

**THE ROLE OF URBAN PLANNING IN CHINESE LARGE-SCALE URBAN
DEVELOPMENTS IN MALAWI**

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN GEOGRAPHY AND EARTH SCIENCES THESIS

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UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN GEOGRAPHY AND EARTH SCIENCES THESIS

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used, acknowledgements have been made.

Full Legal Name

Signature

Date

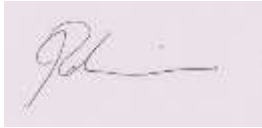
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

To my Mum and Dad (Mr. E.B.E and Mrs. E.R Njanji) and the entire Njanji Family.

Thank you for your love and support.

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ABSTRACT

Developing countries, especially in Africa are undergoing dramatic urban growth through Large-scale-urban Developments (LUDs) with different global actors contributing to African urban development. The Chinese in particular have played an active role in financing and construction of LUDs. To understand how LUD projects are implemented in African cities, the study investigated the role of urban planning in Chinese LUDs in Lilongwe City using the Bingu National Stadium (BNS) as a case study. A comparison was made between the formal legislated role of planning and urban development processes as they relate to LUDs with how Chinese LUDs are planned and executed in urban. Investigation was further done on the impact of decisions made in the implementation of Chinese LUDs on the urban landscape and residents' lives. The BNS as an example of a government-to-government (sovereign) development, funded and constructed by the Chinese Government was studied using qualitative research methods. Data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, observations, documents, and newspaper reviews and was analysed using thematic analysis. From the analysis, it has shown that the role of urban planning was severely constrained because several elements of the development permission application process were by-passed and disregarded. This is largely attributed to the presence of multiple actors with their varying interests. This means that although urban planning is integral to Lilongwe's urban development, there are other factors worth considering when thinking of urban planning in relation to Chinese LUDs. The planning of Chinese LUDs is, therefore, a negotiated process amongst various actors with various interests and not entirely modernist as it has initially been viewed.

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DELINEATION OF CONCEPTS

Circuits: Pattern of infrastructure interventions based on the origin of the funding. The circuits are three-fold: **development circuits** development interventions from international development aid organisations like the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program and are driven by a humanitarian impulse to leave no city behind, **private circuit** are development interventions as a result of the interest by the global private investors to realise value through investments in infrastructure across the world; and finally, **sovereign circuit** are government-to-government interventions in infrastructure provision. (Harrison, Sovereign circuits at work, n.d)

Development control: Development control is a public sector attempt to influence market forces in order to achieve certain social objectives. it serves four key social functions including, promoting public interests, eliminate negative externalities, improving information base for decision making and redistributing public costs and benefits (Tang & Tang, 1999)

Development plan: This is a tool of spatial planning practice prepared to guide or promote the development of an area (Healey, 1993).

Large-scale-urban Developments: ‘A construction project or an aggregate of projects, characterised by: magnified cost, extreme complexity, increased risk, lofty ideals, and high visibility, in a combination that represents a significant challenge to the stakeholders, and has a significant impact on the community’ (Ricardo, 2012-2). These can be activities, events, or projects that happen over a very wide or big area or involve a lot of people or things (Collins Dictionary).

Modernist urban planning: This is a form of urban planning which sought to bring about urban development characterised by order and rationality to the disorders of cities and to bring about social improvement aimed at producing a modern city through its use of innovations in materials and technology (Watson, 2009b).

Physical planning: is concerned with the design, growth and management of the physical environment, in accordance with predetermined and agreed policies, whereby balanced social and economic objectives may be achieved (Franklin, 1979).

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	: African Development Bank
ADB	: Asian Development Bank
ADL	: Airport Development Limited
AU	: African Union
AFECC	: Anhui Foreign Economic Construction Company
BD	: Buildings Department
BNS	: Bingu National Stadium
BRI	: Belt and Rail Initiative
CAF	: Confédération Africaine de Football
CCDC	: Capital City Development Corporation
CDS	: City Development Strategy
DFI	: Development Finance Institutions
ESCOM	: Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi
FAM	: Football Association of Malawi
FOCAC	: Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
FDI	: Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	: Gross National Product
GTZ	: German Technical Cooperation
ICT	: Information Communication Technology
IDS	: Integrated Development Strategy
JICA	: Japan International Cooperation Agency

LCC	: Lilongwe City Council
LUD	: Large-scale-urban Development
MAU	: Making Africa Urban
MCP	: Malawi Congress party
MHC	: Malawi Housing Corporation
MOL	: Ministry of Lands
MOS	: Ministry of Sports
NED	: Neighborhood Economic Development
OECD	: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ORT	: Other Recurrent Transactions
OZP	: Outline Zoning Planning
PPP	: Public Private Partnership
PPF	: Public Pension Funds
SWF	: Sovereign Wealth Funds
SOE	: State Owned Enterprises
TPC	: Town Planning Committee
UCLG	: United Cities and Local Governments.
UN	: United Nations
USD	: United States Dollar
WEF	: World Economic Forum

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter overview

This chapter begins by introducing the background of the study on urban development in African cities and the role of urban planning. In particular, the chapter explores the role of urban planning in Chinese Large-scale-urban Developments (LUDs) in Lilongwe especially sovereign developments focusing on Bingu National Stadium (BNS). The chapter also describes how the city is developing with the proliferation of large-scale projects and how urban planning is carried out in the post-colonial era in Lilongwe City. Further, the chapter focuses on the following sub-topics: statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study. In the final section, the chapter outlines the structure of the whole thesis.

1.2 Background of the study

The growth and prosperity of cities in the past two centuries have brought in undeniable changes on human life as well as its continuing fragments (Bhan, Srinivas & Watson, 2017). The 20th and 21st centuries have experienced urbanisation as one of the prominent tendencies. Cities have expanded in size, activities, as well as population (UN-Habitat, 2020). By 2023, the World Bank statistics showed that about 56 percent of the world's population lived in cities (World Bank, 2023).

This is an equivalent of about 4.4 billion people as opposed to the world population of about 8 billion people. Projections indicate that the number of people who reside in urban areas or cities will double by 2050 (World bank, 2023).

Over the years, statistics have shown that Africa's cities are growing very rapidly as compared to other cities around the world. According to Paller (2021), Africa is in the midst of huge structural transformation from rural to urban and its 3.5 percent urbanisation rate is one of the fastest in the world. In 1970, only 18 percent of Africans lived in cities and by 2018, the number had increased to 40 percent. With such urbanisation rates, there has been a growing demand for efficient and reliable infrastructure services ranging from water, sanitation, and roads in many parts of the developing world (Kirkpatrick, Parker, & Zhang, 2004; Dodson, 2017). This suggests that there is an infrastructure deficit that has been created in urban areas following rapid urbanisation. With increased levels of poverty and low economic growth, many governments in the developing world are pursuing policies to improve and promote infrastructure development (Pieterse, Parnell & Haysom 2018; Dodson, 2017, Goodfellow, 2017), especially considering its ability to support the growth of the urban population economically. In addition, large-scale development projects have also been promoted for their direct economic benefits. All this has a direct implication for urban development and governance in Africa (UN-Habitat, 2020).

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of foreign aid in providing large-scale development projects to developing countries to foster economic growth. This is attributed to factors like; lack of economic capacity which is also associated with factors such as corruption and varying priorities in most governments in the developing world. Many Governments in the developing world have also resorted to seeking various forms of funding for large-scale projects like road constructions, government buildings, and economic zones from across the globe (Kirkpatrick et al., 2004), in efforts to improve urban development as well as economic growth.

Robinson, Ullio and Baur (2021) identified three main mechanisms of financing urban large-scale projects: firstly, using public-private resources to fund infrastructure development; secondly, governments continue to form diplomatic ties with developed countries with the potential of helping infrastructure financing; and thirdly, recent trends in infrastructure provision, especially of large-scale projects in Africa has been through both foreign aid and foreign direct investments. In this case, infrastructure financing involves the interplay of various actors across the globe whose investments are associated with infrastructure provision interventions. These different forms of funding categorised into circuits as sovereign, private, and developmental continue to shape the urban landscape of the developing world (Robinson et al., 2021). In this regard, therefore, African cities are being shaped through the overlap of these circuits.

Developmental circuits focus on development interventions from international development aid organisations like the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program and are driven by a humanitarian impulse to “leave no city behind.” (Harrison, Sovereign circuits at work n.d) Private circuits are development interventions which are a result of the interest by the global private investors to realise value through investments in infrastructure across the world (Harrison; Sovereign circuits at work, n.d.). As for sovereign circuits, they involve government to government interventions in large-scale development projects. Such types of investments are partly underpinned by the goals or modifications of a sovereign government although sometimes they may synergise with interests within the receiving government (Harrison; Sovereign circuits at work, n.d). Instruments of sovereign investments include; grants, guarantees, export credits, concessional loans, commercial loans, and foreign portfolio investments. There are a variety of institutions that manages these investments and they include; Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs), Public Pension Funds (PPFs), Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) (Harrison; Sovereign circuits at work, n.d).

Although large-scale projects have been promoted for economic development and their ability to influence urban growth positively, Watson (2014, p. 3) argues that; “their location in the legal or governance structures of a country is not clear, and where formal city plans

exist, these visions may simply parallel or over-ride them, thereby affecting urban planning and organisation of urban spaces'. As such, there seems to be minimal understanding of how such developments are decided on, managed, and regulated especially regarding technical elements of financing, urban planning, and building approvals including their influence on urban development and people's lives. This is so, especially considering the significance of urban planning in controlling and shaping urban development.

Urban planning has for a long time been believed to serve as a critical tool for managing the dynamics that result from urbanisation like environmental problems and infrastructure deficit (SDG Resource Centre, 2023). Arguably, urban planning can ensure equitable access to resources like housing, reduce environmental impacts, and ensure quality of life in general. However, there have been growing debates on the effectiveness of urban planning in urban development particularly for developing African countries. Watson (2009b), for instance, argues that traditional modernist planning which sought to bring about urban development characterised by order and rationality to the disorders of cities and to bring about social improvement aimed at producing a modern city through its use of innovations in materials and technology has failed to respond to the recent trends in rapid urbanisation in the Global South. One of the factors that has contributed to the current situation is that urban planning operating in the Global South was initially designed to operate in a Global North context (Watson, 2009b). Consequently, there is an increase in informality, illegal development, and contestations over land in many African cities. Relatedly, the situation is made worse by the increased demand for infrastructure and the proliferation of Large-scale-Urban Developments (LUDs) especially in many countries of the developing world which are believed to yield greater economic benefits.

In recent years, the Chinese government in particular has played an active role in provision of sovereign infrastructure intervention and large-scale projects in many developing countries in Africa (Mohan & Mulin, 2019). The proliferation of Chinese-financed and built infrastructure in many African countries both by private firms and government related construction projects are actually backed by the state. In fact, significant investments have been directed towards the provision of infrastructure, from building intra and inter-urban

transport networks (roads, railway lines, airports, or ports), to the construction of large-scale structures like stadiums, government buildings, or special economic zones (Dittgen & Chungu, 2020).

Several studies have been conducted in relation to LUDs in general including those with Chinese background to understand their implementation and their influence on urban development in the cities of the developing world. For instance, A study by Eizenberg (2019) on LUDs and the future of cities found that LUDs as an approach put forward by urban planning to the development and transformation of cities generate new urban spaces with new urban relations, altering planning principles, decision making and power dynamics. Chungu and Dittgen (2021) in their study on ways of constructing and deconstructing the city of Lusaka with reference to Chinese involvement established that development projects with some level of Chinese involvement constitute an integral part of city-making in Lusaka. Li and Siame (2020) explored the nature and impact of Chinese engagement in the development of Lusaka and one of their findings was that Chinese engagements often involve the construction of mega government projects which have substantially shaped the development trajectories in the city both negatively and positively. Although these studies focused on the impact that China has made on the development of urban areas, they did not look at the actual processes followed as these developments are being planned and how decisions regarding such developments are made in efforts to understand the dynamics of urban development. However, it is important to realise that the planning processes followed in the implementation of these projects has in turn implications on the urban planning practice itself and on urban landscape development including the people's socio-economic lives. This is so, bearing in mind that urban planning practice forms an integral part of urban development. On the other hand, the implementation of such projects has an impact on the urban planning practice itself.

Against this background, this research study investigated the decision-making, planning and implementation of Chinese LUDs in Lilongwe focusing on the BNS s one of a sovereign-led large-scale development. This is crucial considering that large-scale infrastructural development influences urban growth. Therefore, studying such projects

builds an understanding of how urban planning, as one of the important aspects of urban development, is responsible for the establishment of these LUDs and how it affects urban development.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Rapid urbanisation has been one of the recent trends in the development of Lilongwe City. Despite the increase in population, the city has experienced infrastructure growth as the demand for housing and other facilities has risen in response to urbanisation (UN-Habitat, 2007). Consequently, there has also been a proliferation of large-scale infrastructure developments with Chinese-backed interventions being dominant in the city thereby shaping the morphology of the urban fabric at different scales which has direct impact on the development (Banik 2013; Banik & Chasukwa, 2016). It is argued, for instance, that despite their economic benefits, Large-scale-urban Developments (LUDs) negatively impact the city's development as they tend to disregard urban development regulations embedded in urban planning (Watson, 2014). Although large-scale projects continue to be implemented in the city, there is little knowledge on how decisions are made regarding the implementation of these projects as well as their planning processes. Against this background, the study sought to investigate how Chinese LUDs are implemented in Lilongwe City by tracing the decision-making process and the urban planning process to provide a deeper understanding of how urban planning shapes urban development. This is critical, especially considering that LUDs have direct impacts on the production of urban space as well as people's lives.

1.4 Study objectives

1.4.1 Main objective

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the role of urban planning in the implementation of Chinese LUDs, specifically, sovereign investments and to assess their impact urban landscape and people's lives

Specific objectives

- a) To compare the formal legislated role of planning and urban development processes as they relate to LUDs in Lilongwe City with how Chinese LUDs are planned and implemented in Lilongwe Urban.
- b) To investigate outcomes of the urban planning processes with specific reference to the impacts of planning on the urban landscape and the everyday lives of communities around the Bingu National Stadium.

1.5 Research questions

- a) How are the Chinese LUDs implemented in relation to urban planning?
- b) What are the outcomes of LUDs planning processes on the urban landscape and people's everyday lives?

1.6 Significance of the study

The study will add knowledge on the actual urban planning processes followed in the implementation of Chinese large-scale projects in Malawi. This study is therefore critical in providing more understanding of the role of planning in the execution of LUDs, especially in contexts where planning decisions involve several actors and the implications of their decisions on the wider urban space. Besides, the study findings will contribute to academic debates on the impacts of LUDs and urban planning to improve practice in Malawi. Finally, this study will also serve as a springboard for future studies on the role of urban planning in the establishment of Chinese-funded LUDs.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This study is structured into six chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 provides the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study and research questions. The chapter further discusses significance of the study, and finally, organisation of the entire thesis.

Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature of LUDs especially in Africa with a focus on Chinese LUDs and how they are established within the cities of the developing countries, and links it to the current study. Besides, it discusses the Chinese stadium diplomacy as one of the dominant examples of Chinese LUDs which has a significant impact on urban development. In particular, the chapter further reviews urban planning to understand its role amidst the proliferation of large-scale projects by tracing the roots of urban planning practice in the Global South, especially African developing countries, including Malawi. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the debates around urban planning and its challenges on LUDs.

