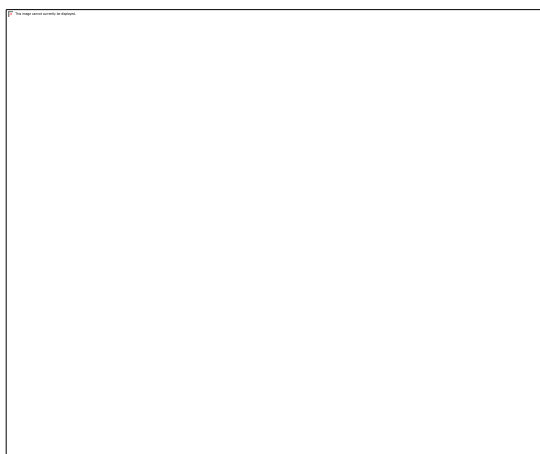**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

Factors Contributing To the Continued Proliferation of Illegal (Informal) Settlements:

A Case of Seke Rural District

By

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Peace and Governance in partial

fulfilment for

The requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Peace and Governance Degree

Supervisor: Dr. Nyoni

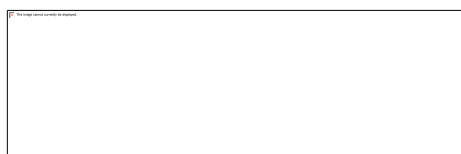**Bindura, Zimbabwe**

August, 2024

ABSTRACT

This dissertation sought to analyze the factors contributing to the proliferation of informal settlements in Seke Rural District, Zimbabwe. The study aimed to explore the socio-economic and political dynamics driving these settlements and the challenges they pose to residents and local authorities. The research employed urbanization theory to frame the complexities of rapid population migration and its implications for housing and services. Utilizing a qualitative case study methodology, the study conducted in-depth interviews with 20 respondents, including residents of informal settlements, local authority employees, and representatives from housing cooperatives. This purposive sampling ensured a rich diversity of perspectives on the issues surrounding illegal settlements. The findings indicate that economic pressures, particularly poverty and a lack of affordable housing, are primary drivers of illegal land occupation. Rapid urbanization and population growth compounded these challenges, as local authorities struggle to provide adequate housing. Corruption and shady land deals, often facilitated by land barons, significantly undermine effective land governance, resulting in unauthorized land occupations. The study highlights several critical challenges associated with informal settlements, including increased crime rates, overcrowding, and environmental degradation. Residents face significant health risks due to inadequate sanitation and limited access to clean water, which contributed to the spread of communicable diseases. To address these issues, the study recommends a multifaceted approach. Key recommendations included improving access to affordable housing, enhancing basic service delivery, and reforming land allocation policies to promote transparency and security of tenure. Regularization of existing informal settlements is also suggested to empower residents and encourage investment in community infrastructure.

Keywords; Informal settlements; Urbanization; Land governance; Corruption; Regularization

DECLARATION FORM

I, Nyasha Machiwana (B210290B), hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own research and study, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgments and references included in the body of the paper, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.

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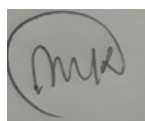
Student Name   **Signature**   **Date**

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Supervisor   **Signature**   **Date: 14/10/25**

Dr. Kurebwa   ……………………….   ………………………

Chairperson   **Signature**   **Date**

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother, Martha Sango.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Maxwell Machiwana and Mary Mashangwe for their support during my studies.

I would also like to express my utmost gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Nyoni for his guidance during my studies.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In many parts of the world, the prevalence of illegal settlements is a major concern. According to Roberts and Okanya (2022) illegal settlements in urban areas refer to the unauthorized occupation of land or buildings within cities. These settlements often lack proper infrastructure, basic services and legal recognition from authorities. Examples of illegal settlements can be seen in cities around the world, such as slums in developing countries or squatter settlements in urban areas. These illegal settlements pose significant challenges to urban planning and development. They can lead to overcrowding, lack of access to essential services like clean water and sanitation, and increased social inequalities. Furthermore, illegal settlements often result in the violation of property rights and displacement of vulnerable populations (Matamanda, 2020).

Illegal settlements in urban areas are often a result of complex socio-economic and political factors. One of the primary causes is economic inequality, as marginalized populations may not have access to affordable housing options and are forced to occupy land or buildings illegally (Gallien, 2020). Inadequate urban planning and zoning regulations can also contribute to the proliferation of illegal settlements, as the formal housing market fails to meet the needs of growing urban populations (Romano et al., 2021). Government corruption and inefficiency can further exacerbate the problem of illegal settlements, as officials may turn a blind eye to unauthorized land occupations in exchange for bribes or political favors (Romano, et al., 2021). Rapid urbanization, driven by rural-to-urban migration and population growth, creates

additional pressure on urban land and housing stock, leading to the spontaneous formation of informal settlements (Gallien, 2020).

In major cities like Mumbai, Delhi, and Kolkata, there are numerous informal settlements known as slums. These areas often lack basic infrastructure and services, and residents face challenges such as overcrowding, poor sanitation, and insecure land tenure (Kovacic, 2022). In South Africa, townships are informal settlements that emerged during the apartheid era and are still prevalent in cities like Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban (Kovacic, 2022). These examples show that illegal settlements have been common internationally and regionally. These areas are characterized by overcrowded housing, inadequate services, and high levels of poverty and social exclusion.

In Zimbabwe, there has also been a proliferation of illegal settlements. The number of people living in Zimbabwe's peri –urban increased dramatically just before independence in 1980,s (Chirisa et al., 2021). After independence the removal of control restrictions resulted in unprecedented urbanisation. However the urban economy failed to offer adequate housing and jobs which led to the proliferation of squatter settlements (Potts 2016). They have emerged as a result of factors like rapid urbanization, economic challenges, and historical land distribution issues. Other informal settlements in Zimbabwe are located in areas such as Epworth, Chitungwiza, and Mabvuku-Tafara, among other (Mabhodyera & Chirisa, 2023). These settlements are home to a significant portion of the urban population and highlight the pressing need for sustainable urban development strategies to improve living conditions and promote inclusive growth for all residents (Matamanda, 2020). In 2005, the government of Zimbabwe, with the Harare City Council and the police undertook Operation Murambatsvina Tsvina or Operation Restore order where a number of illegal housing and trade structures were demolished and individuals lost their working and living space (Mabhodyera & Chirisa, 2023).

Despite this urban clean up a number of illegal structures and squatter camps are resurfacing in urban towns. This highlight the pressing need for sustainable urban development strategies to improve living conditions and promote inclusive growth for all residents (Matamanda, 2020)As cities continue to expand, local authorities are increasingly struggling to meet the rising demand for land. Rapid urbanization, population growth, and limited availability of suitable land for development are key factors contributing to this challenge. In many urban areas, the demand for land far exceeds the supply, leading to land scarcity, soaring land prices, and informal settlements on the outskirts of cities. As stated by Chirisa et al. (2021) Seke is a peri-urban area located outside Harare that has experienced rapid urbanization and population growth. However, land supply through formal channels has failed to meet the demand. This has led many desperate land seekers to illegally occupy land and settle in Seke, subdividing land and developing housing without following legal procedures or approval from relevant authorities (Chirisa et al., 2021). Common "land barons" facilitating illegal settlement in Seke include local chiefs who administer state land, as well as wealthy individuals (Chirisa et al., 2021). They sell off land to land seekers for private financial gain, ignoring their responsibilities to manage land use.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The study aims to analyse the factors that lead to the proliferation of illegal settlements in Seke District Rural District.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Local authorities in Seke have taken legal action against prominent land barons like the Nyatsime Housing Cooperative and United We Stand Cooperative who were illegally subdividing and selling council land (Zivhave & Dzvairo, 2022). However, many illegal

settlements remain. There is a lack of in-depth analysis regarding the specific factors driving illegal settlement proliferation in Seke District, Zimbabwe despite efforts to curb it. Local authorities have sometimes resorted to demolishing some illegal settlements developed by land barons (Zivhave & Dzvairo, 2022). However, this is likely only a small fraction of the thousands of illegal housing units. Furthermore, demolitions face challenges as well, as powerful barons often have political connections that shield illegal developments from facing proper enforcement action like demolition (Chirisa et al., 2022). In Zimbabwe, a significant challenge arises from people creating illegal settlements in peri-urban areas like Seke in their desire to live close to cities. As stated by Chavunduka and Chaonwa-Gaza (2022) these informal settlements often lack the proper authorization for land use and development, leading to a range of negative consequences for both residents and the environment. One of the key issues associated with illegal settlements in peri-urban areas is land tenure insecurity. Without formal recognition or ownership of the land they occupy, residents face the risk of eviction and displacement, creating instability and uncertainty in their living conditions (Mabhodyera & Chirisa, 2023). This means that residents can be evicted from the area at any time. Moreover, the lack of proper planning and infrastructure in these settlements results in limited access to essential services such as clean water, sanitation and electricity (Matamanda, 2020). This further exacerbates the living conditions for inhabitants. According to Chavunduka and Chaonwa-Gaza (2022) the proliferation of illegal settlements also contributes to environmental degradation, as unregulated construction and waste disposal practices can harm local ecosystems and natural resources. Additionally, the informal nature of these settlements has led to legal disagreements such as disputes over land ownership, boundaries, and resource allocation (Mabhodyera & Chirisa, 2023). Chirisa et al. (2021) further asserts that unauthorized settlements have also led to environmental issues like destruction of agricultural land, wetlands, and open spaces. There are risks of flooding and outbreak of diseases. Not much attention has

been paid to the matter. Therefore, the study aims to recommend solutions to address the matter. The study also seeks to highlight why the local authorities have failed to address the issue of illegal settlements in spite of the challenges.

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To probe the factors that cause the proliferation of illegal settlements in Seke District.
2. To review the challenges that emerge as a result of the proliferation of illegal settlements in Seke District.
3. To explore the potential solutions to deal with the issue of illegal settlements.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What factors are causing the proliferation of illegal settlements in Seke District despite council efforts to curb them?
2. What challenges have emerged as a result of the expansion of illegal settlements?
3. Which solutions can be implemented to deal with the issue of illegal settlements?

1.6 Assumptions of the Study

There is an expansion of illegal settlements in Seke District. The study also assumes that the proliferation of illegal settlements in Seke Rural District has been contributing to or causing various social problems in the area. The study also assumes that lack of affordable land and housing in Harare have forced low income residents to seek cheap land in Seke as an alternative. The study also assumes that weak governance, characterized by inadequate policies, corruption and ineffective enforcement contributes to the proliferation of informal settlements in Seke Rural Dsitrict. The study also assumes that illegal peri-urban settlements lack land tenure insecurity. This is because residents face the risk of eviction without formal

land ownership. Lack of proper planning and infrastructure also limits access to essential services. Land barons and other actors in business contribute massively to the expansion of illegal settlements. In that regard, the study assumes that the issue of illegal settlements is a complex issue that has legal economic and political implications.

