Chatiza, K. (2011). *Scoping Study: Governance of Urban Land Markets in Zimbabwe.* Johannesburg: Urban Land Mark,.

Mate, R., Oosterom, M.. and Mpofu, D. (2023): Young Female Traders' Quest for Viability in Zimbabwe's Politicised Urban Spaces. *Journal of Youth Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/13676261.2023.2248897.

Matsa, M. Musasa, T.. and Mupepi, O. (2022). Loss of Urban Green Spaces Due to Increased Land Use/Cover Changes between 2000-2019: The Case of Gweru City, Zimbabwe. *African Geographical Review, 41*(4), 433-451, DOI:10.1080/19376812.2021.1930077.

Matsungo, T.M., Chopera, P. (2020). Nutrition in Contemporary Zimbabwe: A Situational Analysis. *N. Afr. J. Food Nutr. Res., 4*, S25-S35.

Mazhindu, E Munanga, Y. (2022).Recreational Facilities and Space Needs Analysis and Residential Densification: A Review of Design Standards in a Case Study of Harare, Zimbabwe. *Journal of Urban Systems and Innovations for Resilience in Zimbabwe-JUSIRZ 4*(1), 1-24.

McDonald, R.I. *et al.* (2023). Denser and Greener Cities: Green Interventions to Achieve Both Urban Density and Nature. *People Nat., 5*, 84-102, 10.1002/PAN3.10423.

McLean, D. D. and Hurd, A. R. (2012). Travel and Tourism In: McLean, D. D., & Hurd, A. R. (ed.). *Recreation and Leisure in Modern Society*, 299-320. Sudbury, MA: Jones. and Bartlett Learning.

Mlambo C. (2022). Politics and the Natural Resource Curse: Evidence from Selected African States, *Cogent Social Sciences, 8*, 1, DOI: 10.1080/23311886.2022.2035911.

Moyo, ?? and Chipfupa, ??. (2021). Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference Child Protection Policy. https://www.bulawayoarchdiocese.org/images/library/official/child-protection-policy.pdf

Muchadenyika, D. (2015). Land for Housing: A Political Resource – Reflections from Zimbabwe's Urban Areas. *Journal of Southern African Studies,* DOI:10.1080/03057070.2015.1087163.

Mukora-Mutseyekwa, F. *et al.* (2019). Trends in Prevalence and Related Risk Factors of Overweight and Obesity among Women of Reproductive Age in Zimbabwe, 2005-2015. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health, 16*, 2758.

Ndawana, E. 2018. Sacrificing Urban Governance at the Altar of Political Expediency: Illegal Street Vending in Harare. *African Security Review 27* (3-4): 253–277. https://doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2018.1550428.

Ocansey, R. *et al.* (2014). Results from Ghana's 2014 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. J*ournal of Physical Activity and Health,11*(1):58–62.

Oosterom, M. and Gukurume, S. (2019). *Managing the Born-free Generation: Zimbabwe's Strategies for Dealing with the Youth.* Bergen: Chr. Michelsen Institute.

Oosthuizen, Y. and Burnett, C. (2019). Community Mapping and Creating Safe Spaces for Physical Activity in a South African Context of Relative Poverty. *South Afr. J. Res. Sport Phys. Educ. Recreat. 41*, 11–91. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-14fe054255.

Oyeyemi, A.L. *et al* .(2019).. Neighbourhood Environmental Factors are Related to Health-Enhancing Physical Activity and Walking among Community-dwelling Older Adults in Nigeria. *Physiotherapy Theory and Practice.;35*(3), 288-297.

Pencil, A. *et al.* (2023). Prevalence of Obesity and the Factors Associated with Low Obesity Awareness among Urban Adolescents in Harare, Zimbabwe. *Nutrients, 15*, 2302. https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15102302.

Pencil, A., Matsungo, T.M., Hayami, N. (2021). Determinants of Overweight and Obesity among Adolescents in Zimbabwe: A Scoping Review. *N. Afr. J. Food Nutr. Res.,, 5*, 112-121.

Perry, E. C., Moodley, V. and Bob, U. (2008). Open Spaces, Nature And Perceptions of Safety in South Africa: A Case Study of Reservoir Hills, Durban. *Alternation 15,* 240–267. doi: 10.10520/AJA10231757_466.

Pillay, J. (2023) Psychological, Social and Physical Ecologies for Child Resilience: A South African Perspective. *Front. Psychol. 14*:1190297. doi 10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1190297.