Chapter 3 focuses on research design and research methodology the study employs. It also provides a discussion on data collection methods, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations that guided the study. Finally, the chapter discusses the following: credibility, dependability and conformability and how they were employed in the study.

In Chapter 4, results and discussions on the formal urban planning processes applicable to Chinese LUDs implementation, focusing on the Bingu National Stadium are presented.

Chapter 5 presents a continuation of the presentation and discussion of findings particularly the impacts of Chinese LUDs on the urban landscape as well as on people's lives in three dimensions namely: physical, economic and social landscape. In the final section, the chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to the significance of the stadium to the general public and the nation.

Lastly, Chapter 6 provides a synthesis of conclusions and implications of the study including recommendations for further studies.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter began the discussion of investigating the role of urban planning in the establishment of Chinese funded LUDs in Malawi by providing the background to the study in which LUDs are contextualised. Within the chapter, the discussion is centred on tracing the decision-making and urban planning processes and how they contribute to urban development, has been presented. Further, the chapter discusses the formal legislated role of planning and urban development processes about LUDs in Lilongwe City and how the Chinese LUDs are planned and executed. In addition, the chapter discusses the following topics: statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, and significance of the study. Finally, the chapter concludes with the organisational structure of the whole thesis. The following chapter reviews scholarly literature relevant to the study of Chinese LUDs including stadium diplomacy.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the reviewed literature on the study of the role of urban planning in the establishment of Chinese funded Large-scale Urban Developments (LUDs) in Malawi with a focus on the Bingu National Stadium. The structure of the chapter is based on the research questions presented in the previous chapter and it has three major sections. The first section discusses the proliferation of the Chinese LUDs more especially in the Global South and its overall impact on urban growth and people's lives. The second section focuses on understanding of urban planning as one of the most important aspects in urban development. Lastly, the chapter examines urban planning in Lilongwe, particularly the politics around urban planning system and how it affects the implementation of various developments in the city.

2.2 Large-scale-urban Developments in the developing world

Over the years, there has been an increase of interest in LUDs especially in the developing world. In this study, LUDs can be described as; 'construction projects, or aggregate of projects, characterised by; magnified cost, extreme complexity, increased risk, lofty ideals, and high visibility, in a combination that represents a significant challenge to the stakeholders, and has a significant impact on the community' (Ricardo, 2012, p. 2).

Major (2008) uses three attributes in his description of LUDs namely; comprehensiveness and extensiveness, a lengthy timetable of delivery, and distinct geographical limits. He further states that consistent attributes of LUDs are the symbolic importance of the project, the cooperation between public and private entities, and a fashionable spatial outcome. LUDs take various forms. They may either be major projects within a city like iconic buildings, urban extensions or new satellite cities (Watson, 2014).

LUDs are an example of an urban development policy approach that promotes urban development through large-scale projects. Such developments are seen as a way to address both housing demands and environmental concerns especially in the developing world. They are also regarded as a win-win solution that supports urban economic growth and fulfils market needs (Eizenberg, 2019). As noted by Eizenberg (2019), this mode of development is being promoted in various urban arenas like tourism, residences, recreation, transportation, education and commerce, and is being used to shape neighborhoods' commercial centres and business districts.

Although the traditional donors such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have for a long time rendered support in the form of aid and loans to the developing countries for urban development, they still have not been able to meet the demand of large-scale projects in developing countries. In recent years, there has been an increase in sovereign (government to government) assistance especially from developed countries like the United States of America, China and the United Kingdom in urban development (Davies, 2013). Private investors both local and international have also played a role in urban development though on a smaller scale. Besides, developing countries have also embraced a neoliberal approach in their efforts to fund large-scale projects. In this arrangement, there is collaboration between the public and the private sectors in what is also known as public-private partnership (PPPs) to facilitate urban development (Lisborn, 1998). In general, aid, loans, and private investments in LUDs have contributed to shaping the urban landscape of the developing world.

There are different explanations as to why most countries in developing countries especially Africa are pursuing policies that encourage the growth of large-scale developments in their cities. Wagner (2014) argues that LUDs have the potential to determine the position of a city in the world rank list in terms of their image and can also strengthen the competitiveness of cities in the world. Lisbon (1998) states that this has been the case with countries in the west like Spain, Portugal and the United Kingdom which have transformed their cities using flagship projects (Lisbon, 1998, as cited in Carrière & Demazière, 2002). The aim of pursuing a competitive city approach to urban policy is to establish cities that can attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and capital, develop their human capital base, infrastructure and knowledge, and trade that lead to economic growth for the benefit of the citizens (UN Habitat, 2015). UN Habitat (2015) further observes that despite their adherence to the same models and their continued investment flows in the same apparently successful areas of economic growth, competitive cities are still deemed desirable because they are arguably believed to be more diversified and less vulnerable to economic shocks. On the contrary, Watson (2014) argues that recent urban projects which aim to position cities in top positions in a world class city league only benefit the elite and disregards the poor by pushing them away from the city to accommodate such projects and this is common in most developing countries.

LUD as an approach to urban development has also been used to create wider economic territories rather than just single competitive cities (Wagner, 2014). Schindler and Kanai (2018) argue that large-scale infrastructure initiatives or developments for instance, constitute an emergent regime whose ultimate goal is to produce functional transnational territories that can be plugged into global networks of production and trade. Thus, creating territories that are able to attract foreign investment, foster industrial upgrading, and export-oriented growth. There is a growing global consensus among governments and the supranational institutions surrounding the merits of large-scale networked infrastructure for instance, in areas like roads, ports, and production zones. Even the works of regional and international organisations like the World Economic Forum (WEF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), African Union (AU) and African Development Bank (ADB) have over the years prioritised large-scale investment that promises to enhance

connectivity, integration and economic development (Schindler & Kanai, 2018). Consequently, such kind of development will only be beneficial if the investments are regional or transnational in scope. Ultimately, it works to the disadvantage of cities since it only promotes the connectedness of cities in a large territory and isolates cities which have no connectivity.

Arguments against LUDs highlight that such projects are undesirable in cities of the developing countries considering that the planning of satellite cities, for example, is associated with problems such as displacement of the original dwellers (Watson, 2009b). Apart from that, Watson (2014) further claims that housing units that are built in these satellite cities are in most cases affordable to middle-income and high-income people only. For instance, Watson observes that the satellite city of Kigamboni in Dar es Salaam, though still in progress, anticipates a cost that could be unaffordable to the poor. With the majority of urban populations living in deep poverty and with minimal urban services, the most likely outcome of these fantasy plans is a steady worsening of the marginalisation and inequalities that already beset these cities (Watson, 2014). Large-scale projects have also been condemned because they have no presence in the existing legal or governance structures such that where formal plans exist, they either override them or run parallel to them and this creates problems in urban development (Watson, 2014).

2.1.1 Chinese Large-scale-urban Developments

Over the past decade, Africa became an ideal destination for Chinese investment and this has greatly contributed to Africa's urban development. This is due to innate complementarities stemming from Africa's infrastructure deficit and prevalent shortage of capital coupled with a large pool of underdeveloped resource assets for which China has a strong demand (Mohan & Mullin, 2019). For instance, Africa ranks at the very bottom of most infrastructure indicators (Calderon, Cantu & Chuhan-Pole, 2018). The situation in sub-Saharan Africa is particularly daunting especially in low-income countries. The root of the problem is that investment has not kept pace with demographic growth therefore creating a huge deficit over the years. Recently, China has taken advantage of this deficit

and has actively been involved in shaping the contours of African urbanisation through funding of various developments as well as providing planning expertise and sharing of knowledge (Paller, 2021). This initiative has extended to the provision of LUDs especially in least developed countries where such projects are rare considering their economic status. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) of 2006 and the establishment of China's Belt and Road initiative of infrastructure and development (BRI) in 2013 had a major influence on the recent China-Africa relations (Goodfellow, 2020; Alden & Large, 2019; Zhang & Smith, 2017; Banik, 2012). The main agenda behind the BRI for China was to promote trade, investment and industry as well as for geo-political reasons. In this case, it is argued, China would want to extend its geographical influence by gaining control over geographical entities with an international and global dimension, and the use of such geographical entities for political advantage (Ochiai, 2019).

China's financial aid in urban development comes in various forms such as concessional loans, grants and interest free loans provided by the Chinese Government, the Development Bank of China or other Chinese commercial banks. For sovereign investments, the most commonly used tool is concessional loans often provided by Export and Import Bank of China also known as Exim Bank of China (Dollar, 2019). In 2009, for instance, records indicated that about 61 % of concessional loans were targeted for infrastructure development. Although this percentage has declined over time, China is still one of the leading countries in the provision of loans for urban development (Boston University Database, 2023). Generally, such loans are subsidised by the Chinese Government from the foreign aid budget (Brautgam, Huang & Acker, 2020) hence, making them favourable to developing countries. This is so because their interest rates are below the benchmark of the People's Bank of China and their maturity period ranges between 15 and 20 years including a 5 to 7 years grace period (Alves, 2013).

Actually, most of these loans are structured as an export credit facility and the credit lines are often tied to the procurement of services and goods from Chinese firms. In terms of funding activities, they are shaped by negotiations between the Chinese Government and either ministries or agencies of the home government such as Ministry of Finance and

Economics, Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Central Bank (Brautigam, 2020). As Brill and Roboredo (2018) argue, most LUD are top down projects in their establishment and this reduces public accountability and transparency. There is little knowledge regarding the data on the loans that China provides to overseas borrowers and this has created a gap in knowledge (Brautigam, 2020). This raises questions about the motives behind such loans considering arguments about China's interest in African resources which still remain unclear. Thus, there is a need to investigate how decisions are made and the processes followed in the implementation of these projects to understand the politics involved in urban development.

In most cases, the construction of Chinese LUDs is done by Chinese contractors in the recipient countries. This may be part of the agreement in the concessional loans, for instance, or it could be that Chinese contractors win the bid for construction of infrastructure projects which are often in private investments or developmental projects (Brautigam, 2020). A good example is drawn from Ghana's Atuabo gas processing plant in which China offered a loan that was tied to the use of Chinese construction firms. Statistics indicate that by mid-2017, more than ten thousand Chinese-owned companies were operating in Africa with the largest companies by value being state-owned (Jones, Ndofor & Li, 2022). According to Jones et al. (2022), it is estimated that since 2010, one third of Africa's power grid and infrastructure has been taken over by Chinese state-owned companies in terms of construction and financing. These companies usually import labour from their home country and statistics show that about 50 percent of labour used in such projects is imported from China (Alves, 2014). In this regard, Alves (2014) contends that the capital is not designed to be taken away from China but it is only administered on a project basis through the borrowing countries account with the Exim Bank and payments are made directly to the Chinese contractors after the completion of the contract. This situation depicts a system in which the Chinese themselves end up benefitting more from the capital which raises questions on the motives behind these loans.

Overall, Davis (2013) posits that these projects can be linked to the Chinese economic crisis and the import and export expansion of their infrastructure-led development model

through aid and foreign contracts. Such contracts have been used to fund a wide range of development projects ranging from business centres to government buildings, sports facilities as well as transport infrastructures. Therefore, this study will help to develop a deeper understanding of China's aid in Africa, particularly Malawi. The following section discusses how stadiums, as an example of Chinese LUDs, are funded and constructed through Chinese stadium diplomatic policy.

2.1.2 Chinese Stadium Diplomacy in Africa

In the past 60 years, Chinese actors have constructed over 1,400 buildings and infrastructures in the developing countries (Paller, 2020; Amaresh, 2020). Apart from investing in transport through its funding in road infrastructure and construction of railway lines, China has also supported the construction of other large-scale buildings and infrastructure such as parliament buildings, sports facilities, roads, stadiums and other buildings of national importance. For instance, China has constructed over 15 parliament buildings in African countries like Malawi, Zimbabwe and Mozambique in the form of aid (Bartlett, 2023).

Amongst China's popular development projects are sports facilities. China has for a long time used stadiums as diplomatic means to demonstrate its cultural, economic and socio-political engagement in least developed nations. China's stadium diplomacy is considered a manner of cultural diplomacy by China in which it establishes and donates stadiums and sports amenities through foreign aid (Amaresh, 2020). Stadiums are remarkable buildings since they are visually predominant and large-scale in cities and they normally become landmark developments related to social, political, and daily life (Xue, Ding, Chan & Wan, 2019). Research has shown that this form of stadium diplomacy started in Mongolia with the construction of a national stadium with the capacity of 12 500 seats in 1958 (Ojo, 2022; Amaresh, 2020). Since then, the construction of stadiums has expanded across the world. Similarly, China also constructed a 15, 000-seater stadium in Zanzibar that symbolised the beginning of stadium diplomacy in Africa around 1970 (Ross, 2014). By 2021, China had constructed 45 stadiums out of 54 countries in Africa (Dubinsky 2021). This suggests that

Africa as a continent has benefitted a lot from the Chinese Government in terms of infrastructure development. As a matter of fact, it is estimated that about 80 stadiums across the world have been funded by China with Africa getting the lion's share (Steve, 2021). Precisely, about 70 percent of the stadiums in Africa are built by the Chinese government (Xue et al., 2019). Some of the countries that have benefitted from the Chinese Government include; Ghana, Mozambique, Malawi, Mali, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Gabon.

A crucial perspective in China's Stadium diplomacy is that many researchers have established that China is accountable for the whole process from the primary outlining stage of the project to the stadium's completion (Amaresh, 2020). The Chinese package often includes, rendering Chinese materials, building designs and installations, technical staff and even engineers to supervise the work (Ameresh, 2020). Such projects also utilise Chinese construction companies (Dubinsky, 2021). Thus, most of the projects are implemented as a complete project and because of this, architects responsible for the designs are further required to consider additional aspects of design, management and construction with respect to a particular region (Chang & Xue, 2019).

China's foreign aid program has however been criticized for lack of transparency (Tang 2018) considering the fact that the terms and conditions attached to various schemes and loans are sometimes not disclosed fully to the concerned parties in urban development (Ojo, 2022). Actually, this has been the trend with all the Chinese-built stadiums in Africa. Ojo (2022) observes that although these projects directly involve top government officials from the Ministry of Finance, local authorities are usually not engaged to contribute in such projects citing reasons of confidentiality. This implies bypassing or neglecting formal legal systems including the urban planning system which is one of the core components of urban development in many parts of the world.

An analysis of these projects shows that politicians often use these projects as a confirmation of their developments (Amaresh, 2020). This may suggest why politicians seem to have a liking for such state-of-the-art projects in their countries (Tiloune 2021). Beyond political motives, Sports venues have become important places for local authorities

and people to celebrate sports events. Most of them have improved lives of citizens and are often appreciated by both local and international groups despite some critiques (Chang & Xue, 2019). For instance, Lindlacher and Pirich (2024) in their study on the impact of Chinese stadium diplomacy on local economic development in sub-Saharan Africa observed that contrary to the view that Chinese stadiums are entirely White elephants, stadiums can increase the local economic activities of an area and they contribute to the economic growth of an area in general. Contrary to this, in Gabon and Zambia for instance, the Chinese stadium attracted people's anger and even demonstrations as they claimed the stadiums are good for nothing and useless to their welfare (Dubinsky, 2021). Other critics state that, China only employs stadium diplomacy as a way of securing natural resources and diplomatic recognition and not necessarily for the benefit of the recipient countries (Vondracek, 2019), pointing examples of Angola oil reserves for instance (Kellson & Cintron, 2014). Such varying perspectives shows the existence of divided views on the significance of Chinese stadium Diplomacy on people's lives and their wellbeing.