1.7 Significance of the Study

For policymakers, the study will help identify the key drivers of illegal settlements proliferation. Understanding these factors can inform the development of policies and interventions to regulate urban expansion in a sustainable manner. For urban planners, the results of the study will be useful to understand the gaps in urban planning and management that have enabled the uncontrolled growth of informal areas. Lessons can be drawn to update zoning laws and development plans. Academically, the study will add to the body of literature around the socio-economic drivers of informal settlements. It will also contribute local case studies on the associated challenges which are useful for comparative policy research. The study assumes that the proliferation of illegal settlements in Seke Rural District has been contributing to or causing various social problems in the area. The results will be valuable for non-governmental organizations working in the areas of housing, urban development and human rights. It will provide empirical data to inform programs targeting informal settlements.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

This study focused specifically on the proliferation of illegal settlements in Seke Rural District, Zimbabwe. The scope was intentionally limited to this geographic area to allow for an in-depth analysis of local factors and dynamics influencing informal settlements. The research did not extend to other regions or urban centers in Zimbabwe, which might exhibit different characteristics and challenges related to informal settlements.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

Several limitations affected this study. First, the research was conducted within a one-year timeframe, which restricted the depth of longitudinal analysis regarding the evolution of informal settlements over time. The political climate and issues of corruption in land governance also posed challenges in obtaining candid responses from participants, affecting the reliability of the data.

1.11 Definition of Key terms

Illegal settlement: A residential area occupied through unauthorized means without formal permission or recognition from land authorities (Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 2022). It often lacks provision of basic services and security of tenure.

Informal settlement: A residential area where housing and structures have been developed on land that the occupants have no legal claim to or occupy illegally. Used interchangeably with slums or squatter settlements (Matamanda, 2020).

Peri-urban area: The transitional zone between rural and urban land which is experiencing rapid urbanization. Characterized by low density, unplanned development and expansion of informal housing (Angela & Goh, 2021).

Rural-urban migration: The movement of people from rural areas into towns and cities in search of better livelihood opportunities and public services (Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 2022). A major driver of urban growth.

1.12 Dissertation Outline

Chapter One introduced the study by examining the rise of informal settlements in Seke Rural District. It outlined the research problem, objectives, and significance, emphasizing how

poverty, weak governance, and urban migration contribute to illegal land occupation. The chapter defined key terms and clarified the study's scope and assumptions. It highlighted the relevance of the issue for policymakers and urban planners, setting the stage for a deeper investigation into the socio-political and environmental dynamics driving informal settlement proliferation in Zimbabwe's peri-urban areas.

Chapter Two reviewed literature and applied urbanization theory to explain informal settlement growth. It explored global and regional trends, identifying poverty, rapid urbanization, and weak land governance as key drivers. Zimbabwe's context was examined, with emphasis on land barons and peri-urban expansion. The chapter also discussed challenges such as overcrowding, health risks, and environmental degradation. Proposed solutions included regularization, infrastructure investment, and housing initiatives. A research gap was identified in localized analysis, underscoring the need for context-specific policy responses in Seke District.

Chapter Three outlined the qualitative methodology used to explore informal settlements in Seke. A constructivist paradigm and case study design guided the research, with purposive sampling of 20 respondents including residents, officials, and academics. Data collection involved in-depth interviews and secondary sources, analyzed thematically. Validity was ensured through triangulation, and reliability through consistent procedures. Ethical safeguards included informed consent and confidentiality. Pilot testing refined the interview guide. This approach enabled a nuanced understanding of the lived experiences and governance challenges shaping informal settlement dynamics in the district.

Chapter Four presented and discussed findings from interviews and secondary data. Respondents described widespread informal settlements marked by substandard housing and illegal land occupation. Key drivers included poverty, lack of affordable housing, corruption,

and population growth. Social challenges such as crime, overcrowding, and land tenure insecurity were noted, alongside environmental issues like littering and poor sanitation. Local authorities had pursued legal action and limited regularization. Proposed solutions included improved service delivery, zoning reforms, and policy clarity. The findings emphasized the need for inclusive, transparent urban planning in Seke.

Chapter Five concluded the study by synthesizing its findings. It confirmed that informal settlements in Seke stem from economic hardship, governance failures, and rapid urbanization. Residents face insecurity, health risks, and environmental degradation, while authorities struggle to respond effectively. Recommendations included expanding affordable housing, improving basic services, and reforming land allocation policies. Regularization and stronger law enforcement were also proposed. The chapter called for further research into traditional land governance and comparative studies across districts. Ultimately, the study advocated for equitable, sustainable urban development strategies.

CHAPTER 2

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature on informal settlements through a comprehensive literature review and theoretical framework. It begins by outlining urbanization theory, which serves as a lens to understand the rapid migration of populations to urban areas and the resultant challenges in housing and service provision. The chapter examines the multifaceted factors contributing to the proliferation of illegal settlements, including economic pressures, job opportunities, rapid urbanization, land tenure issues, weak governance, and corruption. Each factor contributes to create a complex environment where informal settlements emerge as a response to unmet housing needs. Additionally, the chapter highlights the challenges that arise from these settlements, such as inadequate housing, lack of basic services, environmental degradation, legal issues, and health risks. Finally, it explores potential solutions to mitigate these challenges, particularly focusing on the context of informal settlements in Zimbabwe. This exploration aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play and set the stage for addressing the pressing issues associated with informal urban living.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Urbanization Theory

This research is underpinned by the urbanization theory. Urbanization theory provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the intricate relationship between rapid urban growth and the migration of populations to urban centers, which significantly contributes to the emergence of informal settlements. This theoretical perspective illuminates the

multifaceted challenges associated with delivering adequate housing and essential services amidst the burgeoning urban populations characteristic of contemporary society (Jones, 2017). Central to urbanization theory is the phenomenon of urban migration, wherein individuals and families transition from rural areas to cities in pursuit of economic opportunities, improved living standards, and an enhanced quality of life (Jones, 2017). This migration is propelled by various factors, including the search for employment, educational prospects, and better access to healthcare. As urban populations increase due to both internal migration and natural growth, the demand for housing intensifies, placing substantial pressure on existing urban infrastructure and exacerbating housing shortages in rapidly expanding metropolitan areas (Jones, 2017). As stated by Streule et al. (2020) the theory emphasizes the formidable challenges that arise in meeting the housing and service needs of these growing populations. Urban areas often struggle to keep pace with the increasing demand, leading to the proliferation of informal settlements (Streule et al., 2020). These settlements typically manifest as informal land occupations and self-constructed housing, characterized by inadequate access to essential services such as clean water, sanitation, and electricity (Streule et al., 2020). Moreover, urbanization theory situates the issue of housing informality within the broader context of urban development and social equity. Informal settlements serve as a spatial representation of urban poverty and social exclusion, reflecting systemic inequalities and governance challenges that impede inclusive and sustainable urban growth (Jones, 2017). The emergence of these settlements highlights critical issues related to urban governance, land tenure security, and the need for policies that promote equitable access to housing and services for all urban residents (Jones, 2017). Thus, urbanization theory not only elucidates the causes of informal settlement proliferation but also calls for a holistic approach to urban planning that addresses the underlying socio-economic and political dynamics at play.

2.3 Squatter Settlements: A World Overview

Informal settlements exist worldwide and present significant challenges for urban populations. Basile and Ehlenz (2020) assert that they are characterized by inadequate housing, lack of basic services, and informal land tenure. Basile and Ehlenz (2020) highlights that approximately 1 billion people live in informal settlements globally. This highlights the scale of this issue. There are various factors that contribute to this issue. Campos et al. (2022) asserts that these settlements often emerge due to rapid urbanization, poverty, lack of affordable housing and inadequate urban planning. The consequences of informal settlements include increased vulnerability to disasters and poor health outcomes. Basile and Ehlenz (2020) further elaborate that informal settlements commonly emerge in urban areas where rapid population growth surpasses the rate of formal housing development. This phenomenon is often seen in major cities in developing countries where rural migrants seeking better economic opportunities flock to urban centers (Campos et al., 2022). As a result, the demand for housing exceeds the available supply and this leads to the spontaneous formation of informal settlements. Residents of these settlements face numerous challenges, including inadequate access to clean water and sanitation and over-crowded living conditions (Campos et al., 2022).

Informal settlements are particularly prevalent in regions such as South Asia and parts of Latin America. In South Asia, rapid population growth, rural-to-urban migration, and limited urban planning contribute to the proliferation of informal settlements (Aslam & Schmidt-Sane, 2022). Countries like India and Bangladesh struggle with accommodating the influx of people into urban areas, resulting in the emergence of slums and shantytowns (Aslam & Schmidt-Sane, 2022). Similarly, in parts of Latin America, socioeconomic inequalities, inadequate housing policies, and urban sprawl have led to the expansion of informal settlements in cities like Rio de Janeiro and Lima (Sandoval & Sarmiento, 2020). Favelas, which are informal

settlements in Brazil, are a prominent example of the challenges posed by inadequate housing and urbanization (Sandoval & Sarmiento, 2020). These densely populated neighborhoods are often characterized by makeshift structures, lack of basic services, and complex social dynamics (Sandoval & Sarmiento, 2020). Favelas have become entrenched in the urban landscape of cities like Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Residents of favelas face numerous challenges, including limited access to education, healthcare, and formal employment opportunities.

2.3.1 Squatter Settlements: A Bird's Eye of Africa

In Africa, informal settlements are also prevalent. Kolowa et al. (2024) asserts that over 60% of urban residents in sub-Saharan Africa live in informal settlements. This highlights the widespread prevalence of this housing phenomenon in the region. This staggering statistic highlights the challenges of rapid urbanization, population growth, and inadequate urban planning in many African cities. Factors such as poverty, limited access to formal housing options and inefficient land-use policies contribute to the proliferation of informal settlements (Kolowa et al., 2024). In countries like Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa, rapid urbanization, poverty, and lack of affordable housing contribute to the growth of informal settlements (Roberts & OKanya, 2022). These settlements are home to millions of people who lack access to basic services and live in precarious conditions. Kolowa et al. (2024) asserts that housing conditions in informal settlements are characterized by structures built from low-quality materials. They also lack basic amenities such as running water, sanitation, and electricity. These inadequate living conditions pose significant health and safety risks for residents. For example, the absence of proper sanitation facilities can lead to the spread of diseases (Roberts & OKanya, 2022). Additionally, unstable housing structures may be prone to collapse during natural disasters (Roberts & OKanya, 2022). In South Africa, areas such as Soweto and

Diepsloot serve as poignant examples of the prevalence of informal settlements in the country (Rubin & Charlton, 2020). These communities are characterized by inadequate housing and socio-economic disparities (Rubin & Charlton, 2020). Historically, these settlements emerged as a result of discriminatory policies that marginalized black populations and restricted their access to formal housing (Rubin & Charlton, 2020). Residents of parts of Soweto and Diepsloot grapple with challenges such as high levels of unemployment, crime, and limited infrastructure (Rubin & Charlton, 2020).