Reese-Masterson, A., Murakwani, P. (2016). Assessment of Adolescent Girl Nutrition, Dietary Practices and Roles in Zimbabwe. *F. Exch. Emerg. Nutr. Netw. ENN, 52*, 113-115. Available online: https://www.ennonline.net/fex/52/adolescentgirlnutrition (accessed on 5 May 2023).

Renzaho, A.M. (2004). Fat, rich And Beautiful: Changing Socio-cultural Paradigms Associated with Obesity Risk, Nutritional Status and Refugee Children from sub-Saharan Africa. *Health Place, 10*, 105-113.

Scottish Government (2013). Play Strategy for Scotland: Our Vision. Scottish Government; Edinburgh:. Retrieved April 28, 2021, from http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0042/00425722.pdf.

Seymour, V. (2016). The Human–Nature Relationship and Its Impact on Health: A Critical Review. *Front. Public Health 4*, 260. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2016.00260.

Sharma, M. *et al.* (2022). PROTOCOL: Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Interventions: An Evidence and Gap Map of Low- and Middle-income Countries. *Campbell Systematic Reviews, 18*(1). doi:10.1002/cl2.1221.

Shepley, M. *et al.* (2019). The Impact of Green Space on Violent Crime in Urban Environments: An Evidence Synthesis. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 16*, 5119. doi: 10.3390/ijerph16245119.

Shoari, N. *et al.* (2021). Nowhere to Play: Available Open and Green Space in Greater London schools. *J. Urban Health, 98 (3),*375-384.

Somefun, O. D. and Fotso, A. S. (2020). The Effect of Family and Neighbourhood Social Capital on Youth Mental Health In South Africa. *J. Adolesc. 83*, 22-26. doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2020.06.009.

Stewart, R. (2023.) How Evidence, Implementation, Policy and Politics Come Together within Evidence Systems: Lessons From South Africa. *Development Policy Review, Overseas Development Institute, 41*(2), March. Handle: RePEc:bla:devpol:v:41:y:2023:i:2:n:e12657:DOI: 10.1111/dpr.12657

Strydom, W.F. *et al.* (2010).Evidence-based Policymaking: A Review. *S Afr J Sci.,106*(5/6), Art. #249,. DOI: 10.4102/sajs.v106i5/6.249

UN General Assembly. Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 2015 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/L.1&Lang=E.

Ungar, M. (2017). What Counts More: the Differential Impact of the Environment or the Differential Susceptibility of the Individual? *Br. J. Soc. Work. 47,* 1279-1289. doi: 10.1093/bjsw/bcw109.

Ungar, M. and Theron, L. (2020). Resilience and Mental Health: How Multisystemic Processes Contribute to Positive Outcomes. *Lancet Psychiatry 7,* 441-448. doi: 10.1016/S2215-0366(19)30434-1.

Veitch, J., Salmon, J., Ball, K. (2010). Individual, Social and Physical Environmental Correlates of Children's Active Free-play: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act. Feb 2*;7, 11. doi: 10.1186/1479-5868-7-11. PMID: 20181061; PMCID: PMC2841089.

Watson, V. (2009). 'The Planned City Sweeps the Poor Away...': Urban Planning and 21st-Century Urbanisation. *Prog. Plan. 72,* 151-193. doi: 10.1016/j.progress.2009.06.002.

Welsh Assembly Government (2002). *A Play Policy for Wales.* Cardiff: National Assembly for Wales.

Wood, L *et al.* (2017). Public Green Spaces and Positive Mental Health - Investigating the Relationship between Access, Quantity and Types of Parks and Mental Wellbeing. *Health Place. Nov.,* 48:63-71. doi 10.1016/j.healthplace.2017.09.002. Epub 2017 Sep 23. PMID: 28942343.

World Health Organisation (WHO) (2000). Obesity. In System. Geneva, Switzerland,; 9.

World Health Organisation (2022). Global Status Report on Physical Activity 2022.https://www.who.int/teams/health-promotion/physical-activity/global-status-report-on-physical-activity-2022 [Google Scholar].

Zalaznick, M. (2023). Billion-dollar Business: These are Higher Education's Top 30 R&D Performers. Available online:https://universitybusiness.com/r-d-research-and-development-billion-dollar-top-30-college-university-higher-ed-spenders/. Accessed on 17 January 2024.