2.1.3 Impacts of Chinese Large-scale Urban Developments in Africa

Over the years, China has contributed a lot on the African continent in both social and economic developments. Between 2000 and 2020, China helped African countries build 13,000-plus-kilometres of railways, nearly 100,000 km of highways, about 1,000 bridges, nearly s100 ports and more than 80 large-scale power facilities (Huaxia, 2022). Besides, Huaxia (2022) highlights that China has constructed more than 130 medical facilities, 45 sports venues and more than 170 schools in the recipient countries. Such developments have the capacity to improve the welfare of people, create more jobs and in general support sustainable development all of which are key in economic development. In 2007 for instance, Africa registered an economic growth rate of 5.8% which was partly attributed to the involvement of the Chinese Government (Huaxia, 2022).

However, there is a growing debate on the extent to which such developments not only benefit the elite but also the ordinary citizens (Ojo, 2021). In fact, most Chinese-built stadiums in Africa are referred to as white elephants considering their limited financial

benefits (Dubinsky, 2021; Ojo, 2021). Research has shown that the sporadic use of the Chinese built stadiums in countries like Angola, Gabon and Zambia do not bring much revenue due to poor management which makes them a liability and a burden instead of an asset (Dubinsky, 2021).

Although these projects employ local people, many Chinese projects usually bring in their own workers to do the job. Ben Schiller (2005) cited in Xiaoyang (2016) reported that tens of thousands of Chinese labourers and engineers were imported to build infrastructure projects in Ethiopia, Sudan and other African countries in the years between 2014 and 2016. Although this does not entirely imply that most workers come from China, there is still high competition between the local people and the foreigners in terms of employment which these countries could benefit from these projects. However, the Chinese construction projects still employ a good number of African labourers. According to Xinhua news report, about 4.5 million jobs have been created in Africa by 2022 and the trend of employing Chinese workers seems to be decreasing in recent years. Despite complaints about low wages, poor working conditions and long working hours (Dubinsky, 2021), Tang (2018) argues that wages and conditions vary among different enterprises depending on the type of work being done and the length of the contracts.

Generally, the Chinese funded projects have hugely contributed to the growth of cities in Africa. Chinese urbanisation has made its way into Africa thereby leaving its footprints on the urban landscape. It has transformed many cities by building modern infrastructures otherwise called ‘China-like’ perspective. For instance, the city of Nairobi in Kenya was transformed with a newly constructed expressway (Orlander, 2022); Ethiopia’s capital of Addis Ababa is nick-named as a Chinese city considering the many Chinese developments built there (CNN, 2018), and Kilamba, the new city in Angola was transformed into a decent neighborhood (Paller, 2021).

However, several studies have raised some issues against Chinese LUDs, especially on how appropriate Chinese investments are in African cities. The studies have indicated that the Chinese large-scale infrastructures are ill-adapted to the context of the Global South

both economically and socially considering the huge related costs. Apart from that, these projects are inappropriate to African cultures as their designs are ill suited to the locals and are economically out of their reach (Buire, 2022; Huaxia, 2022; Paller 2021; Mohan & Mullin, 2020; Dittgen & Chungu, 2020). For instance, Chinese housing developments in Kilamba, Uganda were heavily criticised for being too expensive for the locals such that people could not afford them (Dittgen & Chungu, 2020). Although the government introduced low-cost mortgage loans to help local people to buy houses, they are still considered expensive to many ordinary citizens (Buire, 2022).

In addition, the houses have been criticised for having designs that are not suited for local people in Angola (Ditgen & Chungu, 2020). Similarly, a study by Gastrow (2017) as cited in Ditgen and Chungu (2020) on the urban redevelopment and political belonging in Luanda Angola, also observed that the houses in Kilamba, Uganda were based on Chinese planning principles and their housing typologies originate from China. In many cases, there is also destruction of the local landscape with people being evacuated or moved to other areas, hence losing their homes and livelihoods to the Chinese LUDs (Huaxia, 2022; Mohan & Mullin, 2020; Paller 2021; Watson, 2009b). Bearing all these cases in mind, one wonders whether urban planning navigated the implementation of these projects to ensure that people's well-being is promoted both economically and socially. These are some of the keys issues that this research study sought to investigate.

2.1.4. How Chinese Large-scale-Urban Developments affect urban planning

Chinese LUDs have significant impact on urban development considering the substantial changes that they bring to the urban landscape. Despite the arguments on how they positively transform an urban area, Brill and Roboredo (2018) argue that they often cause spatial inequalities and environmental problems which urban planning systems are usually struggling to deal with. Studies in many African countries indicate a tendency for governments to accept sovereign large-scale projects without following the existing planning procedures and frameworks (Dittgen & Chungu, 2020). In their study on the geopolitics of south-to-south infrastructure development which situates Chinese entry into

the Global South as both geopolitical and geo-economic in nature, Mohan and Mulin (2017) found that international deals for large-scale projects are secured at the political elite level and therefore bypassing the established forms of national governance and accountability in the recipient countries. One of the implications in the case of large-scale and externally funded developments is that there is defiance or avoidance of planning procedures and regulations, and agreements are especially made with the involvement of top government officials (Mohan & Mulin, 2017).

Similar patterns were observed in a study by Li and Siame (2020) on the nature and impact of Chinese engagement on the development of the city of Lusaka in Zambia in which planners testified to decisions about LUDs being made in a strongly centralised way. As a result, the local authorities who have the mandate to direct such developments were bypassed. This raises questions of how Chinese LUDs are decided upon and established in recipient countries. Also, what are the implications of such decision-making process on urban development. These are some of the key questions which this study intended to investigate.

These developments also have an element of either dominated by monetary enticement and corruption or unequal but mutual dependence between donors and creditors in showcase states. According to Maze and Chailan (2021, p.3), “research has shown that in their efforts to get construction deals, Chinese private companies, for instance, develop multiple kinds of alliances to gain influence over local institutions’. Such influence can make it easy for such developments to bypass certain regulations. This could result in the establishment of developments that have negative consequences on urban development and the general public. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the role of the legislated urban planning in the establishment of Chinese funded urban developments in Lilongwe City and its implications on the urban morphology and the socio-economic wellbeing of people.

Based on the rate at which the Chinese urban development projects are being implemented in the Global South, their visibility on the urban landscape and how it has transformed urban areas, and the criticisms levelled against the Chinese funded projects, the study set

out to investigate the implementation of these projects and their impact particularly in Malawian context. Therefore, the processes followed in the production of Chinese LUDs, was studied, unpacking the decision-making processes that shape these projects including any hidden irregularities in their establishment compared to the anticipated urban planning and decision-making processes. Further, assessing the implementation process of these projects to determine whether it is beneficial to wider processes of urban development and to the people's socio-economic wellbeing in Malawian context was one of the crucial aspects of this study. The next section therefore discusses urban planning processes with regard to emerging urban development trends in relation to the Chinese LUDs.

2.3 The concept of urban planning and its evolution

Planning in general terms entails making an orderly sequence of actions leading to the achievement of a stated goal or goals (Hall, 1992). Urban planning is an element of planning that can be distinguished from general planning because it incorporates elements of place and space in the definition (Watson, 2009a). In her description of urban planning, Watson (2009a) uses the term 'planning' to refer to intentional, and value-driven, societal efforts to improve the built and natural environment initiated by different groups of people like professionals, government bodies, non-governmental organizations, and business people. Watson's definition relates to the Royal British Town Planning Council's definition which incorporates the two elements of place-making and space mediation. In this definition, the first element is about creativity and deals with visioning, designing, and implementing while the other one is about control, where mediating means determining the uses of the land or building (Couch, 2016). This description also relates to how Feinstein and DeFilipis (2016) look at urban planning as a concept about the regulations concerning how people relate to their spaces as well as the decision-making processes embedded in them. Others have described such definitions as too simplistic and too focused on the activities of professional planners (Bhan et al., 2017). In this regard, the complexity of urban planning as a concept has been demonstrated by a range of different authors whose contributions are deemed paramount for this study.

Modern urban planning can be traced back to the latter part of the 19th century particularly in Europe as a very direct response to concerns of rapid urbanisation, unhealthy and polluted living conditions for the poor, vanishing open green space, and threatened political upheaval which all emerged in the industrialisation era (Hall & Jones, 2019, Watson, 2009b). Such efforts were aimed at correcting the undesirable condition of inequality and deprivation caused by the interplay between market forces and lack of social concern (Mwathunga, 2014) in order to improve people's quality of life. Early approaches to urban planning were rationalistic or modernistic in nature, dominated by the use of detailed land use plans depicting the desired future of an urban area for a given period of time (Watson, 2009a). This was supported by a normative regulatory system to assign these rights in land that conforms to a master plan. Master plans are blueprints that show a detailed view of how a city will develop over a certain period of time (Harrison & Croese, 2022).

Master plans are implemented through a legal tool of development control which may include conforming to a zoning scheme (Harrison & Croese, 2022). The application of a zoning scheme together with land regulation systems require people to apply for development in compliance with the zoning scheme and to comply with particular forms of land tenure and building regulations. Failure to do this, means that the development would be regarded as illegal (Cirolia & Berrisford, 2017; Rakodi, 2001; Watson, 2009a).

Taken together, this system is regarded as a modernist form of urban planning which is guided by principles of modernism like order and prescribed building standards. Modernist urban planning gained momentum in the early part of the 20th century, particularly in western countries where it was first developed. Although Watson (2009b) argues that the modernist form of urban planning was later adopted verbatim by most countries in the Global South, Harrison and Croese (2022) suggest that the modern planning in Africa is rather an alteration or modification of various kinds of traditional master planning like strategic planning and spatial planning as well as hybridised forms of planning including participatory planning.

The rationalist tendencies of this approach to planning have been criticised for being static and non-responsive to change (Harrison & Croese, 2022). Such criticisms have led to calls for the development of new ways of planning. In Europe for instance, Harrison and Croese (2022) state that there are calls for the development of more strategic, collaborative and relational forms of spatial planning. Despite all this, there is still a strong interest in rationalistic planning methods till today. Additionally, in the Global South, interest in rational planning methods are attributed to rapid urban growth, unprecedented growth of urbanisation in the Middle East and East Asia as well as the rise in new city development in Africa which requires strong spatial direction (Harrison & Croese, 2022).

Nevertheless, urban planning has evolved over time and this has affected how planners exercise their role and the procedures associated with the planning process in general. In many contexts, planners are players in the production and regulation of urban space and they represent institutions, follow rules and implement policies. They communicate different values and interests of different stakeholders (Liao, Wehrhahn & Breitung, 2019). On top of that, they play other functions such as advocating for plans. They also serve as negotiators who mediate among different stakeholders in the planning process especially in traditions of communicative planning (Fainstein & Campbell, 1995). Such roles are regarded as non-technocratic contrary to rationalist views of planning and are based on the belief that ideal planning processes would source, rationalise, and finally incorporate the ideas and perspectives of all stakeholders including the general public (Cirolia & Berrisford, 2017; Rakodi, 2001). Advocates of this line of thinking mostly fall under collaborative planning with a belief that this would help to advance the goal of planning to promote public interest (Campbell & Fainstein, 2003). In recent years, however, planning debates on state-society engagement are now in a “post-collaborative” phase, with attention shifting to the difficulties of these processes. For instance, how cumbersome it is, as well as the challenges presented by the range of contexts and conditions within which participation takes place (Watson, 2013).

The evolution of urban planning is considered as a critical point that needs more understanding. Moreover, there is need to understand the role that planners play in urban

planning especially how their role has evolved over time as rational experts, collaborators, communicators, advocates and negotiators, among others. It is also important to consider the implications of urban planning on practice depending on the context. Thus, the next sub-section discusses how urban planning practice is perceived in the Global South and its general functions.

2.3.1 Urban planning in the Global South

Urban Planning in the Global South has a complex history as most of the formal planning systems were adopted from the Global North. While others have argued that much of this is linked to colonialism (Bhan et al., 2017), recent studies indicate that urban planning in the Global South is more complicated than what was happening during the colonial era (Harrison & Croese, 2022). This however further indicates how urban planning has evolved over time. An analysis of the planning system in the Global South shows that it was designed to address the problems of a society with characteristics similar to those of the Global South (Watson, 2009b). Such characteristics include; a relatively strong and stable liberal democratic governments, comprehensive welfare policies with slow urban growth rates and a predictable and amenable to regulatory control. Studies conducted in many parts of the Global South, like in Africa, India and Latin America depicts a planning system characterised by traditional planning approaches particularly, the master plan commonly used in the Global North (Bhan 2019; Bhan et al, 2019; Cirolia & Berrisfold, 2017; Rakodi, 2001; Watson, 2009).

In reality, cities in the Global South, are developing in a way contrary to those of the Global North. In particular, there is rapid population growth which has contributed to serious problems associated with high levels of poverty, inequalities, and environmental problems (Watson 2009a). Urban planning and the use of traditional land use plans though viewed as a solution to these recent urban problems, is slowly losing its relevance and is creating more problems for the urban space. In the context of Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi, the failure of urban planning has resulted in problems like contestations over land which often operate to the advantage of the elite and increasing poverty for the urban poor

(Mwathunga, 2014). Such practices force the majority of urban residents to resort to ‘informal’ means of accessing urban land like squatting (Mwathunga, 2014). Worse still, there are concerns about how recent urban planning is characterised by anti-poor measures that target the poor people thereby accelerating poverty and inequalities (UN habitat, 2007; Watson 2009a). Eventually, it creates a gap between the norms and objectives that inform planning and these are the harsh realities of everyday life in the cities of the Global South (Watson, 2009b).

It is argued that the failure of the planning system applied in the Global South is partly attributed to the idea that planning theory continues to be unrooted in its context. This has made it impossible to translate, apply, and use to influence practice (Bhan 2019, Cirolia & Berrisford, 2017; Rakodi, 2001). This further suggests why recent arguments on planning in the Global South have called for a much closer look at ‘context’ and ‘place’. With this, concerns are no longer on how bad normative plans are but rather on how they fail to consider the actual processes of places and contexts (Cirolia & Berrisford, 2017). In this regard, plans and documents should not be viewed as the only mechanisms to shape and organise urban space. There is need to consider other factors like the changing experiences of the city and everyday life and ambiguities and relations created in the urban spaces (Lefebvre, 2014). Rakodi (2001) suggests that urban planning in the Global South can be improved by revisiting and reviewing urban planning systems so that they accommodate the recent changes in the urban systems. Thus, there is need to develop plans that align with the unique and varying features of every context (Bhan, 2019; Watson, 2009b).