2.3.2 Zimbabwe and Informal Settlements

Informal settlements in Zimbabwe characterized by makeshift dwellings built on land without proper legal ownership or infrastructure (Matamanda, 2020). These settlements often lack access to basic services such as clean water, sanitation, and electricity, leading to poor living conditions and health risks for residents (Matamanda, 2020). The rapid urbanization and economic challenges in Zimbabwe have contributed to the growth of informal settlements, posing significant challenges for urban planning and development in the country (Matamanda, 2020). There are have been challenges in introducing the right measurs to address the proliferation of illegal settlements in Zimbabwe (Bhanye & Dzingirai, 2022). Informal settlements in Zimbabwe are predominantly found in peri-urban areas, on the outskirts of urban centers. These peri-urban informal settlements are characterized by a lack of formal planning, infrastructure, and basic services, creating challenges for residents living in these areas (Bhanye & Dzingirai, 2022). The proximity to urban centers often attracts individuals seeking employment opportunities, but the limited access to resources and services in peri-urban informal settlements exacerbates the living conditions for residents. The areas of study, Seke, is one of the peri urban areas.

2.4 Factors that Lead to the Proliferation of Illegal Settlements

2.4.1 Economic Pressures

One of the key factors driving the proliferation of illegal settlements is the presence of economic pressures, particularly poverty and the lack of affordable housing options. As stated by Del Rio and Sovacool (2023) poverty plays a significant role in pushing individuals and families towards establishing informal settlements on unauthorized land. The inability to afford formal housing alternatives forces people to seek out cheaper, informal solutions. This leads to the growth of illegal settlements. The impact of poverty on the proliferation of illegal settlements is profound. Those living in poverty often face limited options in terms of secure and affordable housing. As a result, they resort to establishing informal settlements as a means of securing shelter, despite the legal implications of such actions (Del Rio & Sovacool, 2023). The cycle of poverty perpetuates the expansion of illegal settlements as individuals struggle to meet their basic housing needs within the constraints of their financial circumstances (Del Rio & Sovacool, 2023). Furthermore, the lack of affordable housing options exacerbates the problem of illegal settlements. In regions where formal housing is prohibitively expensive or inaccessible to a significant portion of the population, informal settlements become a common alternative (Celhay & Gil, 2020). The absence of affordable housing policies and inadequate support for low-income individuals contribute to the proliferation of illegal settlements as people seek out housing solutions that align with their financial capabilities.

2.4.2 Job Opportunities

Another driving factors contributing to the proliferation of illegal settlements is the pursuit of job opportunities in urban areas. This leads to migration and overcrowding that often result in the establishment of informal housing. The lure of better economic prospects and

employment opportunities in cities attracts individuals from rural areas and smaller towns and it fosters a trend of urban migration (Mmbandi, 2024). The influx of people migrating to urban areas in search of employment can lead to overcrowding, as cities struggle to accommodate the growing population. Inadequate infrastructure and limited access to affordable housing options push migrants towards informal settlements as a temporary or permanent housing solution (Mmbandi, 2024). The lack of formal housing options and the high cost of living in urban centers further exacerbate the prevalence of illegal settlements as individuals seek refuge in informal dwellings ((Celhay & Gil, 2020). The connection between job opportunities, migration, overcrowding, and informal housing is a complex interplay of economic and social factors. As job seekers flock to urban areas in pursuit of better livelihoods, the pressure on existing housing stock and urban resources intensifies, creating conditions that foster the growth of illegal settlements (Celhay & Gil, 2020). Informal housing becomes a coping mechanism for migrants who face barriers to accessing formal housing due to economic disparities and limited opportunities.

2.4.3 Rapid Urbanization

As urban populations expand at a swift pace, cities often struggle to keep pace with the demand for housing, leading to a shortage of affordable and formal housing options. Williams et al. (2019) asserts that the rapid urbanization process creates a dual challenge of accommodating the increasing population while also providing sufficient housing that meets the needs of residents. In many cases, the growth of urban areas outpaces the capacity of local authorities to plan and develop housing infrastructure (Williams et al., 2019). This leaves a gap that informal settlements often fill. The lack of accessible and affordable housing alternatives drives individuals and families towards establishing informal settlements as a means of securing shelter in urban environments (Williams et al., 2019). The consequences of rapid

urban growth on the proliferation of illegal settlements are profound. As urban areas expand and populations concentrate in cities, the pressure on housing resources intensifies, resulting in overcrowding and the spontaneous formation of informal settlements in marginal or unauthorized areas (Williams et al., 2019). The lack of adequate housing infrastructure and the inability of urban centers to cope with the increasing demand for housing contribute to the persistence of illegal settlements as a response to the housing crisis.

2.4.4 Land Tenure Issues

Uncertainty over land ownership is a significant factor that contributes to the proliferation of illegal settlements. It creates conditions that encourage illegal occupation and the establishment of informal housing. Land tenure issues, such as unclear property rights, conflicting land claims, and inadequate land registration systems, can fuel land disputes and lead to the unauthorized occupation of land for housing purposes (Zazyki, 2022). The lack of clarity and security in land ownership can incentivize individuals and communities to occupy vacant or disputed land, especially in urban or peri-urban areas where the demand for housing is high (Zazyki, 2022). In the absence of formal property rights or clear land titling mechanisms, people may resort to informal settlement as a means of securing living space, even if it involves occupying land without legal authorization (Sarmiento et al., 2020). The uncertainties surrounding land tenure not only promote illegal occupation but also create barriers to accessing formal housing options for marginalized populations. Vulnerable groups, such as low-income families, migrants, and indigenous communities, are particularly at risk of being affected by land tenure issues and may resort to informal settlements as a coping strategy in the absence of secure land tenure arrangements (Sarmiento et al., 2020). The impact of land tenure issues on the proliferation of illegal settlements extends beyond individual land disputes to broader social and economic implications (Sarmiento et al., 2020). In cases where land

tenure is uncertain or contested, investment in infrastructure, services, and housing development may be deterred, leading to the perpetuation of informal settlements in marginalized areas that lack adequate urban planning and land governance.

2.4.5 Weak Governance

When governance structures lack the capacity or willingness to uphold and enforce land-use policies effectively, it creates opportunities for settlement growth to occur without proper oversight or planning. The consequences of weak governance and the failure to enforce land-use regulations can be profound, particularly in the context of urban development (Carriho & Trindade, 2022). In situations where regulations are not enforced, land may be occupied and developed in ways that are unauthorized or incompatible with existing land-use plans, leading to haphazard and unsustainable settlement growth. Informal settlements often emerge in areas where regulatory oversight is weak, as individuals and communities take advantage of the lack of enforcement to establish housing without adherence to zoning or planning standards (Carriho & Trindade, 2022). The unchecked growth of settlements due to weak governance also has implications for infrastructure development, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion (Carriho & Trindade, 2022). Inadequate enforcement of land-use regulations can result in the encroachment on environmentally sensitive areas, the lack of provision for basic services like water and sanitation, and the exacerbation of social inequalities within urban and rural communities (Sarmiento et al., 2020). Without proper governance mechanisms in place to regulate settlement growth, the challenges associated with informal housing and unplanned urbanization are likely to persist.

2.4.6 Corruption

Illicit land deals are pivotal factors that can facilitate the establishment of illegal settlements. They undermine transparent and fair processes of land allocation and urban planning (Chiweshe, 2021). Corruption within the realm of land management can lead to the distortion of land tenure systems, the misappropriation of public land, and the unjust enrichment of individuals or groups involved in illegitimate land transactions (Chiweshe, 2021). The repercussions of corruption in facilitating illegal settlements are multifaceted and far-reaching. Furthermore, patronage politics in Zimbabwe profoundly influences the proliferation of illegal settlements by intertwining land access and political support (Kisseka-Ntale, 2024). In a context where political loyalty often dictates the distribution of resources, certain individuals and groups may receive preferential treatment in land allocation, leading to the establishment of informal settlements in areas lacking formal governance (Kisseka-Ntale, 2024). This dynamic fosters a culture of dependency, where communities align themselves with political elites in hopes of securing land and resources, further entrenching informal housing practices. When land deals are conducted in a clandestine or fraudulent manner, it can result in the unauthorized occupation of land. It also results in the exclusion of marginalized communities from equitable access to land resources and the perpetuation of social and economic inequalities. In cases where favoritism dictates land allocation decisions, certain individuals or groups may receive preferential treatment in acquiring land for settlement purposes, leading to the concentration of informal housing in specific areas (Chiweshe, 2021). The prevalence of illicit land deals and favoritism in land transactions not only undermines the rule of law and institutional integrity but also hinders sustainable urban development and exacerbates urban sprawl (Chiweshe, 2021). Illegal settlements established through corrupt practices often lack the necessary infrastructure, services and legal recognition. This poses

challenges to urban governance, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion within affected communities.

2.4.7 Climate Change

Climate change significantly contributes to urbanization. Xinyue and Mingxing (2019) asserts that climate change significantly contributes to the proliferation of illegal settlements by exacerbating environmental challenges that force vulnerable populations to seek shelter in urban areas. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and shifting rainfall patterns have led to the degradation of rural livelihoods. This promotes rural-to-urban migration as individuals and families flee from agricultural decline and resource scarcity. Additionally, climate-induced disasters such as floods and droughts displace communities, pushing them towards urban centers (Xinyue & Mingxing, 2019). They often resort to informal housing due to limited affordable options. In urban areas, the increased demand for housing outstrips supply. This again leads to the emergence of illegal settlements as desperate individuals occupy vacant land without legal authorization (Carriho & Trindade, 2022). This cycle of displacement and informal settlement growth is further fueled by inadequate urban planning and governance, which fail to address the housing needs of growing populations in the face of climate change.

2.5 Challenges that Emerge from Illegal Settlements

2.5.1 Inadequate Housing

A critical challenge associated with illegal settlements is the prevalence of poorly constructed dwellings that lack basic structural integrity. As stated by Marutlulle (2021) this results in unsafe and hazardous living conditions for residents. The substandard quality of housing in illegal settlements not only compromises the physical safety of occupants but also contributes to a myriad of social, economic, and health-related challenges (Marutlulle, 2021).

The substandard construction of dwellings in illegal settlements can manifest in various ways, including the use of low-quality materials, lack of proper foundations, inadequate sanitation facilities, overcrowding, and insufficient structural reinforcement (Marutlulle, 2021). These shortcomings increase the vulnerability of housing structures to collapse, fires, flooding, and other disasters. This poses significant risks to the lives and well-being of residents. Moreover, poorly constructed dwellings in illegal settlements often lack access to essential utilities such as water, electricity, and sanitation, further exacerbating living conditions and compromising residents' health and quality of life (Malik et al., 2021). The inadequate housing conditions in illegal settlements not only affect the physical safety and well-being of residents but also have broader social and economic implications (Malik et al., 2021). The lack of secure housing tenure, limited access to formal housing finance, and inadequate housing infrastructure can impede residents' ability to break out of the cycle of poverty and informality, perpetuating socio-economic disparities and exclusion within urban environments (Malik et al., 2021).

