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Myth, memory, and political settlements in the city: compounded disadvantage and a path for plausible futures

Ndlovu, M.B.

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Candidate - Mandipa Bongiwe Ndlovu

Dissertation Title - ***Myth, Memory, and Political Settlements in the City: Compounded Disadvantage and a Path for Plausible Futures***

Dissertation-based propositions:

1. Urban disadvantage in Bulawayo is not the result of developmental failure, but the outcome of political settlements that actively reproduce exclusion through patronage, securocratic governance, and mythologised narratives of dissent.
2. Informality in Bulawayo functions through politically mediated systems of selective tolerance, coercion, and patronage.
3. The mythologisation of Bulawayo as a "dissident city" has functioned as a durable political instrument through which exclusion, securitisation, and uneven development have been legitimised in post-independence Zimbabwe.
4. The strategic silence theorised in this dissertation as "uneasy peace" reflects adaptive forms of survival and citizenship under unresolved state violence, rather than political apathy.

Field-/discipline-based propositions:

5. Urban governance scholarship in postcolonial Africa insufficiently accounts for the role of memory, myth, and affect in reproducing material inequality.
6. Political settlements analysis is strengthened when ethno-political mythicisations are treated not only as products of elite bargaining, but also as mechanisms through which exclusionary settlements are reproduced over time.
7. Political settlements theory cannot adequately explain urban marginalisation unless symbolic and affective forms of power are treated as constitutive rather than secondary political forces.
8. The distinction between "formal" and "informal" urban economies obscures the extent to which African states govern through negotiated illegality and selective enforcement.
9. Futures methodologies such as Causal Layered Analysis and the Futures Triangle are more analytically valuable than trend-based forecasting for analysing urban disadvantage as they foreground the historical, political, and socio-cultural roots of possible futures.

Societally based proposition:

10. Development discourse that prioritises national growth while neglecting regional inequality narrows the horizon of plausible futures and deepens political fragmentation rather than national cohesion.