Understanding the context requires unpacking particularities of places and focusing on what is actually happening on the ground, studying the processes of urban planning, the implementation and its actors (Watson, 2009a). Studies that sought to understand the context and specificity of places seem to suggest that urban planning implementation in Africa is a negotiated process amongst various stakeholders (e.g. national governments, local governments, and donors). This was the case with studies conducted in Nairobi, Addis Ababa and Harare whose aim was to understand the actual practices of plan implementation (Cirolia & Berrisford, 2017). In this regard, the plans developed reflect an

accommodation amongst the actions, agendas and interests of all these actors. Considering what Levy (2017) argues, urban planning is a political process to do with issues of governance characterised by compromises, negotiation and contests in decision-making. As such, there is need to shift attention to addressing governance arrangements, processes of decision making and politics of planning (Rakodi, 2001).

These processes are critical in understanding how developments are handled and their complex relationship to the urban planning process. The following section therefore discusses the politics of urban planning in the Global South and how it affects the operation of the urban planning system in the development of African cities.

2.3.2 Politics and planning of the Global South

Urban planning emerged as a state activity and in many contexts the powers and responsibility of planning rests in the hands of the local government (Mwathunga, 2014). Unfortunately, most local governments in African countries are weak (Cirolia & Berrisford, 2017) and do not have the capacity to execute their duties materially and financially. This has, often times, resulted in the central government stepping up to provide technical support and sometimes even taking up all the urban planning functions. This situation has led to confusion in terms of who is responsible for urban planning (Rakodi, 2001). Studies that have been conducted in Harare, Addis Ababa and Nairobi depict the role central government making decisions regarding urban developments despite the existence of the local government (Cirolia & Berrisford, 2017). This implies that with the nature of the central government, it may not be able to attend in detail to all the requirements of urban development as a result, the decisions made may overlook some important aspects of urban development (Cirolia and Berrisford, 2017).

In addition, the multiplicity of actors within urban planning system makes the decision-making process complex since it involves various stakeholders with various interests. This suggests the need to have clear and stable rules about the power, functions as well as resource distribution associated with urban planning (World Bank, 1999) to guide urban

development in decision-making regarding urban planning. However, this has not been the case in practice as rules are unclear and often contested and unpredictable. Actually, the urban planning process and implementation reflect explicit and tacit power relationships among various stakeholders that have varied interests. As such, there should be demands for negotiations to ensure that urban planning meets the needs of everyone (Bhan et al., 2017).

In many African countries, the role of politicians as one of the actors in urban planning is highly significant. The involvement of political party leaders especially those of the governing regime in issues to do with land and urban development has made urban planning vulnerable to political influence and behaviour (Cirollia & Berrisfold, 2017). Political behaviour is often driven by a variety of motives like; satisfying campaign financiers, satisfying the demands of the electorate and even for personal benefits (Rakodi, 2001). This results into failure to delegate to the relevant local authority, avoidance of strategic decisions as well as arbitrary decision making done to serve personal interests thereby neglecting common good (Rakodi, 2001). A study on the nature and impact of Chinese engagement in the development of Lusaka in Zambia by Li and Siame (2022) found that the planning system of Lusaka is characterised by strong political influence and therefore most projects lack strategic and long-term input from planning professionals. To a greater extent, this is common in many African contexts and that calls for an urban planning system with minimal political interference. There is also need to delegate urban planning functions to the local government officials to ensure that decisions uphold meaningful urban development.

Urban planning practice is further complicated with the presence of private developers in contexts where government is highly centralized. The private developers would want to have contact with the central government thereby further neglecting the local government (Corolia & Berrisfold, 2017). Interactions between the government and developers is contextual and takes many formats (Todes & Robinson, 2019). While the local government of countries in the United States of America for instance have significant autonomy over planning (Todes & Robinson, 2019), many African countries have weak local

governments. In Nairobi, for example, it was noted that many developers do not apply for development at all labeling it as cumbersome. In cases where they do, their applications for developments only loosely resemble the one they actually build on the ground (Corolia & Berrisfold, 2017). Other studies have revealed that in such cases, the developers, often private, have direct connections with the central government and this gives them power to bypass the planning system (Maze & Chailan, 2021). This suggests that the overwhelming desire for development which is also driven by political motivations leads to the acceptance of most development applications. In such cases, flexibility unlike urban planning legislations is a determining factor in the approval of such foreign investments by the planning authorities (Ioannou, Serrao & Spiliopoulou, 2019).

The foregoing discussion on planning and politics of urban planning raises one fundamental question regarding the role and the extent to which urban planning shapes and influences urban development in cities of the Global South. Firstly, urban planning in the Global South operates within a context of rapid urbanisation; the existence of multiple agendas and multiple interests; and in a context characterised by distinctiveness and particularities of places and spaces. Under this context, traditional land use planning and planning theory as it disconnects with context seems to be of limited value yet it persists as the only mechanism of shaping and organising urban space. Secondly, politics seems to be a related factor shaping urban development as politicians and governing regimes continue to influence urban planning and development. Relatedly, the planning of large-scale projects remains a central government activity although in theory it is a local government function. Indeed, since local governments are apparently weak, the situation creates room for the central government to exert influence over urban planning and development. It is not surprising therefore that the private sector as an actor in urban development continuously bypasses the local government in favor of the central government for various reasons, thereby creating tensions and negotiations between the various actors in urban development. Contextual studies on the planning process of LUDs can give room for further generalisation which would be applied to similar situations. Therefore, the section that follows discusses the practice of urban planning and the growth of LUDs in Africa focusing on Lilongwe, the Capital City of Malawi.

2.4 Urban planning and Large-scale Urban Developments in Lilongwe

2.4.1 The history of urban planning in Malawi

Originally, physical planning is indebted to the British attempts to handle problems arising from the excesses of the Industrial Revolution, particularly public concern about unsanitary and congested conditions in rapidly growing towns (Mwathunga, 2014). Modern urban planning in Malawi based on the modernist approach can be traced back to the end of the Second World War with the enactment of the British Town Planning Act of 1946 (Mwathunga, 2014). This act was to address sanitary and health concerns through spatial practices of zoning and development control (Mwathunga and Donaldson, 2021). Being a colony of Britain, Malawi adopted this act in 1948 and it became the official planning law thereafter. This law is what declared planning areas, appointment of planning committees to prepare statutory plans of such areas and for the definition of the powers of the minister including the need to request for preparation and submission of development plans (Mwathunga, 2014). All this, form the basis of today's urban planning in Malawi. Having a basis in the experiences of a European state, the towns that were to be produced with the law of the 1946 British Town Planning Act were to be a carbon copy of a Western European town (Manda, 2005). Following this law, people were not allowed to develop without approval and penalties were imposed on anyone who attempted to break the law. This was done to prevent squatting usually of the poor Black people and as Mwathunga (2014) puts it, this minimized contestations in urban space. This was indirectly part of a colonial administration policy of segregation in which people of different races and income levels were to be based in different zones (Manda, 2005; Mwathunga & Donaldson, 2018). It must be noted, however, that there was transplanting of planning legislation within the colonies with Bombay and Madras as the first British colonies to legislate town planning. In this regard, racial segregation, as was the case in Kenya, was among the controls imposed by colonial masters upon Africans. Thus, the township rules enforced the reservation of areas for specified land uses including Europeans, Asians and native locations, among other land uses. Similar models and related legislation were transferred to Nyasaland in 1948 (Home, 2013).

Over the years, urban planning in Malawi has undergone an evolution with different practices from the pre-colonial era to post-colonial era. In the post-colonial era, local physical development plans namely urban structure plans and urban layout plans were used as instruments of zoning and plot-and-road layouts respectively (Mwathunga, 2014). This demonstrates that within the post-colonial era, there were still traits of urban segregation. As noted by Manda (2005), during the colonial era, physical planning was used to promote order, amenity, good sanitation and convenience especially with a focus on European areas (Home, 2013). At national level, physical planning was used as a tool for national development, especially it focused on balanced development of regions.

In the multiparty era, institutional arrangements for planning were reduced and the role of Planning evolved to that of maintaining order to implementing development approvals, applications, and land divisions (Manda, 2005). Because this period was a democratic era, one of the most important aspects was participation in decision-making making which led to the adoption of a decentralized policy in 1996 and the local government act in 1998 (Mwathunga, 2014). This meant that even in the urban planning systems, the approach that was adopted in decision making was to include consultation and active involvement of different actors. However, there is a controversy that has since been created over the roles of the central government and local government in planning. This is because of the requirements of the Local Government Act (LGA) which gives power to the local government in decision-making and the laws of planning especially under the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) of 1988 in which the minister has power over approval of plans (Mwathunga, 2014).

2.4.2 Urban Planning in Lilongwe

Lilongwe emerged as a small administration and market centre in the Central Region of Malawi. It became the capital city in 1975 following the relocation from Zomba. It was chosen as an ideal capital city because of a number of reasons including its centrality and the desire to stimulate growth in the central region which would also benefit the more

isolated northern region (Manda, 2005; Potts, 1985). It has also been argued that political motives were behind this movement since Lilongwe is located in the central region where Dr Kamuzu Banda hailed from and therefore was automatically a stronghold for his Malawi Congress Party (Collonel, 1972 cited in Potts, 1985).

The first ever development plan for Lilongwe was administered in 1955 which was the Outline Zoning Scheme for the colonial era town. This plan anticipated the growth of an industrial town and not a capital city based on the British Town and Country planning ordinance (Mwathunga, 2014; Mwathunga & Donaldson, 2021). According to this plan, Lilongwe had an impression of a colonial modernist town with segregated zones for the whites, asian's and blacks (Manda, 2005). In 1969, a master plan was developed as the second development plan of the city (Manda, 2005). According to this plan, the city was to develop as a garden city in which it was to combine the amenities of urban life with access to nature (Britanica, 2023). Lilongwe as a garden city envisioned a city characterised by formal urban planning with strong design and development control. To implement this master plan, the Capital City Development Corporation (CCDC) was established as the implementation vehicle for this massive investment that was defined by its ambitious national imagery of Malawi's garden city (Manda, 2005).

Thereafter, two other development plans followed; the Lilongwe urban structure plan of 1978 and the outline zoning scheme plan (OZP) of 1986 (Mwathunga, 2014). The latter is an updated version of the former and both plans recommended a new master plan and the need for multi-centered urban form which was later adopted to deal with the problem of congestion likely to develop from old town (Manda, 2005). This was what led to the development of the centres of Lumbadzi, Kanengo, City Centre and Old Town (see figure 2.1).

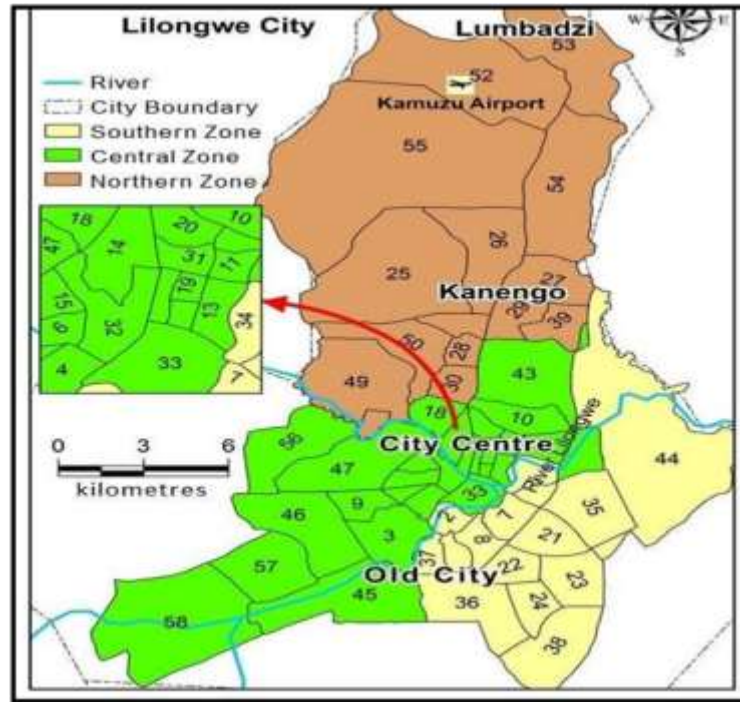


Figure 2. 1: Map of Lilongwe city showing the four growth centres

Source: Tiwale, Rusca and Zwarteveen (2018)

The OZP earmarked some land as undetermined for unforeseen land use in the future, a development which left land prone to squatting. The council had difficulties in implementing the OZP because of the time-consuming application process for development and the inability of the council to implement and control development due to lack of resources (Manda, 2005). This resulted into the haphazard development of the city.

In 1990, an integrated development strategy (IDS) was developed but was later abandoned after regime change from autocratic to democratic governance in 1994 (Croese et al., 2023; Manda, 2004). Between 1985 and 2008, there was lack of new plans. In 2009 however, three different development plans were initiated by international actors. The first plan is the JICA Master plan. This a comprehensive spatial master developed to promote planned use and regulate urban facility development. The second one is the City Development Strategy (CDS) which was developed by Johannesburg City Council, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the Cities Alliance. The third plan was developed by the

UN-Habitat, GTZ and the European Union and it is an Urban Profile to advocate for slum upgrading (Croese et al, 2023).

These three plans reflect different interests of different actors within the city. Though not entirely successful, some implementation from these plans actually took place. For instance, the slum upgrading project which was supported by Cities Alliance, UCLG and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Although it was terminated after two years, it achieved construction of a market and some drainage infrastructure (Croese, Robinson, Amedzro, Harrison, Kombe, Mwathunga & Owusu, 2023). A study by Croese et al (2023) on the persistence of urban master planning in Lilongwe revealed that little has so far been achieved in relation to the JICA Master plan. Generally, the plan is an official framework for the city since it is a comprehensive plan and it is still in effect. In recent years, the city council has developed a shorter term institutional strategic plan to implement some of its provisions (Croese, et al, 2023). Moreover, recent developments being initiated in the city still reflect plans identified in the 2010 JICA Master plan for instance, road developments and the new city centre in Area 32 (Croese et al., 2023).

2.4.3 Urban growth and Urban planning in Lilongwe

For the last few decades, Lilongwe has experienced rapid urbanisation in the process of becoming a major commercial and administration centre of the country. It has an urban growth rate of 4 percent (Stratchan et al., 2021). In 2018, the city's population was estimated at 989, 318 which constituted about 6 percent of the country's total population (Mwathunga & Donaldson, 2018). In 2021, the world population review indicated that the population had grown to about 1.17 million. Population projections for the city indicates that by 2033, the population will reach 2 million (McClean & Salama, 2021). This rapid population growth has a direct impact on urban growth such as reclassification of rural spaces to expand the urban area which leads to contestations over land (Mwathunga & Donaldson, 2018). This has implications for the urban planning system and planning practice in the city.

Studies have revealed that the plans previously developed for the city did not anticipate the recent urban growth (Stratchan et al., 2021; Mwathunga, 2014). The laws and regulations currently being used are arguably a replica of colonial laws and these frustrate sustainable planning principles in the face of rapid urbanisation (Mwathunga & Donaldson, 2018). Despite the garden city concept not favoring squatting, informality in Lilongwe is very high especially in traditional areas and unplanned areas. The garden city expected the city to grow into a formal city. On the contrary, there has been growth of informal areas that are strongly excluded from the core planned city. Potts (1985) states that with the way the city was developing in the early 1980s, the authorities of the city will have to interfere with their commitment to the garden city image. This seems to be a viable option with recent trends in the city's development. Considering how informalised the city has grown in recent years, it raises questions of the extent to which the most recently developed plan of 2010 as a development control has influenced the development of the city. Apparently, some features of the garden city design are now being reproduced by planning and politics.