2.5.2 Lack of Basic Services

Residents of illegal settlements often grapple with the stark reality of limited or non-existent access to essential services, including clean water, sanitation, electricity, and waste management. Mutyambizi et al. (2020) asserts that this creates conditions ripe for public health crises and social vulnerabilities. The absence of basic services not only undermines the quality of life for residents but also poses significant risks to community health, environmental sustainability, and overall well-being within informal settlements (Mutyambizi et al., 2020). Clean water and sanitation are fundamental human rights that are frequently compromised in illegal settlements, where residents may lack access to safe drinking water sources, adequate sanitation facilities, and proper hygiene practices (Mutyambizi et al., 2020). The absence of clean water and sanitation infrastructure increases the likelihood of waterborne diseases,

diarrheal illnesses, and other preventable health conditions, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations living in substandard conditions (Mutyambizi et al., 2020). Furthermore, the lack of reliable electricity supply in illegal settlements hampers residents' access to lighting, heating, and electrical appliances, impacting their daily functioning, safety, and quality of life (Carriho & Trindade, 2022). Insufficient energy access also hinders economic productivity, educational opportunities, and social connectivity within informal communities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and exclusion among residents. Waste management poses yet another pressing challenge in illegal settlements, where the absence of formal waste collection services and proper disposal mechanisms leads to the accumulation of solid waste, open dumping, and environmental degradation (Carriho & Trindade, 2022). The proliferation of waste in informal settlements not only harms public health through pollution and contamination but also contributes to the spread of vector-borne diseases, respiratory ailments, and injuries among residents (Carriho & Trindade, 2022).

2.5.3 Environmental Degradation

The expansion of illegal settlements in ecologically sensitive areas poses a significant threat to environmental sustainability. As informal communities often contribute to deforestation, soil erosion, and pollution (Brown et al., 2018). This exacerbates climate change impacts and compromising the resilience of urban ecosystems (Brown et al., 2018. The degradation of natural resources in and around illegal settlements not only affects local environments but also has far-reaching consequences for biodiversity loss and community well-being. Illegal settlements frequently encroach upon forests, wetlands, hillsides, and other fragile ecosystems, leading to the clearing of vegetation, loss of biodiversity, and disruption of natural habitats (Brown et al., 2018). Deforestation in and around informal communities not only diminishes the ecological value of these areas but also contributes to carbon emissions,

habitat fragmentation, and altered water cycles, intensifying the effects of climate change on vulnerable communities and natural landscapes (Brown et al., 2018). Moreover, the unplanned development and informal construction activities in illegal settlements can exacerbate soil erosion, land degradation, and flood risks (Corburn & Sverdik, 2019). The absence of erosion control measures, improper land use practices, and inadequate infrastructure planning expose residents to environmental hazards and ecosystem instability (Corburn & Sverdlik, 2019). Soil erosion not only reduces the fertility of agricultural lands but also increases sedimentation in water bodies, affecting water quality, aquatic ecosystems, and biodiversity conservation efforts. Pollution is another pressing environmental concern associated with illegal settlements (Corburn & Sverdlik, 2019). The accumulation of solid waste, discharge of untreated sewage, and contamination of natural resources in informal settlements contribute to environmental pollution, public health hazards, and the degradation of urban ecosystems (Corburn & Sverdlik, 2019). This underscores the need for sustainable waste management and pollution control measures.

2.5.4 Legal Issues

The precarious legal status of illegal settlements gives rise to a myriad of legal disputes, eviction threats and conflicts over land use. As stated by Magina et al. (2020) this creates a climate of instability and insecurity for residents who call these informal communities home. The intersection of legal, regulatory, and socio-economic factors often compounds the vulnerabilities of residents living in illegal settlements (Magina et al., 2020). This exposes them to risks of displacement, harassment, and loss of shelter and livelihoods. In Zimbabwe, there are companies or individuals known as land barons. They are known for predatory practices against prospective home owners in informal settlements (Mwatwara & Mujere, 2022). Legal disputes in illegal settlements arise from conflicting land tenure arrangements, ambiguous

property rights, and inadequate enforcement of planning and zoning regulations (Mwatwara & Mujere, 2022). This usually leads to contentious issues over land ownership, use, and development. Residents face legal challenges related to property rights, eviction notices, building code violations, and encroachment on public or private lands (Mwatwara & Mujere, 2022). Eviction threats loom large over residents of illegal settlements, as authorities and landowners may seek to reclaim land, clear settlements, or enforce eviction orders on grounds of illegality, public safety concerns, or development projects. The threat of forced evictions not only disrupts the lives and livelihoods of residents but also raises questions of due process, human rights protections, and the provision of adequate alternative housing solutions for those affected by displacement (Magina et al., 2020). Conflicts over land use and development in illegal settlements can stem from competing interests among residents, authorities, developers, and other stakeholders seeking to leverage urban land for various purposes, such as housing, infrastructure, commercial activities, or environmental conservation (Magina et al., 2020). The lack of clear regulations, participatory decision-making processes, and inclusive land use planning frameworks often fuel tensions, disputes, and power struggles over the allocation and utilization of scarce urban land resources.

2.5.5 Health Risks

The adverse living conditions prevalent in illegal settlements, characterized by poor sanitation, overcrowding, and inadequate access to healthcare, create a breeding ground for the spread of infectious diseases, health disparities, and preventable health issues among vulnerable populations. The convergence of environmental risks, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and limited healthcare services in informal communities exacerbates the burden of disease and undermines the overall health and well-being of residents (Ncube, 2022). Poor sanitation facilities and limited access to clean water in illegal settlements contribute to the

transmission of waterborne diseases, such as cholera, typhoid fever, and diarrheal infections (Ncube, 2022). These disproportionately affect children, women, and the elderly. The lack of proper sanitation infrastructure, safe hygiene practices, and wastewater treatment mechanisms increases the risk of fecal-oral contamination, microbial pathogens, and environmental pollution (Zerbo et al., 2020). Overcrowding in informal settlements further compounds health risks, as densely populated living spaces, shared facilities, and inadequate ventilation facilitate the rapid spread of communicable illnesses among residents (Zerbo et al., 2020). The close proximity of households and lack of healthcare access contribute to increased vulnerability to public health challenges faced by communities in cramped living conditions (Ncube, 2022). Limited healthcare resources, inadequate health promotion efforts, and barriers to healthcare utilization perpetuate disparities in health outcomes and exacerbate the burden of preventable diseases among marginalized populations (Charnley, 2022).

2.6 Potential Solutions to Illegal Settlements

2.6.1 Regularization of Settlements

The regularization of settlements is a critical process that governments can implement to address informal housing issues. By legalizing informal settlements, residents can gain secure land tenure, providing them with ownership rights or long-term leases. This, in turn, can lead to increased investment in housing and infrastructure, improving overall living conditions for residents (Manandhar, 2019). For example, in countries like Brazil and South Africa, regularization programs have successfully granted ownership rights to residents of informal settlements, allowing them to invest in and maintain their homes (Manandhar, 2019). However, challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles, resistance from various stakeholders, and the financial burden of formalizing settlements need to be carefully considered and addressed in the implementation of regularization policies (Manandhar, 2019). Hylton and Charles (2018) assert

that governments need to establish transparent frameworks that outline the steps, requirements, and rights involved in the regularization process. For instance, clear policies can specify the criteria for eligibility, the documentation needed for proof of residence, and the mechanisms for resolving disputes arising during the regularization process (Hylton & Charles, 2018). These guidelines provide clarity to both residents and authorities, helping to streamline the process and mitigate potential challenges (Hylton & Charles, 2018). Additionally, well-defined policies can enhance the legitimacy of the regularization efforts, instilling trust and cooperation among stakeholders involved in the process.

2.6.2 Infrastructural Development

Infrastructure development plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of life in informal settlements by providing crucial services like clean water, sanitation, electricity, and waste management (Dovey et al., 2020). Investing in these essential services can lead to substantial improvements in the living conditions of residents and foster sustainable development within these communities (Dovey et al., 2020). For instance, the provision of clean water can reduce health risks associated with waterborne diseases, while access to proper sanitation facilities can enhance overall hygiene and well-being (Dovey et al., 2020). Moreover, reliable electricity supply not only improves safety and security but also enables economic activities to thrive in informal settlements (Dovey et al., 2020). However, the development of infrastructure in informal settlements is often met with challenges such as limited financial resources, inadequate planning, and social resistance (Dovey et al., 2020). To address these obstacles, governments can consider innovative financing mechanisms, community engagement strategies, and effective urban planning to ensure the successful implementation of infrastructure projects.

2.6.3 Affordable Housing Initiatives

Implementing affordable housing initiatives is crucial in alleviating the strain on informal settlements. By expanding access to affordable housing options, governments can mitigate the housing crisis and improve living conditions for vulnerable populations. This can be achieved through a variety of measures, including public housing projects, subsidies, and incentives for private developers to build low-cost housing units (Nzau & Trillo, 2020). Public housing initiatives provide a stable and secure housing option for low-income individuals and families, while subsidies can help reduce the financial burden of housing costs (Nzau & Trillo, 2020). In addition, offering incentives to private developers encourages the construction of affordable housing units, thereby increasing the availability of housing options for those in need (Nzau & Trillo, 2020). By combining these strategies, governments can address the housing shortage, reduce informal settlements, and create more inclusive and sustainable communities for all residents.

2.6.4 Relocation Programs

Relocation programs can be a necessary step in ensuring the safety and well-being of residents living in hazardous or unsuitable areas. When faced with environmental or safety concerns, governments may need to initiate relocation efforts to protect individuals from harm (Lorenzo-Perez, 2021). However, it is crucial that such programs are carried out with compassion, fairness, and adequate support for those affected. Displaced individuals should be provided with proper compensation and assistance in finding new housing options and accessing essential services in their new communities (Lorenzo-Perez, 2021). By prioritizing the needs and rights of displaced individuals, governments can facilitate a smoother transition and help ensure that all residents have access to safe and sustainable living environments.

2.7 Research Gap

Despite the extensive literature on urbanization theory and its implications for informal settlements, several critical gaps remain that warrant further investigation. Much of the existing research tends to generalize the causes and consequences of informal settlements across various global contexts without adequately addressing local dynamics. There is a need for more context-specific studies that explore the unique socio-economic, political, and cultural factors influencing informal settlement proliferation. There is a lack of comprehensive analysis regarding the effectiveness of different governance models and policy frameworks in managing informal settlements. Research comparing successful case studies across varying governance structures could provide valuable lessons for policymakers.

2.8 Summary

In summary, this chapter provided an elaboration on the critical relationship between urbanization and the emergence of informal settlements. This highlights the need for a multifaceted approach to address the challenges they pose. By examining the theoretical framework and various contributing factors, it becomes evident that informal settlements are not merely a byproduct of urban growth but rather a complex phenomenon shaped by socio-economic, political, and environmental dynamics. The identified challenges, ranging from inadequate housing to health risks, necessitate targeted interventions, including regularization of settlements, infrastructural development, and the implementation of affordable housing initiatives. As demonstrated, addressing the issues surrounding informal settlements, particularly in the context of Zimbabwe, requires a commitment to equitable urban planning and governance that prioritizes the needs of all residents. This chapter ultimately sets the groundwork for further research and actionable solutions that can foster more inclusive and sustainable urban environments.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlined the research design and methodology employed in the study of factors contributing to the continued proliferation of illegal (informal) settlements in Seke Rural District. The research provides a comprehensive examination of the complexities surrounding these settlements by utilizing a constructivist approach that values the subjective experiences and perspectives of individuals affected by this issue. The research design was centered on a case study approach, focusing specifically on Seke Rural District as a representative context for examining informal settlements. Qualitative research methods was employed in this study to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors contributing to the proliferation of illegal settlements. A total of 20 respondents were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that those chosen have relevant knowledge or experience related to the issue. A sample size of 20 was chosen to balance the need for depth in qualitative research with practical considerations. This number is manageable for in-depth interviews while allowing for sufficient data to explore the complexities of the issue. These respondents included residents of informal settlements, community leaders, local authorities, and key informants involved in urban planning and development.