The failure of urban planning to control development in Lilongwe is further worsened by the absence of effective urban planning and management (Brown, Manda and Mwalyambire, 2024). A study by the Tilitonse Foundation reveals that, urban planning in the councils of Malawi has been varied with others operating with outdated structural development plans while others operate even without plans (Chiweza, 2019). Worse still, development control has always been controversial due to legal and political ramifications. Often, enforcement of building regulations and standards lead to legal and political battles often lost by local councils (Chiweza, 2019). The study conducted by the Tilitonse foundation shows that about 70 % of development activities in Lilongwe are not authorized by the Lilongwe city council (Chiweza, 2019). This shows how development control is a serious problem in the city.

Several reasons have been attributed to the weakened state of affairs of urban planning in Lilongwe. Firstly, it is observed that spatial plans are often not linked to socio-economic plans making it difficult for cities to realise full potential for socioeconomic prosperity thereby producing structures without viable facilities for their functioning (Chiweza,

2019). Secondly, there exists several conflicts in urban governance. For instance, there is no harmonization in the provisions provided by the 1988 town and country planning act and the 1998 local government act in terms of who draw out plans for socio-economic development (Chinsinga, 2015). The local government act indicates that it is the duty of the council to draw up plans for socioeconomic development which contradicts with the provision of the Town and country planning act which also gives power to the physical directorate of planning under ministry of lands to do the same. This has since created a controversy which has affected the local authority's exercise of its power in urban governance and management (Chinsinga, 2015).

Furthermore, the multiplicity of institutions responsible for urban development means that there are multiple actors with varying interests. The existence of such parallel authorities makes it difficult for planning committees to oversee the observance of building codes and standards within the city boundaries of Lilongwe for instance (Chiweza, 2019). This again has contributed to the uncontrollable explosion of unplanned settlements and developments that are implemented without observing requirements and has reduced the role of urban planning in urban development. Studies that have focused on the implementation of projects and plans have revealed that there is need to consider the actors and the complex alliances created in development projects and how significant they are. (Cirolia & Berrisford, 2016). This means that it is no longer about what is good planning or bad planning since we need to consider contexts in which plans are being developed (Watson, 2013). However as noted earlier, plans in Lilongwe continue to be outdated and unrooted in their context with various contestations and controversies amongst actors in urban development. This implies that if urban planning is to be successful there is need for coordination and cooperation amongst various actors and institutions.

Recent trends in urban planning and urban growth in Lilongwe exhibit different characteristics from those that were seen in the past three decades. This is rooted in the history of the development of physical planning in the country. The garden city of Lilongwe was developed based on formal modernist planning principles with strong design and development control which prevailed largely due to authoritarian rule under Dr

Kamuzu Banda (Manda, 2005). During this period, there was strong political will which helped to reduce illegal development. The president took it to himself to scrutinise major building plans and those that did not meet his taste were refused (Manda, 2005). Although this type of leadership has been condemned particularly for its exclusion of the poor, it still contributed to the successful implementation of urban plans during this era.

The move from the authoritarian system in the early 1990s affected the direction of the whole planning process (Potts, 1985). Following the introduction of multiparty democracy, urban planning and development control were neglected and that resulted in the abandonment of the integrated development strategy (Lilongwe City scoping study, 2015 cited in Croese et al., 2023). ‘During the multiparty regime of Dr Bakili Muluzi, physical planning was considered a hindrance to development which led to the sidelining of the planning profession to a certain extent’ (Manda, 2005, p. 18). Instead of following rational considerations from planners, presidential decrees largely shaped the implementation of development projects (Manda, 2005). This implied that development projects were implemented without consideration of the implications on the urban landscape. This led to the wider weakening of development control through political patronage which brought chaos in urban space in the country because people were developing anyhow without considering planning ordinances (Manda, 2005). This trend seems to continue even in recent urban governance within many cities including Lilongwe and this is one of the issues that this study intended to investigate.

Recently, urban development of the city indicates some trends in which there are large-scale projects proliferation almost in all corners of the city. Interestingly, the government is at the centre negotiating and planning these projects as a policy to economic development while undermining the role of the local government in urban planning (Croese et al., 2023). Both international organisations and developed nations has since funded many of the projects. Among the dominant actors in these development projects are Chinese investors. Both Chinese state- owned companies and private developers have exerted a great impact on the development of the city through the provision of funds and technical support in

LUDs. The next section provides a description of how Chinese investors have shaped the Lilongwe City in terms of growth and development.

2.4.4 Chinese Large-scale Urban Developments in Lilongwe.

Over the past two decades, Lilongwe has undergone considerable transformation largely attributed to the proliferation of Chinese-led developments both government and private. The Chinese presence in the city is evidenced in the construction of government offices, business complexes, world-class hotels, and education facilities that are financed and constructed by the Chinese contractors. A profile of Chinese firms that are actively involved in shaping the city shows that the firms consist of state-owned and private companies. Some of the contractors popular in Malawi include Anhui Foreign Economic Construction Company (AFECC) also known as SOGECOA, China Civil Engineering Construction Company, and Sino Hydro Corporation group. Some of the Chinese infrastructure projects have formed a distinctive pattern running across the Lilongwe City Centre from the east to the west along the Presidential Way and extend to the south along Kaunda Drive. These Chinese funded projects have greatly improved the face of Lilongwe City. Some of the prominent developments with the Chinese background in Lilongwe include: the Henan Guoji Housing Development, Parliament Building, Umodzi Park, Bingu National Stadium (BNS), and Golden Peacock Hotel and the Grand Business Park. Figure 2.2 shows the major Chinese developments in Lilongwe.



Figure 2. 2: Aerial view of the concentration of the Chinese Large-scale Urban Developments

Source: Google earth maps (2023)

As shown in Figure 2.2, these developments are happening against a background of the absence of effective urban governance and strong political desire for meaningful urban development. The imposition of various large-scale projects by the government in the city in turn affects the implementation of physical development plans as well as the overall development of the city (Croese et al., 2023). This raises questions on the implementation of such projects with regard to urban planning processes and principles. One wonders whether the plans that are followed are still relevant during this era of Chinese-led development in the city. These are some of the key questions that the study sought to address. It is important to realise that these developments, in general, have implications on urban development. Therefore, it is based on these developments that this study set out to

investigate the role of urban planning in the establishment of Chinese-funded LUDs in Malawi, focusing on the BNS in Lilongwe city to have a deeper understanding.

2.5 Chapter summary

The Chapter looked at the growing demand for LUD-led development in many parts of the developing world and its effects on both urban planning practice and urban development in general. It considers how urban planning has evolved in trying to resolve some urban development issues in the Global South and in Malawi in particular. Finally, it analysed the growth of African city with regards to the proliferation of LUDs in Lilongwe, the Capital city of Malawi.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology that was employed in the study which seeks to understand the role of urban planning in Chinese Large-scale-Urban Developments (LUDs). It first discusses the theoretical perspective that guided the choice of the research design and methodology. The chapter then discusses the study design, study site and participants, data collection methods and data analysis method. Besides, the chapter further describes the following aspects: credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability. Finally, it presents ethical considerations that guided the research and the limitation of the study.

3.2 Constructivism as a philosophical paradigm

The overall approach to this study was guided by constructivism paradigm. Constructivism paradigm also known as social constructivism (Cresswell, 2014) believes in multiple realities, subjective understandings in which there is co-creation of understanding, and naturalistic procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Thus, people acquire knowledge and create meaning of things around them based on their experiences. The choice of constructivism as a paradigm aligns well with the research design used in the study which is qualitative methodology (Kivunja & Kiyuni, 2005; Cresswell, 2014). This paradigm gave the researcher the chance to discover the reality that exists out there through a variety of perspectives including that of the researcher (Lee, 2012).

In addition, the study required a philosophical paradigm that seeks to discover information about the participants' experiences in their context, hence constructivist paradigm was ideal for this study (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2012). It was deemed necessary to employ constructivism in this study because it allowed the researcher to best understand the research problem through the interpretation of the data gathered from the participants (Cresswell, 2014). Besides, this was also critical in providing answers to the research questions being investigated in this study. Thus, constructivism paradigm allowed the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the role of urban planning in the establishment of Chinese funded LUDs in Malawi particularly in the establishment of the Bingu National Stadium (BNS).

3.3 Research design

The study employed qualitative research design to investigate the role of urban planning in the establishment of Chinese funded LUDs in Malawi. Considering the nature of the problem under investigation, a case study design was used for in-depth analysis of the implementation processes used in urban planning in the Lilongwe City (Yin, 2009). Figure 3.1 summarises research design used in this study.

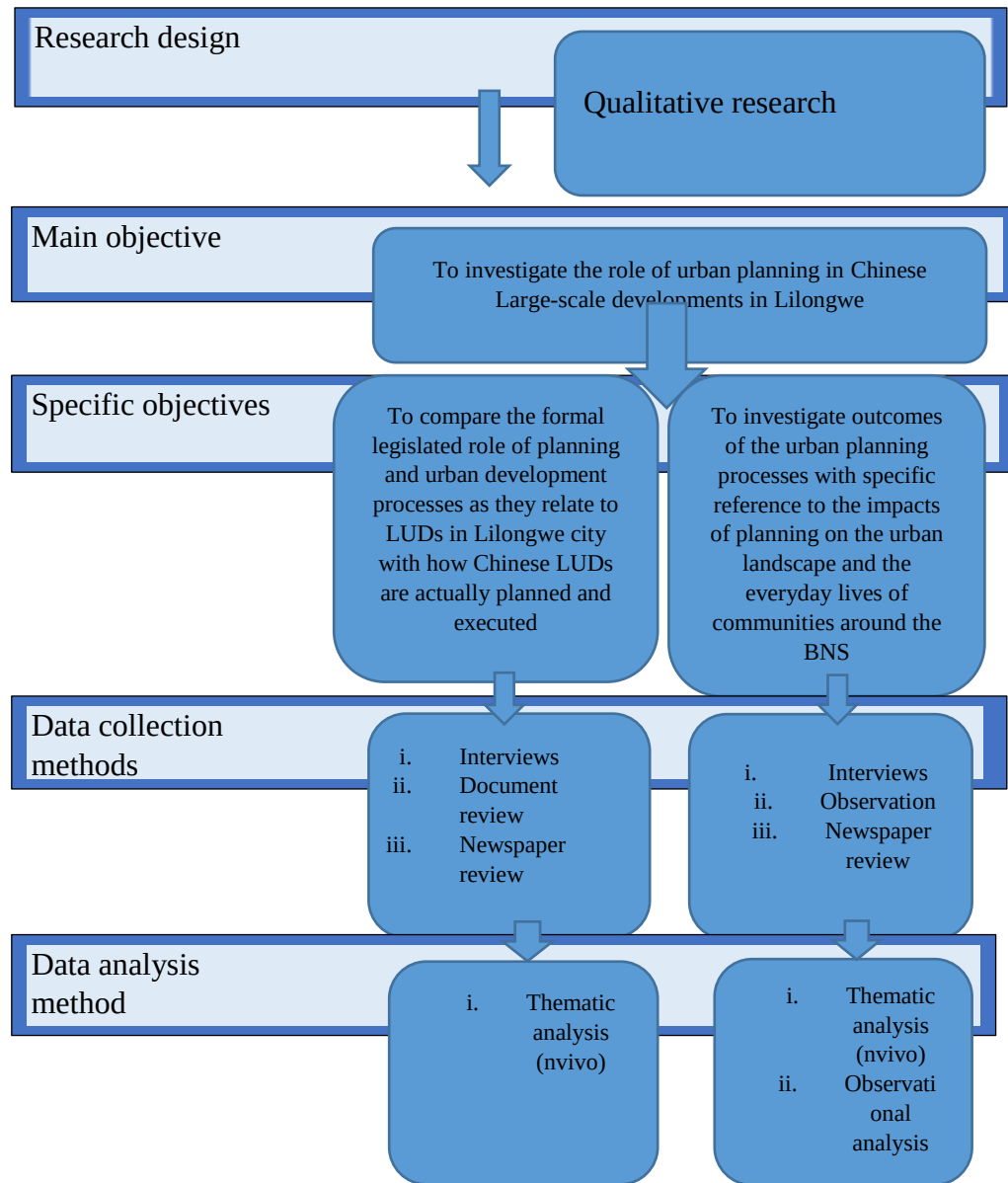


Figure 3. 1: Research design and methodology framework

Source: Author (2024)

3.3.1 Qualitative methodology

Qualitative research methods allow a descriptive approach to understanding human experiences and information is acquired from the participant's point of view (Patton, 2002). The methods assist the researcher to examine people's experiences in detail using a set of

methods like in-depth interviews and observation (Baxter & Jack, 2008). These methods enable the researcher to collect rich information about a particular phenomenon under investigation. In addition, Baxter and Jack (2008) argue that qualitative research methods allow issues to be identified from participants' points of view in their natural settings. However, qualitative research design has been criticised by scholars because it is subjective (Kothari, 2004). Apart from that, Bassias and Pollalis (2018) states that qualitative research methods are influenced by the attitude, culture and ethos of the researcher. As such, they require skill, intellect and creativity of researchers to interpret the magnitude of information generated (Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2004; Nayak & Singh, 2021).

However, the ability of qualitative research methods to provide detailed information is one of the reasons why this study employed it as a research design. Qualitative research design is concerned with developing rich explanations of social phenomena under investigation and therefore it makes people understand the social world in which they live in and why things are the way they are (Cohen & Manion, 1994). It looks at the social aspects of the world and attempts to answer questions such as: why do people behave the way they do? How are opinions and attitudes formed? How events taking place around people affect them and why cultures and practices develop in different ways (Creswell, 2010). In relation, this study, which sought to investigate the role of urban planning in Lilongwe, used structured interview questions and observations. These were used to investigate and understand the experiences of urban planning practitioners in the implementation of laws and regulations of urban planning. Further, these tools were used to investigate how decisions related to urban planning affect LUDs and their implications on the urban landscape as well as people's lives. Through in-depth interviews, the researcher was able to capture the experiences and opinions of people regarding how the stadium has benefitted them as well as participants were able to explain perceived benefits and drawbacks of the stadium.

3.3.2 Case study design

The study adopted a case study approach (Simons, 2009). This approach facilitates investigation of a phenomena within its context using a variety of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Yin (2013) argues that case study design works well when the focus is to answer questions related to how, why and contextual condition of a phenomena. Such being the case, case study design was chosen because issues are investigated through a variety of lenses and this allows multiple facets of the phenomena to be revealed and understood which is crucial for this study (Cresswell, 2013). A case study research design was employed to assess the performance of urban planning process in relation to Chinese LUDs in Lilongwe City using the BNS as a case study. BNS was chosen particularly because it was funded and constructed by the Chinese Government and therefore a sovereign development. The stadium was also considered as a good example of large-scale projects because it is one of the most extensive projects in the city with magnified costs and a greater visibility in the city as a mega project. In addition, such magnificent and iconic projects usually have a greater impact on its immediate surrounding community hence worth consideration in the study.

Using the BNS as a case study, the study set out to investigate whether sovereign Chinese developments follow the right procedure or deviate from the formal planning processes as required by Physical Planning Act of 2016. The study further assessed how the implementation of such flagship projects impact urban development as well as lives of ordinary citizens.

3.4 Study site and participants

3.4.1 Study area

The study was conducted in Lilongwe district in the Central Region of Malawi. It's origin as a modern city dates back to 1904 when it was made the administrative centre of the region (JICA, 2010). In 1975, it became the capital city following the movement of the capital from Zomba district. While the major reason for Lilongwe to be chosen as a capital

city was its centrality which was essential for regional spread of development, it was also chosen because the then ruling party, Malawi Congress party (MCP) saw it as an ideal location to achieve its political aims (Potts, 1985). The city covers about 393 km of land and it is divided into 58 areas for management and development purpose (Salama, 2021). Although this is the case, the city is expanding raising the possibility of more areas to be included within its jurisdiction.

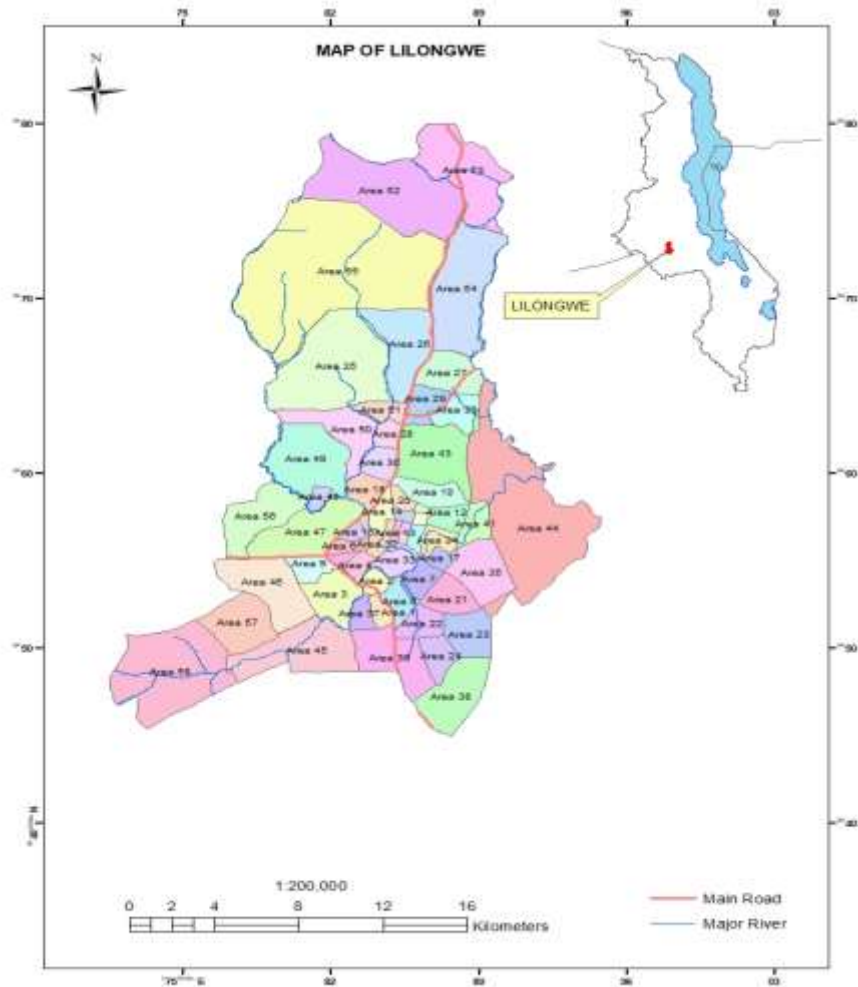


Figure 3. 2: Map of Lilongwe as the study area

Source: Author

Lilongwe has four growth centres; Old town, Kanengo, Lumbadzi and Capital Hill, following proposals from earlier city development plans, the Lilongwe urban structure plan of 1978 and the outline Zoning Scheme Plan (OZP) of 1986 (Mwathunga, 2014). It has 13 designated land uses intended to guide and regulate development (JICA, 2010). Most of the land is controlled by entities like the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Malawi Housing Corporation (MHC), Airport Development Limited (ADL) and Press Corporation, among others. These entities are regarded as the major land owners of the city (Stratchan et al., 2021). Land regulation fall under the Land Act, Land Acquisition Act, Town and Country Planning Act including City Master Plan and Development Strategy. The Lilongwe City Council is responsible for urban planning and ushering other development functions in the city under the Physical Planning Act of 2016. Being the largest and most important city, it has of late experienced proliferation of major infrastructure projects either funded or constructed by the Chinese Government. It is against this background that the BNS was used as a case study to investigate urban planning system used in the Chinese funded projects and how they are shaping the city of Lilongwe.

3.4.2 Sampling procedures

The study used two types of non-probability sampling techniques to select units based on certain non-random criteria (Bhattacharjee, 2012). These are purposive and snowball sampling. Firstly, purposive sampling is the deliberate choice of participants by the researcher due to the qualities of the participants (Etikan et al., 2016). This technique helped the researcher to choose participants such as policymakers and planning experts in various government institutions and bodies in Lilongwe based on their expertise. Purposive sampling technique was used to identify study participants who are more familiar with issues of urban planning and implementation processes in Lilongwe (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

Secondly, the study employed snowball sampling technique. In this technique, the participants who were identified using purposive sampling were asked to recommend other people who would be relevant to the study (Parker & Scott, 2019). Although this technique is related to purposive sampling, the researcher used it to get more participants beyond

those who were initially identified. However, according to Parker and Scott (2019) snowball sampling technique has been criticised for its inability to lead to representative samples. Despite the criticism, the researcher used it to get hard-to-reach participants of the study as well as those that the researcher did not think of but were relevant for the study (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

In total, 16 key participants were interviewed and they include planners and policymakers; heads of government departments, directors, regional and central state actors, developers, prominent members of communities, traditional leaders and development committee chairpersons. Out of the total key participants, 12 participants were chosen because of their positions, expertise and knowledge related to the study, thus purposive sampling while 4 participants were identified using snowball sampling technique.

3.4.3 Demographic profile of participants

A total of 16 key informants were interviewed using formal interviews. Out of the 16 participants, 14 were males and only 2 were females. One of the reasons why the male participants were in majority could be because many of the key informants who were directing the researcher to fellow professionals were males or that the desired professions in this case are male dominated in Lilongwe. The majority of the participants were also highly educated as most of them reached the tertiary level. They were mostly professionals working with government departments. Some of the participants once worked with the government since the case study was a government project, but they retired. Among the study participants were community leaders around the stadium from Mtandire and area 49 gulliver. From the total sample, 5 participants were from the Directorate of planning, 2 from the Buildings Department under the Ministry of Transport and Public Works, 2 officials were from the Ministry of Sports, 3 participants from the Ministry of Lands and 4 participants were community leaders. In addition, 4 other business people and one official from the stadium were informally interviewed during observation sessions conducted by the researcher at the stadium. Table 3.1 provides details of the key participants of the study.

Table 3. 1: List of key study participants.

Interview number	Sex	Education	Department/ institution/Area
1	Male	Tertiary	Lilongwe City Council; Department of Planning
2	Male	Tertiary	Lilongwe City Council, Department of Planning
3	Male	Tertiary	Lilongwe City Council, Department of Planning
4	Female	Tertiary	Lilongwe City Council, Department of Planning
5	Female	Tertiary	Lilongwe City Council, Department of Planning (retired)
6	Male	Tertiary	Ministry of Lands Directorate of planning and development (retired)
7	Female	Tertiary	Ministry of Lands, Department of Estate Management and Valuation
8	Male	Tertiary	Ministry of lands, Land Reforms Department
9	Male	Tertiary	Ministry of Sports; Construction Department
10	Male	Tertiary	Ministry of Sports; Bingu National Stadium
11	Male	Tertiary	Ministry of Transport and Works: Buildings Department
12	Male	Tertiary	Ministry of Transport and Works: Buildings Department (retired)
13	Male	Tertiary	Area 49 Gulliver

14	Male	Tertiary	Area 49 Gulliver
15	Male	Tertiary	Mtandire
16	Male	Secondary	Mtandire

3.5 Data collection methods

The study utilised both primary and secondary data and it employed three main tools of data collection namely: key informant interviews using a questionnaire guide (both face-to-face and virtual), physical observations, and document analysis (policies, internet and social media sources). Largely, the study relied on interviews with key informants. Taylor (2005) described interviews as a two-way process where the researcher and participants engage in a dialogue to explore the topic at hand. According to Taylor (2005), this helps in exploring the insider's perspective, to capture the participant's own words, thoughts, feelings and perceptions. The study used semi-structured interviews. These were used to gather information about policies, planning processes and plans as well as the role of different actors in shaping the implementation processes of the BNS.

In addition, the study also employed observation as a means of gathering data by watching, behaviour, and events, noting the physical characteristics in their natural setting (Nelson & Cohn, 2015). The researcher had six observation sessions on different occasions at the stadium. From the six sessions, three were done on days when there were football matches at the stadium. The remaining three sessions were done on working days and pictures were taken in all occasions. The researcher visited the stadium to understand how activities are conducted and how people patronises such activities.

Furthermore, document analysis was used to gather data for the study. Savin-Baden and Major (2013) states that documents provide researchers with a rich and often readily accessible source of information for understanding participants and the research contexts. Creswell (2012) contends that documents such as public and private records are an important source of information in qualitative studies because they help researchers to understand participants and research sites. Considering all this, the researcher utilised data

from different sources like Lilongwe JICA Master Plan and the Malawi Physical Planning Act of 2016 to provide information on planning processes and policies. Apart from that, the researcher also used articles and reports from the Lilongwe City Council, stadium project proposal by the Ministry of Sports, and reports and minutes from the committee that was responsible for organising the construction of the stadium from the Buildings Department in the Ministry of Lands.

Lastly, the researcher reviewed newspaper and social media articles which were specifically related to the study. Barranco and Wisler (2022) explains that newspaper data gives results from a combination of news values shared by professional journalists and a cultural reproduction process. The researcher reviewed newspaper articles because they provided context and background about some specific topics related to this study. This method was included to understand different perspectives, varying attitudes and biases of the general public towards BNS. In this study, two major newspapers were sampled namely; Times Group Newspapers and the Nation Newspapers from 2012 to 2017. This period was critical for the study because the project started in 2012 and the stadium was officially opened in 2017. In total, 15 newspaper articles were reviewed. Although 15 newspaper articles were not enough for the study, the challenge was that it was difficult to trace articles related to the study since they were picked randomly.

3.6 Data analysis

Data for this study was processed and analysed using thematic analysis which requires coding the interview replies and observations, and tabulating the data (Kothari, 2004). Thematic analysis as a method of analysing qualitative data involves searching across data sets to identify, analyse and report repeated patterns and interpret data using a selection of codes and the construction of recurrent themes from the collected data (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). This method was used because it is flexible in the interpretation of data and it is possible to manage large data sets more easily by sorting them into broad themes (Cresswell, 2014). Data collected from the semi-structured interviews with key informants

was transcribed and reflected upon. Using NVIVO Software, data was sorted and codes were generated, identifying predominant themes within the raw data that was collected.

Furthermore, data from the analysis of documents including newspaper articles was also sorted and reflected upon and analysed using NVIVO to formulate themes. The themes were then used in the final analysis following the researcher's interpretation of the data. However, when using NVIVO software for thematic analysis, care should be taken when coding to avoid errors and so researchers should always check the reliability of the codes (Kothari, 2004). Realising that this is critical in achieving the objectives of the study, the researcher carefully checked the reliability of the codes that were formulated before formulating the themes. Lastly, observational analysis was undertaken to draw out meaning from various observational sessions that were conducted by the researcher. The collected data was therefore organised and sorted, and the researcher carefully studied the data to create meanings.

3.7 Credibility, dependability, transferability, and conformability,

Any qualitative research requires trustworthiness to be established (Guba, 1981). Trustworthiness refers to how qualitative data is dependable, consistent, stable, predictable, reliable and credible, and produce the same results in the future (Delpont & Rustenburg, 2011). Credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability are aspects of trustworthiness and authenticity (Guba, 1981). Qualitative data is credible when others can recognise the experiences after only reading about them (John & Hugh, 1999). It relates to how findings align with reality as constructed by the researcher (Kivunja, 2017). One of the most common ways of achieving credibility and validity in qualitative research is the use of triangulation. Creswell (2012) states that this involves using various methods, theories and investigators to address the research question. In this study, the researcher used several data collection methods such as in-depth interviews with key informants, observation, document analysis and newspaper articles' review to enhance the validity of the research. Apart from recoding the interviews, the researcher took short notes to

supplement the recorded data. Finally, the researcher also used member-checking as a validation process.

Dependability in research involves evaluation of the findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study supported by the data collected from the participants of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It relates to the aspect of consistency of the research findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In this study, dependability was achieved through transparent description of the research steps taken from the start of the study and keeping the records of the entire study for example, newspaper articles and notes taken during interviews. In addition, audit trail was used to complement dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This also helped to enhance confirmability which deals with the extent to which the research study can be confirmed by others (Kivunja, 2017). Besides, it ensures that the findings and their interpretations are not figments of the researcher's imagination but rather derived from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Finally, transferability is another critical aspect in qualitative research that deals with the degree to which the study findings can be applied to similar contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability can be achieved through thick description of the behaviour and experiences in the research process in such a way that even outsiders could find meanings. Similarly, in this study, the researcher used narratives coupled with visual images to describe the findings of the study.

3.8 Ethical considerations

The researcher followed some ethical principles throughout the study to ensure the credibility of the study. Firstly, before data collection exercise, the researcher developed a research proposal that was approved by the University of Malawi Research and Ethics Committee (UNIMAREC). The Research Ethics Policy of the University of Malawi mandates anyone undertaking a study that involves humans to apply for ethical clearance. The idea is to make sure that research studies should be carried out with honesty and integrity; safe and responsible methods and fairness and equity for the participants.

Secondly, ethical principles of confidentiality and anonymity were strictly considered during the data collection process. This was done to ensure non-disclosure of participants' names that could be used to identify them (Creswell, 2009). In this study, the participants were for instance, addressed in a more general anonymised way such as; 'Buildings Department Official' or 'Ministry of Sports Official' in efforts to hide their identities. In situations where there were many participants from one institution, codes like 1, 2 and 3 were assigned to show variations of data sources. This was meant to hide the identities of the participants.