3.2 Research Philosophy

The constructivist research paradigm was used in the study. According to Burr (2020) the constructivist research paradigm is a framework within qualitative research that focuses on the subjective construction of social reality. In this paradigm, reality is viewed as being socially constructed through interactions and interpretations of individuals within a specific cultural

and historical context (Burr, 2020). The constructivist paradigm allows you to delve deeply into the subjective experiences of various stakeholders, including residents of informal settlements, community leaders, and local authorities. Researchers operating within the constructivist paradigm acknowledge that knowledge is not absolute but is shaped by the perspectives, experiences, and values of those involved in the research process (Burr, 2020). The constructivist paradigm allows one to delve deeply into the subjective experiences of various stakeholders, including residents of informal settlements, community leaders, and local authorities. Packer and Goicoechea (2020) assert that this paradigm emphasizes the importance of understanding how meaning is created and negotiated. It values the multiple truths and interpretations that individuals bring to their experiences. This paradigm acknowledges and values the diversity of perspectives and interpretations, allowing for the exploration of multiple truths and the complexity of human experiences (Packer & Goicoechea, 2020). Furthermore, the study recognizes that the issue of illegal settlements is complex and multifaceted. Each target such as residents, urban planners and local officials brings unique insights and interpretations. Constructivism supports the idea that there is no single truth. Researchers operating within the constructivist paradigm have the flexibility to adapt their methods and approaches to better capture the dynamic and context-dependent nature of social reality. This is why the constructivist paradigm was used in the study.

3.3 Research Methodology

The research methodology employed for this study is qualitative in nature. Creswell (2021) describes qualitative research methods as a way to study individuals' lived experiences, perceptions, and interactions within their natural settings. As stated by Creswell (2021) qualitative research methods involve the collection of non-numerical data to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues and contexts. This allowed for a detailed exploration of the

complexities surrounding illegal settlements in Seke Rural District. Therefore, in the context of the study, there was an in-depth analysis of the factors that contribute to the proliferation of informal settlements in Seke. Flick (2020) argues that qualitative research methods enable researchers to capture the subjective perspectives of individuals, giving voice to marginalized groups and shedding light on diverse experiences and realities. Creswell (2021) asserts that qualitative research methods offer researchers the opportunity to delve into complex phenomena in their natural contexts, providing a holistic understanding that goes beyond surface-level explanations. Flick (2020) points out that qualitative research methods promote respondent engagement and collaboration. This fosters a deeper connection between researchers and respondents and results in rich, context-specific data. This is why qualitative research methods were used in the study.

3.4 Research Design

Merriam and Tisdell (2019) characterize research design as a systematic plan that outlines the procedures and methods to be employed in a study. It serves as a roadmap for conducting research and ensures that the study is conducted in a structured and rigorous manner. The research design employed in this study is a case study approach. The focus was specifically on Seke Rural District as a representative case of illegal settlements. Robson and McCartan (2020) define case study research design as an intensive study of a specific individual, group, or phenomenon in its natural setting. The case study research design helped highlight the specific factors that cause the proliferation of informal settlements in Seke. It involved detailed data collection and analysis to generate a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the case. The advantage of analysing a single case is that it uncover the contextual factors regarding informal settlements in the district. Merriam and Tisdell (2019) argue that case study research design allows for the examination of unique and rare cases that

may not be easily replicated in other research designs, offering a rich source of information and data for analysis. Merriam and Tisdell (2019) further suggest that case study research design enables researchers to explore real-life situations in their natural context, allowing for a holistic and in-depth analysis that goes beyond simple explanations. Robson and McCartan (2020) emphasize that case studies allow researchers to delve deeply into a specific case, providing a rich and detailed understanding of the complexities and nuances of the phenomenon under investigation.

3.5 Population and Sample

3.5.1 Population

The population is the entire group of individuals, objects, or events that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study (Palinkas et al., 2019). It represents the larger group from which the sample is drawn and to which the research findings are intended to generalize. The population of interest for the study comprised of residents living in illegal settlements within Seke Rural District. These individuals represent the target group from which valuable insights regarding the factors contributing to the continued proliferation of informal settlements were drawn. According to Zim Data Portal (2022) Seke has a population of approximately 200,000 residents.

3.5.2 Sample

According to Faber and Fonseca (2020) a sample is a selected subset of the population that is representative of the larger group from which it is drawn. Samples were used in research to study characteristics, behaviors, and trends within populations more efficiently and cost-effectively. Non-probability sampling was used to select respondents for the study on the proliferation of illegal settlements in Seke. Palinkas et al. (2019) characterizes non-probability

sampling as a technique where the selection of individuals or cases for the sample is based on the researcher's judgment or convenience, rather than through random selection (Faber & Fonseca, 2020). Non-probability sampling methods may include quota sampling, purposive sampling, or snowball sampling (Faber & Fonseca, 2020). A sample of 20 respondents who have direct experience or knowledge related to illegal settlements in Seke Rural District. The research aimed to include individuals who possess relevant knowledge or experience related to the issue of illegal settlements. This targeted selection ensures that the sample is rich in insights and perspective. The sample included 5 residents of informal settlements, 5 members from the local authority, 5 people from housing cooperatives and 5 academics. This samples size was chosen as a means to balance the need for depth in qualitative research with practical considerations. This number is manageable for in-depth interviews while allowing for sufficient data to explore the complexities of the issue.

3.6 Sampling Method

The sampling method employed in the study prioritized the selection of respondents based on their relevance and expertise in the field of informal settlements. Through purposive sampling, the research aims to gather diverse perspectives and experiences that can enrich the understanding of the research topic. Teddie and Yu (2019) describe purposive sampling as a strategy that involves intentionally selecting respondents who possess the qualities or experiences that are of interest to the study. Researchers use purposive sampling to target specific groups or individuals that can best address the research objectives. It also has a flexible approach that allows the researcher to select respondents based on convenience. The sample of 20 respondents was therefore conveniently and purposively selected. Purposive sampling allows researchers to select respondents who possess the specific characteristics, knowledge, or experiences that are relevant to the research objectives (Teddie & Yu, 2019). This targeted

approach ensures that the sample includes individuals who can provide valuable insights into the topic regarding the proliferation of illegal settlements. Purposive sampling is also a cost-effective and time-efficient sampling method, as researchers can focus on recruiting respondents who meet the criteria of interest, rather than selecting a random sample from the entire population (Richie et al., 2019). This targeted selection process saves resources and reduces unnecessary data collection.

3.7 Data Collection Methods

3.7.1 In-depth Interviews

Data collection involved conducting in-depth interviews with selected respondents to gather detailed information on the contributing factors to the proliferation of illegal settlements. These interviews provided a platform for respondents to share their insights, experiences, and perceptions regarding the issue at hand. During data collection, 5 residents of informal settlements, 5 members from the local authority, 5 people from housing cooperatives and 5 academics participated in in-depth interviews. According to Ritchie et al. (2019) in-depth interviews are a qualitative research method that involves conducting detailed and comprehensive one-on-one conversations with study respondents to gather rich and in-depth data on their experiences, perspectives, and opinions. These interviews aim to explore the complexities of individuals' thoughts and behaviours in light of the spread of informal settlements. This allows researchers to delve deeply into specific topics and gain a nuanced understanding of their views (Ritchie et al., 2019). The advantage of in-depth interviews is that they follow a semi-structured or unstructured format, where open-ended questions are used to encourage respondents to share detailed narratives and insights (Kvale & Brinkman, 2020). The researcher plays an active role in probing for additional information, clarifications, and elaborations to uncover hidden meanings and nuances in respondents' responses (Kvale &

Brinkman, 2020). In-depth interviews offer flexibility in questioning and probing. The researcher asked follow up questions in order to probe more about the matter. This allows researchers to explore unexpected topics, follow up on responses, and adapt the interview process to uncover new insights (Ritchie et al., 2019). In-depth interviews enable researchers to contextualize respondents ' responses within their lived experiences, cultural backgrounds, and social contexts, providing a deeper understanding of the factors shaping their perspectives (Ritchie et al., 2019). Through in-depth interviews, researchers can capture diverse perspectives and variations in respondents ' experiences, contributing to a more comprehensive and nuanced analysis of the research topic.

3.7.2 Secondary Data

Documentary data refers to information or records obtained from existing documents, texts, or materials, such as written sources or visual materials (Seidman, 2020). These documents serve as primary sources of data and are directly accessed and analyzed by researchers to extract insights and evidence for their studies. On the other hand, secondary data refers to data that has been collected and compiled by someone else for a different purpose than the researcher's current study (Seidman, 2020). As stated by Josselson (2020) secondary data may include datasets, reports, surveys, academic literature, government publications, or any other sources of information that have already been gathered and are available for reuse in research. Secondary data sources, such as official reports, academic literature, and policy documents, were consulted to complement the findings obtained from primary data collection. Secondary data analysis helped contextualize the primary data and provide a broader perspective on the factors influencing illegal settlements in Seke Rural District.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Validity in research refers to the extent to which a study accurately measures what it intends to measure (Roulston, 2020). Validity assesses whether the research instrument or methods used are appropriate for capturing the desired constructs or phenomena, ensuring that the conclusions drawn from the study are sound and trustworthy (Roulston, 2020). Noble and Smith (2020) describes reliability in research as the consistency and stability of measurement over repeated observations or measurements. Reliability assesses the extent to which a research instrument or method produces consistent results when applied multiple times, indicating the dependability and replicability of the findings (Noble & Smith, 2020). Ensuring the validity and reliability of the study findings is paramount. To enhance validity, data triangulation was employed by cross-verifying information obtained from multiple sources. Reliability was strengthened through the use of a systematic and consistent data collection and analysis process.

3.9 Data Presentation and Analysis

Thematic analysis was used in the study. As stated by Braun and Clarke (2021) thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to analyze the patterns, themes, and meanings within a dataset of textual or visual data. This approach involves systematically identifying, analyzing, and reporting recurring themes or patterns in the data to gain insights into the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Researchers conducting thematic analysis typically follow a series of steps, including data familiarization, coding, theme development, and interpretation. The data gathered through interviews and secondary sources were analyzed thematically to identify patterns, trends, and relationships among the factors contributing to the proliferation of illegal settlements. Findings were presented in a clear and organized manner to facilitate understanding and interpretation.

3.10 Pilot Testing

Pilot testing is a preliminary small-scale research study conducted by researchers before the full implementation of a larger study or experiment (Eldridge & Lancaster, 2019). The primary purpose of pilot testing is to evaluate and refine the research methods, procedures, instruments, or interventions that will be used in the main study (Eldridge & Lancaster, 2019). During pilot testing, the researcher recruited a small sample of respondents who are similar to the target population of the main study to test the feasibility and functionality of their research design. This pilot phase allows researchers to identify any potential issues, challenges, or limitations in their study protocol and make necessary adjustments before proceeding with the larger study (Eldridge & Lancaster, 2019). Prior to full-scale data collection, the research instruments underwent pilot testing to assess their effectiveness and relevance.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

This research prioritized ethical considerations to safeguard the rights and welfare of respondents. The researcher obtained a permission letter from the university. Informed consent was obtained from all individuals involved, ensuring they receive comprehensive information about the study's objectives, methods, potential risks, and benefits. Respondents were clearly informed that their involvement is voluntary, and they may withdraw from the study at any point without facing any adverse consequences. Furthermore, maintaining confidentiality and anonymity was a top priority throughout the research process. All collected data was treated with utmost confidentiality, and any identifying details were removed or obscured to prevent any association between respondents and their responses.

3.12 Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter outlined the research design and methodology that guided the investigation into the factors contributing to the proliferation of illegal settlements in Seke Rural District. Utilizing a case study research design allowed for an in-depth exploration of the unique dynamics within this specific context. The qualitative approach, particularly through purposive sampling and in-depth interviews, facilitates the collection of rich, contextual data from 20 respondents, each offering valuable insights into the complexities of informal settlements. This methodology captured diverse perspectives and provided a comprehensive understanding of the underlying issues. Adhering to rigorous ethical standards while ensuring validity and reliability in the research process aimed to yield findings that can inform policies and interventions addressing the challenges of illegal settlements. The next chapter shall present the findings of the study. It shall also provide a discussion and analysis of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This research was conducted in Seke with a sample of 20 respondents. The chapter presents the results of the study as follows. Respondents highlighted that informal settlements are characterized by sub-standard housing, often constructed from makeshift materials without regulatory approval. Economic pressures, including the lack of affordable housing and job opportunities, drive residents to these settlements. Corruption and shady land deals exacerbate the situation, with land barons exploiting vulnerable communities. Social challenges include heightened crime rates, overcrowding, and the constant threat of eviction, which creates instability. Environmental issues arise from inadequate sanitation and waste management, leading to health risks. Respondents emphasized the urgent need for improved access to basic services, robust urban planning, and reform in land allocation policies to address these challenges effectively.

4.2 Interview Response Rate

Table 4.1 Interview Response Rate

	Expected	Responded	Response Rate
Residents of Informal Settlements	5	5	100%
Representatives of Housing Cooperatives	5	5	100%
Local Authority Employees	5	5	100%

Academics	5	5	100%
Total	20	20	100%

4.3 Biographic Information of Respondents

Table 4.2 Demographic Information

Category	Subcategory	Details	Number of Respondents
Biographic Information	Sex	Male	14
		Female	6
	Age Distribution	18 - 34	2
		35 - 39	3
		40 - 44	8
		45 - 50	3
		50 - 54	4
	Size of Household	1 – 2	5
		3 – 4	7
		5 – 6	4
		7 – 8	3
		9 or more	1
	Area of Origin	Seke	10
		Harare	5
		Chitungwiza	3
		Other	2

	Date of Settlement	Before 2000	4
		2000 - 2005	5
		2006 - 2010	4
		2011 - 2015	3
		2016 - Present	4

The demographic overview of the respondents reveals that about 70% were male and approximately 30% were female. In terms of age distribution, roughly 10% were aged 18-34, around 15% were 35-39, about 40% were 40-44, approximately 15% were 45-50, and about 20% were 50-54. The size of households varied, with roughly 25% having 1-2 members, around 35% with 3-4 members, approximately 20% having 5-6 members, about 15% with 7-8 members, and roughly 5% having 9 or more members. Regarding their area of origin, about 50% of respondents came from Seke, approximately 25% from Harare, around 15% from Chitungwiza, and roughly 10% from other areas. Lastly, the date of settlement indicated that about 20% settled before 2000, approximately 25% between 2000 and 2005, about 20% from 2006 to 2010, roughly 15% from 2011 to 2015, and about 20% settled in 2016 or later.

4.4 The Prevalence of informal Settlements

The respondents were asked about the prevalence and commonality of informal settlements in the area. The following responses were given in relation to the matter.

4.4.1 Sub-standard Structures

The findings highlight that informal settlements in Seke District are characterized by sub-standard structures that do not meet local regulatory requirements. It emerged that people

sometimes construct temporary structures that are not approved by the local authority. In relation to the matter, Respondent 8 said;

> *In my area, informal settlements are quite common. These settlements often consist of makeshift structures that do not fully comply with regulatory building standards. Some also build small houses, cottages, or even wooden cabins as a way to establish shelter quickly and affordably.*

In relation to the matter Respondent 10 had this to say.

> *Individuals in informal settlements often utilize cost-effective materials for construction. Common choices include wood for framing, corrugated metal for roofing.*

This is consistent with what has been shared in literature. Basile and Ehlenz (2020) concur that informal settlements are typically characterized by makeshift structures. These constructions often lack formal planning and regulatory compliance, resulting in substandard living conditions. The reliance on readily available and cost-effective materials further contributes to the precarious nature of these settlements, highlighting the challenges residents face in securing safe and stable housing.

4.4.2 Illegal Land Occupation

The findings also that informal settlements are characterized by illegal land occupation. Some have characterized these settlers as squatters due to the informal nature of the settlements. Respondent 6 shared that;

> *I have noticed that squatting on land is prevalent issues in informal settlements. Many individuals and families occupy vacant or underutilized spaces without formal permission.*

This means that they just build on a vacant piece of land even if it causes disputes with the local authority. The findings show that there people are willing to encroach even in restricted areas. Respondent 5 asserts that;

> *Some even build on restricted areas such as wetlands or forests. The demand for land causes people to take shortcuts and build in undesignated areas.*

Another respondent noted,

> *Land poaching in our community is becoming increasingly common. It seems that more people are setting up makeshift homes on vacant land, often without any formal permission. This has created a visible shift in the landscape, with areas that were once open now filled with temporary structures*

These observations are in sync with Zazyki (2022) who concurs that illegal settlements are characterized by questionable measures in terms of land tenure. The findings show that the sporadic emergence of settlements does not signify proper planning.

4.5 Factors that lead to the Proliferation of Informal Settlements

Respondents were asked about the factors that lead to the emergence of informal settlements. Various themes emerged in the findings.

4.5.1 Economic Pull

The findings show that economic factors lead to the expansion of informal settlements. Most people like to live in Seke because of its proximity to Harare and Chitungwiza, which are urban areas. Respondent 10 had this to say;

Cities typically offer more employment prospects than rural areas. As individuals and families move to urban centers to improve their economic situation, they often find themselves in a position where formal housing is unaffordable or unavailable.

Respondent 8 stated that;

As residents of this city, we all have similar stories about why we came here. Many of us left our rural homes in search of better job opportunities. The hope was to find work that would help us support our families and improve our living condition

Respondent 7 made almost similar remarks;

In my experience, rural life isn't comparable to the urban lifestyle. In the city there are markets and diverse activities. These offer a sense of opportunity that rural areas often lack.

Furthermore, given the country's current tough socioeconomic conditions, it is expedient for some to migrate to urban areas in search of better opportunities. These findings show that informal settlements expand rapidly because of economic considerations. Williams et al. (2019) highlight that informal settlements are primarily driven by economic considerations. Many individuals and families migrate to urban areas in search of better job opportunities and improved living conditions. This economic motivation is a significant factor leading to the establishment of informal settlements, especially in cities where the demand for housing exceeds supply.

4.5.2 Lack of Affordable Housing

The findings showed that informal settlements are created when the city cannot meet the housing needs of the residents. The findings indicate that the local authority in Seke rural district has been slow to respond to the demands of urbanization. Respondent 9 said;

I never imagined I'd end up in an informal settlement. I thought cities would have solutions, but it's the opposite. It's a constant battle to find decent housing at a price we can afford.

In relation to the matter, Respondent 4 said;

Residents stands are expensive in various areas. For those that want to build in urban area, the cost of admission is high. That is why most resort to illegal settlements.

Another resident, Respondent 11, shared,

We all want a safe place to live, but the reality is that most of us can't afford it. We're left with no choice but to build wherever we can.

Respondent 12 added,

The prices of residential stands just keep going up every year. This makes them inaccessible for some.

This sentiment reflects a broader trend where the rapid urbanization and rising costs of living outpace wage growth, making formal housing increasingly unattainable for many. Zazyki (2022) argues that the lack of affordable housing exacerbates social inequalities and contributes to the marginalization of low-income populations. Without adequate housing options,

individuals are forced into informal settlements, which often lack basic services such as clean water, sanitation, and electricity.

4.5.3 Shady Land Deals and Improper Allocation of Land

The findings show that the prevalence of shady land deals, often orchestrated by land barons and corrupt politicians, significantly contributes to the improper allocation of land in Seke District. Many residents express frustration over the lack of transparency in land transactions. Respondent 12 remarked,

It's disheartening to see how land meant for development is sold off to a few individuals while ordinary people are left with nothing. This gives the land barons a monopoly over the land. They then opt to sell the land haphazardly.

Respondent 14, noted,

We hear stories of politicians benefitting from approving these deals. It makes you wonder if anyone cares about our community's needs.

Additionally, Respondent 11 stated,

Land that could be used for parks or schools is being turned into makeshift homes because someone decided to sell it without considering the consequences. There is no adequate urban planning when it comes to the sale of these pieces of land.

This highlights the detrimental impact of these corrupt practices on community development. Respondent 12 added,

It will be tough for emerging suburbs to be as orderly as other residential areas that are already established. I think it would be ideal if they would properly allocate land for schools, shops, clinics and other functional uses of land within the community.

Mwatwara and Mujere (2022) emphasize that such practices not only undermine the integrity of land governance but also foster social inequality. The argument is that the lack of accountability in land administration fuels mistrust among residents and exacerbates the challenges faced by those in informal settlements (Mwatwara & Mujere, 2022). Without effective oversight and transparent processes, the cycle of corruption and improper land allocation is likely to continue.

4.5.4 Population Growth and Housing Demand

The findings indicate that population growth, particularly among younger demographics, significantly increases the need for housing in urban areas. As more young people migrate to cities in search of educational and employment opportunities, the demand for affordable housing rises sharply. Respondent 12 expressed this sentiment, stating:

Many young families and young people move here. As a result, the areas has become more overcrowded.

This influx not only strains existing housing supply but also exacerbates the challenges of affordability and accessibility. Respondent 14 added:

I moved to the city for work, and many of my friends have done the same. We all want to live close to where we study or work.

In relation to the matter, Respondent 15 noted:

We just want a small place to call our own. But with the prices out there, many of us end up living in overcrowded conditions or illegal settlements."

Marutlulle (2021) argues that this demographic shift necessitates urgent policy interventions. The findings indicate that the demand for housing has exceeded the capacity of the local authority.

4.5.5 Corrupt Land Allocation

The respondents indicated that corruption within local government and land administration significantly exacerbates housing challenges, particularly in rapidly growing populations. Officials may turn a blind eye to illegal settlements, allowing unauthorized land occupations to flourish. This creates a climate where land barons exploit vulnerable communities, often through bribery and profitreering. Respondent 8 noted;

There are corrupt officials from the local authority that participate in the allocation of land in our area. This frustrates those who try to acquire land through legal means.

In relation to the matter, Respondent 9 said;

It has become a common practice form some to build without permits. There seems to be a double standard when it comes to how the law is enforced. I believe the local authority is complicit in these unethical practices because of how relaxed they are.