Thirdly, participants were informed of their right to consent to participation without being coerced or unfairly pressurized. This was done to ensure voluntary participation of the participants without intervention of force, fraud, deceit, duress or other forms of coercion (Holloway, 2005). After consent to take part in the study was granted by the participants, the researcher asked them to sign the consent forms if they agreed to take part in the study which they did. In addition, the participants were also asked if they were comfortable to be recorded during the interviews and they also gave their consent. Where participants did not give consent to be recorded, the researcher proceeded with the interviews and took comprehensive notes throughout the interview.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The major limitation of the study was to gain access to key informants. Even though contacts were found after interacting with the Central Office of the BNS Project, the researcher found that some of the most key informants had retired and some had moved to other places away from the city. This situation forced the researcher to use alternative means such as traveling to those places and using phone calls. Apart from that, one participant opted for text messages rather than phone calls and his request was granted. In addition, some participants never showed up for interviews despite efforts from the researcher to reach them through phone calls. All this may have affected the precision of the results since it implies that the study might have missed some important data which

could have helped in the analysis of the problem statement. Again, gaining access to Chinese investors was another limitation that was experienced during data collection exercise. Although a Chinese researcher was engaged in the study as part of efforts to get to the Chinese developers, little data was still obtained from them as they were not open enough. Therefore, the study lacks enough data from Chinese developers. The last limitation was that the researcher did not get as much documents as expected. This was partly attributed to poor keeping of records in most government offices and issues of privacy in some government offices. This affected the findings and the study lacks substantive documents to support some of the claims that were made by participants.

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter has discussed the research design and methodology used in this study. The chapter also discussed the study demographics, sampling techniques, data collection methods, data analysis methods, measures to enhance trustworthiness and limitations of the study. Finally, it has described issues of ethical considerations that were taken into account when conducting the study. The next chapter presents and discusses the findings related to planning process for Chinese LUDs in Lilongwe.

CHAPTER FOUR

PLANNING PROCESS FOR CHINESE LARGE-SCALE URBAN DEVELOPMENTS IN LILONGWE

4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. Specifically, the chapter focuses on the planning processes that guide urban development in Lilongwe City with regard to Large-scale Urban Developments (LUDs) using BNS as a case study. In addition, the chapter discusses the extent to which planners in Lilongwe and the planning system in general have shaped the large-scale projects mostly the Chinese-funded developments that have reoriented the city to a northern axis. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations and documents analysis. The structure of the study is based on the research questions that guided this study.

4.2 Urban planning processes relating to urban development in Lilongwe: Guidelines and practice

This section presents and discusses the statutory planning process which includes the assessment of planning permit applications for new development proposals and changes to land use activities with reference to the Town and Country Planning Act of 1987 and its successor, The Physical Planning Act of 2016 for proposed land use and development of land. Based on the analysis of the formal processes that guide urban developments in Lilongwe, the section further discusses how development projects are actually executed in Lilongwe City. Lastly, the section presents and discusses factors that affect urban planning in relation to LUDs in Malawi and how planners respond to the challenges they face in executing their roles in relation to these developments.

4.2.1. Guidelines for Development permission

The formal statutory planning process in Malawi, particularly Lilongwe City follows a four-stage process comprising land acquisition, application for building permit, assessment, and scrutiny and approval. According to this process, prior to submitting a development proposal, developers need to acquire land. Three mechanisms were identified as ways in which people obtain land in Lilongwe depending on whether one is a citizen or a foreigner. For ordinary citizens, land may be allocated (under lease) by the Ministry of Land or by any other landlord in the city. In some cases, it can be inherited from parents while sometimes it is purchased from fellow citizens. In the case of foreign investors, two major ways were identified on how land is acquired especially by the Chinese investors who were identified as one of the dominant foreign investors. One of the participants from the Ministry of Lands explained that the Chinese usually buy land from local people who were once allocated the land by the Ministry. In other circumstances, they get allocation of land from the Ministry of Lands. Apparently, this is the main mechanism of accessing land for the majority of foreign projects that have ties with the government. One participant from the Ministry of Lands said:

Some projects are allocated land directly, for example, the villas along the BNS [Bingu National Stadium] road. That land was allocated to the Chinese by the Ministry [Ministry of Lands] including the Golden Peacock Hotel. (Interview with Ministry of Lands official, 25 July 2022).

The above quotation illustrates the fact that although there are multiple mechanisms of accessing urban land in case of LUDs, the state including the central government plays a crucial role in allocating land. Table 4.1 summarises major ways of acquiring urban land in Lilongwe city for urban development projects.

Table 4. 1: Acquisition of Land in Lilongwe

No.	Local Projects	Foreign Projects (with Chinese background)	Private (with Chinese ties)	Government projects (with Chinese ties)
1.	Inheritance or customary` land acquisition	Purchasing from locals/ companies		Allocation by the Ministry of Lands
2.	Purchasing from other individuals/companies	Allocation by the Ministry of Lands		
3.	Allocation by the Ministry of Lands or other			

Table 4.1 Land acquisition mechanisms for urban development projects in Lilongwe city.

From the interviews as well as a review of the Physical Planning Act of 2016, once developers have acquired the land, they are required to provide information about the land and development plans to relevant authorities. The authorities in this case, the directorate of planning and development are to enter the land to which the application relates to so that they view it and its adjacent land and development. However, this is usually done in the midst of the approval process.

The second step in the guidelines of applying for development permission is to apply for a building permit. This is according to the Physical Planning Act of 2016. ‘An application for development permission shall (a) be made to (i) the local government authority in the case of any development within its jurisdiction or (ii) the commissioner in every other case; in a prescribed form; and (c) accompanied by a prescribed fee payable to Government, and shall include such other information as the local government authority or the Commissioner

may require' (Physical Planning Act, 2016, section 46. 22). In this case, applications are to be made to the Lilongwe city council and other information needed may include; layout plans together which will vary depending on the type and size of the project to the City Council (Planning Directorate). In addition, participants identified scrutiny fee as an example of the charges that are included in the application. During the interviews, one of the participants from the Directorate of planning of Lilongwe City Council reiterated the following:

We require the structural drawings and these structural drawings are supposed to be certified by the registered structural firm. We also require service drawings for example, the electrical drawings and the fittings, the sockets and the switches. Then we calculate what we call scrutiny fees, a submission fee that goes to the Council. So, we have a standard formula that we use. (Interview with LCC Planner, 25 July, 2022).

'Where the development permission applied for is of national interest, the local government authority or the Commissioner, as the case may be, shall forward the application to the Council for approval' (Physical Planning Act, 2016, sec 46.22). However, participants from the planning directorate of Lilongwe city council stressed that before the final decision is made, the application documents go through a technical subcommittee of the Town Planning Committee to assess the plans on a technical level. The technical subcommittee consists of technicians from different fields like architects, engineers, health professionals, environmental professionals as well as planners. This sub-committee is mandated to make recommendations to the Town Planning Committee based on their judgment.

Applicants are to provide information about the land and development to relevant authorities and should allow the responsible authority, in this case, the planning directorate, to enter the land to which the applicants relate to view it and its adjacent land and development. After all the assessment has been done, 'the responsible authority may, by written notice served on an applicant for the grant of a development permission require the

applicant to do either or both of the following— (a) publish details of his application at a time or times in a place or places and in a manner specified in the notice; or (b) give details of his application to the persons and authorities and in a manner specified in the notice’ (Physical Planning Act, 2016, sec. 46.22). This means that the Town Planning council makes a final decision on the application based on what was submitted by the developer. According to the Physical Planning Act of 2016, Permission can be granted absolutely, subject to condition or may be refused completely and sometimes it is deferred for a period of 60 days until the applicant makes corrections as required. This step determines whether the developer will proceed with implementation or not. One participant from the Directorate of planning explained:

...the Town Planning Committee is mandated to make the final decision to either approve, reject or defer an application. (Interview with LCC Planner, 28 July, 2022).

This quotation illustrates the role of the Town planning committee, including the power that it has on urban development in Lilongwe.

Although this is regarded as the final step in the development application process, the Physical Planning Act of 2016 states that sometimes the permission can be revoked and this can be done by the responsible authority with the direction of the Minister. This often happens when the developer fails to commence development on the land within the allocated time frame which is two years after the permission is granted. In this situation, the developer is required to re-apply. Figure 4.1 provides a summary of the processes that are followed before actual construction of a development project.

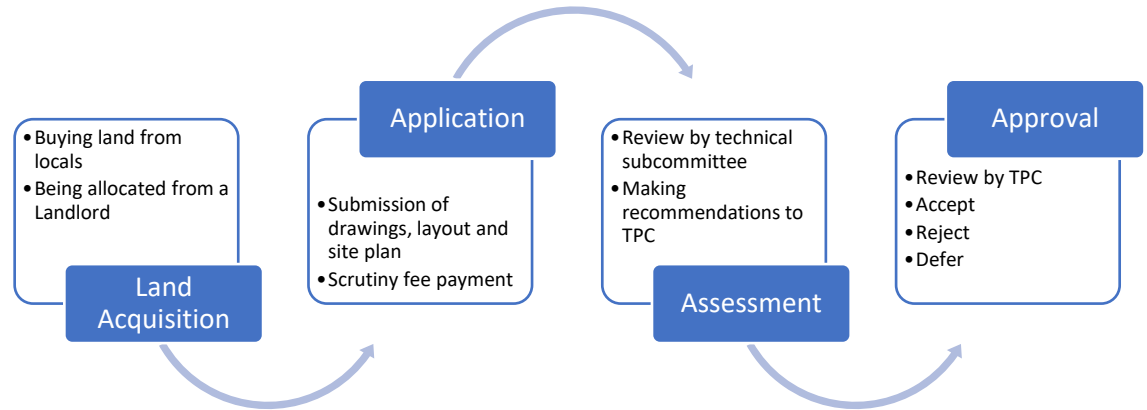


Figure 4. 1: Development permission application process

Source: Author (2024)

From the findings, (refer to Fig 4.1), there are formal and legal guidelines that should be followed by all developers within the city and these are embedded within the urban planning rules. These guidelines as outlined in the Physical Planning Act of 2016 are a manifestation of the modernist form of planning that is guiding the development of Lilongwe City. They also depict the significant role played by the Directorate of planning of the City Council in project planning and implementation which even starts in the process of acquiring land. This means that the Directorate of planning and development of the city is important for every development that happens in the city. It also implies that developing without these guidelines means one has chosen to bypass physical planning ordinances.

4.2.2 Actual planning processes, deviations and exceptions from guidelines

The study investigated whether the formal development application process applies to all developments within the jurisdiction including foreign developers like the Chinese. From the participants, it was established that projects which have strong Central Government interest are more complicated in their implementation. One of the participants from the City Councils' Directorate of planning gave an example of a Sports Complex right next to the stadium which is under construction by a Chinese contractor, as in the following quotation:

The new development behind the stadium that's the Sports Complex, you see that the President went there for an opening ceremony. At that time, the Council had not yet approved the project yet it had started and the President was there. Normally, they were supposed to submit the plans; the Council goes through the plans and the Town Planning Committee gives approval. And after obtaining that approval, then they would start construction and then maybe call the President for the opening. But they jumped all those stages and started construction. (Interview with LCC Planner, 26 July, 2022)

Given the explanation above, the study established that instead of waiting for proper assessment from the Town Planning Committee, this element was disregarded and possibly this is because of the involvement of top government officials like the president. Thus, political interference affects the implementation of Chinese LUDs.

Beyond this though, the study found that there are examples within the city in which private investors follow the rightful procedure citing an example the MHC-Henan Guoji Housing Development, a Joint Venture between Malawi Housing Corporation and Henan Guoji Development Company Limited from China which did follow the formal process. However, it was revealed that at a later stage, the design that was initially submitted was not followed in the construction stage despite going through the formal process.

Although there exists a formal procedure to be followed by all developments, the findings suggest that there is a certain degree to which development projects conform to this process and this may also depend on the nature of the project. Many Sovereign Chinese LUDs often do not follow the formal procedure since they are driven by the Central Government. This affects their implementation and end-up bypassing some elements of the process. This means that the processes followed in their implementation cannot be positioned within existing legal frameworks agreeing with Watson (2014). This is often because they are important for political prestige and usually are rushed for completion so that they can be included as part of the government's achievements. Private developers may sometimes

bypass regulations especially if they are backed by some strong political powers. Two implications can be drawn from this: first, urban development in Lilongwe is guided by not only urban planning but a combination of factors one of them being the nature of the developers as an actor in urban development; and second, there is a disconnect between legislated procedures for urban planning happening on the ground with regard to actual urban planning practice. These findings are consistent with a study by Watson (2009b) in which she observed that there seems to be a wide gap between the norms of urban planning and the realities on the ground.

4.2.3 Politics and planning of Large-scale Urban Developments

The study further investigated the role politics plays in relation to planning of Large-scale Urban Developments (LUDs). The study found that planning of Chinese LUDs is strongly influenced by politics and politicians. In Lilongwe, “politics” was largely cited by most of the participants to refer to the participation of politicians and their ability to influence decisions within the planning system. One of the participants who once worked with the City Council had this to say with reference to political influence in urban developments projects in Lilongwe:

...there is a strong force that pushes development projects in the city
(Interview with ex-Planner LCC, 17 May, 2022).

In agreement, another participant from the Directorate of planning stated the following:

...this may depend on the nature of the project because government projects are government driven and obviously have political connotations.
(Interview with Planner, LCC, 28 July, 2022).

When asked on the reasons behind the politician’s involvement, a Planner from the Directorate of planning explained that politicians use these developments to gain political “mileage”. In this case, they will always try to push for the projects to start even before the

proper process of granting development permit is finalized. The participant cited two examples as follows:

The six-lane road from the City Centre to the Parliament Building and Kamuzu Central Hospital Roundabout; and the Sports Complex close to the stadium, are some of the projects in which the President went ahead and opened for construction without the city council's approval and finalizing of permits for construction. (Interview with LCC Planner, 26 July, 2022).

This shows how politicians use these developments to gain political "mileage" and disregarding the proper procedure in the process. Political interference in development projects was also associated with personal benefits. This is what one of the participants had to say:

These things involve a lot of money. Politicians and money, are neighbours so that's why you find that in projects like these, you will always have political peeping in them. (Interview with LCC Planner, 25 July 2022).

This explanation as quoted above reveals that some politicians who are responsible for such projects are greedy and would want to benefit personally, disregarding public interests. This explains why they usually want to be at the centre of such projects.

The study further found that foreign developers deliberately use politicians to advance their interests instead of dealing directly with the Planning Directorate under the Lilongwe City Council. One of the participants explained the following:

What happens is that most of the times these major big player investors would rather go through politicians than the City Council because they feel if they involve politicians, their application will run smoothly. (Interview with LCC Planner, 25 July, 2022).

Investors usually use politicians because they believe that politicians are powerful in the society and have the power to influence matters to do with land and decision making concerning urban development projects. Although not a specific example was given, it still gives insights on why usually foreign investors have certain relationships with politicians.

The findings suggest that urban planning decision making process is rather a non-linear process involving many different questions and actors. It is shaped by evolving relations of control and consent, power and authority and often revolves around those with most influence in decision making as it was also observed in other parts of Africa like Ethiopia and Kenya (Cirolia and Berrisfold, 2016). Politicians as a dominant party in urban planning usually have greater influence in the decisions that are made regarding urban development. This is because they have significant access to state resources which makes them able to advance their interests. The study found that in Lilongwe, politicians would rather push to have major developments established during their time to gain popularity and win votes for the next elections. Worse still, politicians facilitate developments for personal advantage. As noted by Lwanda (2006), politicians would use certain projects to acquire money for personal benefits. In addition, the investors' tendency to use politicians to advance their interest gives politicians an upper hand in their influence on developments within the City. Rakodi (2001) describes this as self-centred decision made by politicians which neglects the common good. Considering the power that politicians have, planning professionals often succumb to their decisions which are often unrealistic and non-strategic, disregarding planning laws and regulations.