These sentiments highlight how some respondents feel that the misuse of land is partly exacerbated by the unethical practices of corrupt officials. In relation to the matter, Respondent 10 asserts that;

As a rural district, Seke has traditional leadership structures. In that regard, a Village Head (Sabhuku) can sell land without the authorization of the council. This is what sometimes leads to the haphazard distribution of land.

In support of this matter, Respondent 11 said;

There is a loophole whereby homeseekers can access land from the Village Head instead of the council and a cheaper price. When someone follows this route, they can build their house in an expedited manner.

The Communal Lands Act (20:04) gives the village head the authority to manage and allocate land. Therefore, this presents a legal ambiguity for a district such as Seke which is experiencing urbanization. Marutlulle (2021) concurs that informal settlements are characterized by corrupt land allocation.

4.7 Social challenges Caused by Illegal Settlements

The respondents were asked about the social challenges that have emerged as a result of informal settlements. The following themes emerged from the findings.

4.7.1 Higher Crime Rate and Theft

The findings highlighted that informal settlements often grapple with heightened crime rates and insecurity due to the absence of effective law enforcement. The haphazard nature of the way the houses are constructed makes it easy for criminal activity to occur. Respondent 1 articulated this concern, stating,

In our area, we rarely see police patrols. Not enough attention is given to the security of the local area.

Similarly, Respondent 3 noted,

We've had break-ins and thefts. My assumption is that the high number of unemployed youths leads to this problem. There are young people that are always loitering around. I believe they mostly cause the crime problem.

Respondent 5 echoed these sentiments, saying,

Disputes emerge as a result of the disorderly way in which we live. I do not have confidence in our authorities to assist us. Thieves and other anti-social elements carry out their activities with impunity.

This lack of safety not only affects daily life but also deters community development. The findings highlight a pervasive sense of insecurity that permeates the lives of those living in informal settlements, underscoring the urgent need for improved safety measures and law enforcement presence. Cicalese and Fasolino (2023) concur that crime is endemic is informal settlements. Furthermore Cicalese and Fasolino (2023) highlight that with minimal law enforcement presence, informal settlements can become breeding grounds for various criminal activities, including theft, drug trafficking, and violence. The absence of a reliable judicial system further complicates matters, as victims of crime may feel discouraged from reporting incidents due to a lack of trust in authorities.

4.7.2 Lack of Land Tenure

Respondents also indicated that residents of informal settlements face the constant threat of eviction and this leads to instability and insecurity in their living conditions. Respondent 2 shared,

Every day, we live in fear that the authorities will come and demolish our homes. It is

a significant concern. Some of our neighbours have lost their houses and property.

This sentiment was echoed by Respondent 4, who described the legal implications of such uncertainty, stating,

Not knowing if we'll have a roof over our heads tomorrow makes it hard to plan for the

future. The authorities should find a way to regulate the settlements that already exist

while preventing the emergence of future illegal settlements.

The fear of displacement hinders infrastructural development in the area because it hinders residents from investing in their communities, as Respondent 6 pointed out,

Why should I fix my house when I know it could all be taken away in an instant? To me

this area could be a place where I am living in temporarily.

The constant threat of eviction creates a climate of instability, where residents are reluctant to establish roots. Sarmiento et al. (2020) highlight that this precariousness is a hallmark of life in informal settlements, where legal protections are often nonexistent. Many residents find themselves in a cycle of temporary solutions, seeking to secure their living arrangements while knowing they could be uprooted at any moment. This instability can lead to further social issues, such as increased tensions within the community and a lack of cohesion among residents who may feel isolated in their struggles.

4.7.3 Overcrowding

The findings also showed that population density in illegal settlements can lead to inadequate living conditions, significantly impacting the quality of life for residents. Respondent 3 highlighted this issue, stating,

Our homes are so close together in a compact way. We are overcrowded beyond what is normally expected for high density suburbs… This overcrowding strains available resources and fosters unsanitary conditions. This makes it difficult for residents to maintain basic hygiene.

In relation to the matter, Respondent 7 commented,

When you have so many people in one area, conflicts arise over space and resources. It's hard to get along when everyone is struggling.

In agreement with the matter, Zivhave and Dzvairo (2022) assert that overcrowded illegal settlements in Seke cause water and sewer reticulation facilities to be overwhelmed. This leads to significant operational challenges. Furthermore, Zivhave and Dzvairo (2022) note that the surge in population density places excessive demand on existing infrastructure, which is frequently inadequate or poorly maintained. This results in intermittent water supply and overloaded sewage systems, causing blockages and overflows that disrupt daily life and create unsanitary conditions for residents.

4.8 Environmental Challenges Caused by Informal Settlements

The respondents were also asked about the environmental challenges that emerge as a result of informal settlements. The following themes were noted in light of their responses.

4.8.1 Health Concerns

The findings indicate that poor sanitation and limited access to healthcare facilities increase the risk of communicable diseases. This contributes to public health crises in informal settlements. Respondent 2 emphasized this concern, stating,

People rely on makeshift toilets that are not properly constructed. This is a breeding ground for communicable diseases. The lack of proper sanitation infrastructure therefore creates an environment where illnesses can spread rapidly.

In relation to the matter, Respondent 4 noted,

The local water sources are contaminated. We have had several challenges in the spread of communicable diseases.

Respondent 6 remarked,

When someone gets sick, we have to travel far to find a clinic, and often they don't have the medicines

we need. One infection can have the ripple effects and cause an outbreak

This lack of accessible healthcare means that many residents delay seeking treatment, leading to worsened health outcome Furthermore, as indicated earlier, areas of illegal settlements plagued by overcrowding, water and sewer reticulation facilities are often overwhelmed, leading to significant public health concerns. The surge in population density strains existing infrastructure, which is frequently inadequate or poorly maintained. As a result, water supply becomes intermittent, and sewage systems struggle to cope with the increased load, causing blockages and overflows (Mutyambizi et al., 2020). This situation exacerbates the risk of waterborne diseases and also creates unsanitary living conditions which impact the well-being of residents and straining community resources.

4.8.2 Excessive Littering

The findings show that a lack of proper waste management practices in some parts of Seke have led to severe littering. It was noted that there is a trash problem that has emerged as a result of the crowded living conditions. Respondent 1 noted,

In various parts of our local area, there is a significant amount of trash. We often see a buildup of waste and makeshift landfills.

In relation to the matter, Respondent 15 said,

Trash is thrown away with impunity every day, leading to a worsening sanitation crisis in our community. The local authority is overwhelmed and unable to manage the sheer volume of waste generated. As a result, garbage accumulates in various locations, creating unsightly scenes and posing health hazards to residents.

Respondent 16 made stronger remarks,

People toss their trash on the streets without a second thought. It is of concern that we have no proper bins or collection services. The local authority seems unable to keep up with the problem, and it feels like we're stuck in this cycle of littering and neglect.

This sentiment highlights the dissatisfaction with how litter is handled in Seke. Respondent 15 added,

I've lived here for years and the situation has gotten worse. The trash piles up, and it seems like no one is taking responsibility.

Grangxabe et al. (2023) asserts that informal settlements often face significant challenges related to waste management, primarily due to inadequate infrastructure and limited resources.

Grangxabe et al. (2023) asserts that the rapid population growth in these areas leads to increased waste generation, but the lack of formal waste collection services means that trash is frequently disposed of improperly. This creates a cycle of littering and environmental degradation

4.8.3 Noise Pollution

The findings also indicate that the transition of Seke from a rural area to a more urbanized environment has led to increased noise pollution, primarily due to various activities that disrupt the tranquillity of the community. Respondent 19 stated that,

The establishment of beer halls and other entertainment venues has introduced loud music and significant foot traffic, particularly during weekends and holidays. This can be disruptive for residents seeking peace in their homes.

In relation to the matter, Respondent 8 asserts that,

The influx of people and social activities often leads to disorderly behavior, including loud conversations and disturbances late into the night. This not only affects the quality of life for residents but can also escalate tensions within the community.

Respondent 19 added,

Increased vehicular traffic associated with urbanization adds to the noise levels. The sounds of honking, engines, and general hustle and bustle are common in more populated areas.

These responses show that noise pollution has become a significant concern in Seke rural District. The proliferation of informal settlements. Zivhave and Dzvairo (2022) concur that such social challenges emerge as a result of the proliferation of informal settlements.

4.8.4 Environmental Degradation

The respondents also indicated that the proliferation of informal settlements leads to environmental degradation. The rapid and unplanned growth of informal settlements in Seke District has had significant environmental implications. This has led to various forms of degradation. Respondent 8 said,

When new people came to settle in the area, we saw an immediate destruction of biodiversity. The expansion of settlements required clearing land for housing and infrastructure. This resulted in the loss of trees and vegetation.

Furthermore, Respondent 10 reiterated points that have been stated earlier and said,

The increased population density has led to higher waste generation. Inadequate waste management practices have resulted in littering and illegal dumping. This has contributed to soil and water pollution.

Additionally, it has been noted that soil erosion has emerged from the expansion of settlements. Respondent 10 added,

There has been visible damage in the land. We have noticed the emergence of gulleys and pits throughout our neighbourhoods. These depressions are often caused by erosion and improper drainage.

Respondent 7 added,

The rapid and unplanned growth of informal settlements has led to visible degradation in our environment.

Safety concerns were also cited by some of the respondents. Respondent 8 cited that,

The destruction of our local land has made it increasingly unsafe to walk around, especially at night. The combination of poorly lit areas, uneven ground, and the presence of gullies creates an environment where accidents are all too common.

The findings highlight how the poor planning has led to unsafe living conditions. There are also poor water drainage systems which lead to gullies and other hazards. Carriho and Trindade (2022) acknowledge that the expansion of illegal settlements often leads to environmental degradation. These are the trends that are seen in Seke District.

4.9 Solutions Introduced by the Local Authority

The respondents were asked about some of the solutions that have been introduced by the local authority regarding informal settlements. The following themes emerged from the findings.

4.9.1 Legal Action

The findings highlight that the rural district council in the area has taken legal action against individuals as well as real estate developers who allocate informal settlements. Respond 9 cited that,

The local authority has taken legal action against some who are involved in the improper allocation of stands. Land barons have been implicated in corrupt practices, often selling land without proper authorization.

Respondent 11 reiterated the same theme,

The council took legal action with the aim to hold land barons accountable and restore rightful ownership of land to the community. The predatory nature of their practices has warranted a legal response.

However, it has emerged that the local authority is not always successful in these lawsuits. Respondent 12 shared that,

The legal framework surrounding land ownership and allocation is intricate and convoluted. Many cases become bogged down in legal technicalities. This leads to prolonged court proceedings with little progress.

As an example, the people that were allotted land by Village Heads can make an argument on the legality of their land tenure. This legal ambiguity presents a challenge in finding resolutions for informal settlements. Nyagwande (2017) confirms that Seke Rural District Council has taken various individuals as well as land developers to court due to illegal settlements.

4.9.2 Regularization

The findings show that the local council in Seke District has been working to regularize stands in informal settlements as part of its broader strategy to address the challenges posed by unplanned urbanization. This initiative aims to provide legal land titles to residents, thereby enhancing security of tenure and encouraging investment in infrastructure. Respondent 13 stated,

Our local authority has been working to regularize the ownership of informal settlements. There are some people that have received official paperwork to certify their ownership.

Another resident noted,

The local authority has made concessions with some people that live in informal settlements. In some instances, they have also reduced the land size of some that received land from village heads.

Scholars like Jones (2020) argue that establishing clear legal frameworks is crucial for managing informal settlements effectively, as it clarifies land rights and responsibilities, reducing conflicts. Furthermore, the council's efforts to engage with community members during the regularization process have been noted positively by residents, with Respondent 16 commenting,

Having secure land titles would protect us from eviction and give us the confidence to invest in our properties.

This approach has helped to sanitize the chaos that has emerged as a result of informal settlements.

4.10 Solutions to Address Challenges that emerge in Informal Settlements

The respondents were asked about potential solutions that could be implemented so that the challenges that emerge in informal settlements can be alleviated. The following themes emerged in the findings.

4.10.1 Improving Access to Basic Services

The findings noted that informal settlements should benefit from the improvement of basic services. Some residents cited that it is their right to live under conditions where the most basic services are available to them. Expanding access to healthcare and social services in informal settlements is vital for improving the overall quality of life for residents. Respondent 2 suggested:

If local authorities could establish more clinics in our area, it would make a huge difference. We need healthcare that is accessible and affordable in our neighbourhoods.

Additionally, ensuring reliable access to clean water is essential for the health and well-being of residents in informal settlements. Respondent 3 proposed:

> *We urgently need the local authorities to install more communal water points in our area. Access to clean water shouldn't be a luxury, it should be a basic right for everyone.*

Additionally, Respondent 4 recommended:

> *We need regular waste collection services to be established in our community. Having scheduled pickups would prevent garbage from piling up and causing health hazards.*

This could solve the issues to do with litter and environmental damage. These overarching themes highlight how some residents feel that enhanced access to basic services would be beneficial. As stated earlier by Mutyambizi et al. (2020) informal settlements sometimes lack access to basic services. Therefore, these challenges need to be solved.

4.10.2 Zoning and Urban Planning

The findings highlight there is a need to develop robust urban planning measures. This is essential for creating sustainable and liveable environments in informal settlements. Respondent 8 suggested:

> *We need comprehensive urban planning that includes designated zones for residential, commercial, and recreational areas in Seke. This would help organize our community and ensure that essential services are accessible.*

Respondent 11 pointed out:

When land is partitioned properly, it encourages adherence to regulations. This can help reduce conflicts and ensure that everyone understands their rights and responsibilities.

Respondent 12 noted:

An organized layout will lead to better infrastructure and services. If the planning is done right, it will ultimately improve our living conditions.

These voices highlight the importance of order in urban planning, emphasizing that diligent and structured approaches will foster a more cohesive and functional community. Even though there is a pre-existing crisis, there is a need to regularize the informal settlements. Mwatwara and Mujere (2022) also recommend robust zoning and planning as a contingency to deter the proliferation of informal settlements.

4.10.3 Policy Reform

The findings cited that there is a need to remove legal ambiguities that have contributed to the expansion of informal settlements. As stated earlier, legal ambiguities between traditional leaders and local councils have created significant challenges in land and housing policies. Respondent 13 stated:

We need policies that simplify the process of obtaining legal land titles. Too many barriers make it difficult for us to claim ownership and invest in our homes.

Respondent 16 noted:

There needs to be a clear understanding of the roles of traditional leaders and the council. Confusion about authority can lead to disputes over land rights and access.

Respondent 20 emphasized:

We need secure land titles that are legally recognized. This would protect us from eviction and give us the confidence to invest in our properties.

Respondent 21 pointed out:

The process of obtaining land tenure should be transparent. Clear guidelines and accessible information will help reduce confusion and disputes.

Jones (2020) asserts that comprehensive legal frameworks are paramount in effectively managing informal settlements. A robust legal framework provides clarity regarding land rights, ownership, and responsibilities. This structure is essential for residents to understand their legal standing and avoid conflicts. Comprehensive laws facilitate mechanisms for conflict resolution, ensuring that disputes between residents, traditional leaders, and local councils can be addressed fairly and efficiently.

4.10.4 Demolitions

The findings indicate that there are some respondents who are in favour of demolitions as a means to mitigate the expansion of informal settlements. Responded 18 cited that,

I think council demolitions would be helpful to deter the spread of informal settlements. Houses that were built illegally should be destroyed so that there can be regularization.

Furthermore, these demolitions have been identified as a contingency plan that is meant to reduce the negative effects of informal settlements. Respondent 2 stated that,

As Seke District evolves, the local authority should seek to implement urban planning initiatives that require clearing certain areas. Demolitions can be a part of broader efforts to create organized and sustainable living environments.

Understandably, there are some respondents who are not in support of the suggestion. Respondent 9 made the following remarks,

While we have a crisis at hand, I do not think destruction of property is a solution. Demolitions often lead to the displacement of families who have built their homes in these informal settlements. This creates a humanitarian crisis, as many residents are left without shelter or alternative housing options.

In support of this narrative, Respondent 11 stated that,

The fear of imminent demolitions has led to tensions within the community. Some residents feel targeted and marginalized. As informal settlements are common, why do some get demolished while others do not? If demotions are done, it would be a double standard in the application of the law.

These responses highlight how demolitions can be used as a means to deal with the spread of informal settlements. Some feel that they are a violation of people's human rights. Nyagwande (2017) asserts that demolitions have been used as a means to deal with the spread of informal settlements in other parts of Zimbabwe.

4.11 Summary

In summary, the findings from this chapter underscore the multifaceted challenges associated with informal settlements in Seke District. The prevalence of sub-standard housing, coupled with illegal settling on restricted lands, reflects a pressing need for effective urban

planning and policy reform. Economic factors, including the lack of affordable housing and corruption in land allocation, significantly contribute to the growth of these settlements, creating a cycle of instability and insecurity for residents. Moreover, the social and environmental implications, such as increased crime rates, overcrowding, and health risks, highlight the urgent necessity for comprehensive solutions. Improving access to basic services, implementing robust urban planning, and establishing transparent land allocation processes are critical steps toward enhancing the living conditions of those in informal settlements.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study on the factors contributing to the proliferation of illegal settlements in Seke Rural District. The objectives were to identify the underlying factors driving informal settlements, review the challenges they present, and explore potential solutions. The study utilized a sample of 20 respondents, including residents, local authority members, and housing cooperative representatives, to gather diverse perspectives. Key findings revealed that economic pressures, lack of affordable housing, and corruption were primary drivers of informal settlements. Recommendations include improving access to basic services, enhancing urban planning, and reforming land allocation policies to promote transparency and secure land tenure. Addressing these issues is essential for fostering sustainable urban development in Seke.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study reveals a complex interplay of factors contributing to the proliferation of illegal settlements in Seke Rural District. Economic pressures, particularly poverty and the lack of affordable housing, emerge as significant drivers, compelling residents to seek informal living arrangements. Rapid urbanization, fueled by population growth and migration, exacerbates the housing crisis, leaving local authorities unable to meet increasing demands. Corruption and shady land deals play a critical role, with land barons exploiting vulnerable communities through unauthorized land sales. This lack of transparency in land administration fosters an environment conducive to informal settlements. Social challenges include heightened crime rates, overcrowding, and a pervasive sense of insecurity due to unstable land

tenure. Residents face significant health risks stemming from inadequate sanitation and limited access to clean water. Environmental degradation is evident, with increased littering and pollution arising from poor waste management practices. The findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive solutions, including improving access to basic services, implementing effective urban planning, and reforming policies to address the underlying issues and enhance living conditions for those in informal settlements.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made in light of the study,

- ❖ The local authorities should prioritize the development of more affordable and accessible housing options to meet the growing demand and reduce the incentive for residents to turn to informal settlements.

- ❖ It would be helpful for the local authority to invest in expanding access to clean water, sanitation, healthcare facilities, and efficient waste management systems within informal settlements to improve the living conditions and public health outcomes of residents.

- ❖ The local authority should also implement comprehensive urban planning that designates specific areas for residential, commercial, and recreational use. This will help organize the community, ensure equitable distribution of resources and promote sustainable development.

- ❖ Simplifying the process of obtaining legal land titles could help deal with the issue of informal settlements. There should also be clarity about the roles and responsibilities of traditional leaders and local authorities. The authorities should establish transparent mechanisms for land allocation to reduce conflicts and provide residents with secure tenure.

❖ To address the high crime rates in informal settlements, it would helpful to enhance the presence and effectiveness of law enforcement. They should also promote community-based policing initiatives to foster trust and collaboration.

❖ In conjunction with the government, the local authority can explore opportunities to regularize and formalize existing informal settlements. It would also be helpful to grant residents legal recognition and security of tenure to encourage investment in their homes and communities.

❖ It would also be helpful to implement measures to address environmental degradation, such as reforestation efforts, improved waste management, and the development of sustainable drainage systems to mitigate the impact of informal settlements on the local ecosystem.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Study

The current study focused on the specific context of Seke Rural District, but expanding the research to examine how other local authorities are addressing the proliferation of informal settlements could provide valuable insights. A comparative analysis could shed light on best practices, challenges, and innovative solutions that have been implemented in different regions.

The findings of this study highlighted the complex dynamics between traditional leaders and local authorities in the allocation of land, which has contributed to the growth of informal settlements. Further research could delve deeper into the decision-making processes, power dynamics, and potential reforms needed to align traditional and formal systems of land governance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide for Respondents

Preamble

My name is Nyasha Machiwana, I am a student of Peace and Governance Studies at Bindura University of Education (BUSE). I am participating in bachelors degree program in the field. To fulfil my studies, I'm writing a research paper on the effectiveness of informal settlements. The tile of my paper is Factors Contributing to the Continued Proliferation of Illegal (Informal) Settlements: A Case of Seke Rural District.

I will be interviewing key informants in the study.

The information obtained during this interview will be obtained for academic purposes. The researcher will guarantee the anonymity and security of the respondents. The research follows acceptable research ethics. As such, the identity of the interviewee and the information provided will not be shared with anyone.

<u>Interview Guide</u>

<u>Section A</u>

Respondent Number: ………………………………………

Biographical Data (Tick or fill where applicable).

Biographic Information	Age Distribution	18 - 34: [ ]
		35 - 39: [ ]
		40 - 44: [ ]
		45 - 50: [ ]
		50 - 54: [ ]
	Sex	Male: [ ]
		Female: [ ]
	Size of Household	1 – 2 members: [ ]
		3 – 4 members: [ ]
		5 – 6 members: [ ]
		7 – 8 members: [ ]
		9 or more members: [ ]
	Area of Origin	
	Date of Settlement	Before 2000: [ ]
		2000 - 2005: [ ]
		2006 - 2010: [ ]
		2011 - 2015: [ ]
		2016 - Present: [ ]

Interview Questions

1. How common are informal settlements in your area?

2. Which factors contribute to the spread of informal settlements?

3. Which social challenges have emerged as a result of illegal settlements?

4. Which environmental challenges have emerged as a result of illegal settlements?

5. Which general challenges have emerged as a result of illegal settlements?

6. What solutions have been introduced by the local authorities to deal with the spread of informal settlements?

7. Which solutions would you recommend to deal with the spread of informal settlements?

Appendix B: Research Permission Letter

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