This implies that politics, individual politicians, government divisions as well as the top-down decision-making can distort the intentions of a sound planning system. As Muchadenyika and Williams (2016) established. Such practices are detrimental to public interest as it brings into existence projects that may affect people's wellbeing. Thus, the researcher argues that political interference in urban planning is a major hindrance to urban planning in Lilongwe. To a certain extent, this perhaps explains why the planning system is failing to be effective in its functioning.

4.2.4 Planner's agency against deviations from guidelines

This section presents and discusses how urban planners deal with issues that affect the planning of LUDs In Lilongwe. The researcher asked urban planners to explain how they handle projects that do not follow the guidelines in urban planning. Based on the findings, it was revealed that it is difficult for them to have a say on projects that political influence even when they want to. Most participants explained that even in cases where the practitioners try to act according to Physical Planning legislations, politicians would contact and threaten them that they will lose their jobs. One of the participants from the Directorate of planning explained:

You find someone is calling you to say, I hear that at the meetings you are talking too much, do you want your job or not? If you do want your job, make sure that this project gets approved. (Interview with LCC Planner, 26 July, 2022).

This illustrates that planners usually work in fear and this negatively affects how they execute their day-to-day activities. It also shows how politicians have power over the planners, thereby having a greater influence on urban development. However, the study further established that in some development projects that do not have political influence, urban planners can control the implementation processes to follow urban planning regulation. For instance, one of the participants gave an example of the area 49 Gouji Shopping mall in which they were trying to make sure that what was submitted in the plans is what is coming out of the construction phase. He explained the following:

So, we have had talks with the architects and the developer and they agreed that something somewhere went wrong, they even agreed that that's not what they had in mind so they are trying to find ways on how they can rectify that. If all else fails then we can come in with demolition. (Interview with LCC Planner, 25 July 2022)

This action shows the planning directorate's effort to enforce development control within the city. It also fueled public interest in the work of the Lilongwe city council and somehow showed the relevance of the directorate of planning and development within the city. However sometimes such efforts prove futile because even if the development control officers engage with the developers, they may choose to ignore their advice with reasons that the participants felt were personal to the developers. This was the case with a Chinese industry in Kanengo as explained by one of the participants:

I can give you one example, there is a steel factory along the MI 1 road as you go to the airport, I think it is called main steel by the Chinese. It is a light industry and if you look at its location, that place was not zoned for light industry. So, we did not give the approval for that but, the Chinese went ahead and constructed it and we have had issues (Interview with LCC planner, 25 July, 2022).

These remarks demonstrate efforts by the directorate of planning and development to correct some of the development challenges they face within the city. As another way of dealing with such problems, the directorate of planning sometimes resort to regularization of the developments through re-zoning depending on the nature of the development especially for small scale projects like houses.

Overall, the findings imply the limited influence that Planners and Development Control Officers have in large-scale development project. Apart from that, it also implies that the governing system is inflexible, unchecked and corrupt in its exercise of power when it comes to urban planning. This is so because planners are hindered by corrupt politicians to carry out their duties professionally. The findings are in line with structure agency theory which states that lack of power and resources undermines individuals' ability to make decisions and bring about an impact (Kaihuai, 2019). Thus, it can be argued that how planners deal with issues to exercise their duties depends on the political and governing environment.

4.3 Planning and implementation of the Bingu National Stadium

This section presents and discusses findings related to processes followed in the planning and implementation of the Bingu National Stadium (BNS). The study investigated the processes that were involved from the planning stage of the BNS up to the construction phase. The first part covers the general information of the BNS and the second part focuses on four areas relating to the establishment of the facility name; project agreements and negotiations, the planning approval process and Urban Development Control and consequences of non-compliance with the planning of the BNS and the reasons behind the non-compliance.

4.3.1 Bingu National Stadium: Background and context

The plans to construct the BNS followed the signing of a pact between the Chinese Government and the Malawi Government towards the construction of other Chinese developments all in Lilongwe namely; the Kwacha Presidential Hotel, International Conference Centre also known as The Bingu International Conference Centre; and the Presidential Villas in 2009 (Chinoko, 2017). The structure was financed through a concessional loan from the Exim-Bank of China, a state-owned policy bank, amounting to about 433.71 Million Kwacha (an equivalent of about 57156.62 USD). This loan is to be repaid in 20 years with a grace period of 7 years with an interest rate of 2% and 0.50% management fee (Chinoko, 2017). The stadium was constructed by a Chinese contractor known as Anhui Foreign Economic Construction Group. The design was done by Beijing Institute of Architectural Design although with input from Malawian architectural experts. The construction commenced in July, 2013 until November, 2015. The whole project took 29 months (Chinoko, 2017). However, the stadium was officially opened in January, 2017 due to problems related to electricity connection and sewer line (Chinoko, 2017).

The BNS is located in Area 48 in Lilongwe, the Capital City of Malawi. The stadium lies between Area 49; (Gulliver and Shire) and Area 47. It also shares boundaries with Mtandire and lies adjacent to the newly constructed Griffin Saenda Sports Complex to the south along the Kaunda Road to the West and the Area 18 Presidential Way from the Area

18 Inter-change to its north. The structure covers about 32 hectares of land and has a capacity of about 40 000 spectators with two covered and two open stands. The stadium has 46 gates, an eight-lane standard running track, 56 lounges where families and sponsor groups have the luxury of watching the events in private, a medical centre, a police unit, two stand-by diesel-powered 800KW generators and 32 000-litres fire hydro water tank. It also has an indoor training running track, two VVIP and two VIP lounges, four dressing rooms, two referee rooms, five event management rooms and three management rooms (Kalowekamo, 2017). In addition, the stadium also has eight shopping outlets, two lifts for VVIP, 800 toilets and a 400-car parking space among other facilities (Chiniko, 2017). Figure 4.2 shows an aerial view of the magnificent Bingu National Stadium.



Figure 4. 2: Aerial view of the Bingu National Stadium

Source: StadiumDB.com.

4.2.2. Project agreements and negotiations

When asked on how parties came to terms on the construction of the stadium, an official from the ministry of sports explained that:

The construction of the Bingu National Stadium was done through a contractual agreement made by the Central Government of Malawi and the

Chinese Government. The Ministry of Finance facilitated the negotiations since it was a loan to the Malawi Government. The loan was given through Exim Bank of China. The two parties, later signed a maintenance contract in which the Government of China pledged to maintain the stadium, up to 3 years from its official opening (Interview with Ministry of Sports Official, 27 July, 2022).

Further, the two parties also signed a technical cooperation deal of 1,17 million USD (Chitsulo, 2017). Thus, the contractual agreement relating to the national stadium signed between Malawi and China comprised three package deal namely: financing agreement maintenance contract; and technical cooperation. All this indicates a centralized system of decision making since most of these agreements were done at central government level mostly because it was a government project.

After agreements to construct the Stadium were made and signed for, the projects design and proposal documents were sent to the Buildings Department of the Ministry of Transport and Works who were responsible for overseeing the construction of government projects in the country. Thus, the Buildings Department was involved after agreements were made by the central government. One of the participants from the Buildings Department, explained that:

we did not have much information regarding the nature of the agreements made. Similarly, our friends from the Buildings Department seemed to not have information. We were only to help in the implementation process of the project which was already agreed upon and decided upon' (Interview with LCC Planner, 28 July 2022).

The participant further explained that this was so because it was a government project. This meant that technicians from the Buildings Department and directorate of planning and development had limited knowledge on the projects that they were to implement. Although

this is usually the case with most sovereign projects, sometimes it has implications on the project.

When the researcher further asked for documents regarding the project, it was found that most top government officers did not have them and some officers were unable to trace them. In some cases, they were not willing to produce the documents stating they are sensitive documents and therefore need approval from their bosses at the Ministry of Sports. This confirms that indeed this project was handled by the central government officials.

The fact that negotiations only involved top government officials depicts a centralised system of decision-making for the BNS. This was also observed in a study of urban developments in Zambia by Li and Siame (2022) which revealed that large-scale projects are characterised by centralised decision making. This implies that the nature of the project determines how and who will handle it. In most cases, technicians and planners are excluded until the implementation phase of the projects. For the BNS, the study found that the Minister of Finance was the one responsible and most technicians were consulted when agreements had already been made. The findings also agree with Mohan and Mullin (2019) and Watson (2014) who in their studies identified lack of involvement and participation especially by the local government for most large-scale projects. This implies that it is possible to bypass and disregard some aspects of the requirements of urban planning. As a result, some critical aspects of physical planning may be overlooked and this can affect urban development.

In addition, despite knowing the terms and conditions of the concessional loan of the BNS, the study established from various media platforms that not much information is exposed to the general public regarding agreement made on the BNS project. This finding resonates with what was stated in studies by Brautgam (2020); Ojo (2022); and Tang (2018) that such projects are characterised by non-disclosure agreements and lacks accountability and transparency. Consequently, this may disrupt the project in the long run and cause

confusion amongst stakeholders since others are not aware of how the project will run. This has also been demonstrated in the implementation of the BNS.

4.3.3. Identifying a site for the stadium

After agreements were made and plans submitted to the Buildings Department, the identification of land for the construction of the stadium was left in the hands of the Ministry of Lands. Considering that the project was politically driven, plans to construct the stadium in Lilongwe were changed when the then President, Professor Bingu Wa Mutharika opted for Blantyre, the Commercial city, close to Soche Hill in the southern region. According to Nyasa times online news, the reason was that Lilongwe had already enjoyed a fair share of projects from the Chinese Government as compared to Blantyre. This move was however criticised as some people believed that this was meant to bring the development closer to the President's home village, Thyolo in the southern region of the country. Nonetheless, plans changed when the former President, Dr Joyce Banda came into power and directed that the stadium should be built in the Capital City. The Ministry of Lands then identified Area 48 as the ideal site for the stadium (New stadium to be built in Soche, January, 2012). According to the 2010 JICA Master Plan, the area was meant for recreation purposes while in the 1986 Outline Zoning Scheme, it was an open space (Figure 3).

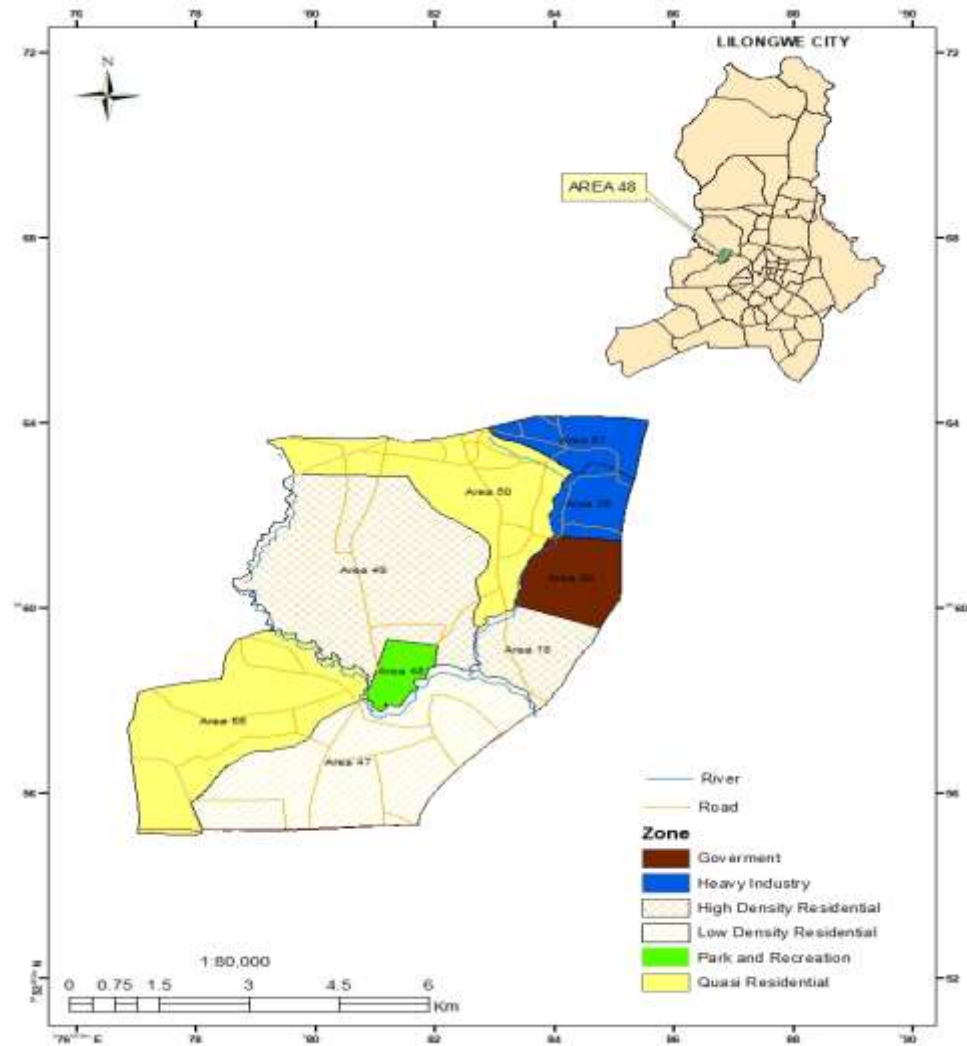


Figure 4. 3: Urban land-use plan (zoning) for Lilongwe

Source: Adapted from JICA Master Plan (2010).

Figure 4.3 shows the urban land use plan (zoning) for different areas in Lilongwe in terms of zoning. From the figure, area 48, where the BNS is located was zoned to be a park and recreation area. The location of the Stadium therefore is consistent with the JICA Master plan since sports is a recreation activity. This shows how some elements of the JICA master plans are being applied in the development of the city of Lilongwe.

The study further noted that the Ministry of Lands did not work alone in the identification of the land for the stadium as it is always a requirement in the development of land to consult the Directorate of planning and Development of the Lilongwe City Council to assist in checking whether the land was fit for the project or not. The Ministry of Lands and the Directorate of Planning also made an application to the City Council for the division of the land since the plan was to leave out some space for other future developments. One of the participants from the Planning Directorate reiterated the following in relation to their function on the choice of the land:

We were looking at issues of transportation, accessibility, we felt it is accessible and the land is ample and adequate for a major structure like that and then we looked at the adjacent uses on the other side, there were also commercial or institutional and then we had a lot of residential areas close by which meant a lot of people could also just walk to the stadium. So, it was an ideal place (Interview with LLC Planner, 26 July 2022).

Although the directorate of planning from Lilongwe city council played a critical role in the identification of land for the stadium, their roles are somehow compromised by other factors beyond planning regulations. The study findings expose the weakness of the planning system in Lilongwe bearing in mind that in some situations, the roles of the Planning Directorate are sometimes overlooked. Although this is the case however, the study has shown their relevance in a number of areas. For instance, their contribution in the choice of the land for the stadium which was designed for park and recreation reflects the implementation of a plan that is in line with existing plans of the city as it was zoned in the 2010 JICA master plan. This suggests that not all LUDs override or run parallel to formal city plans to some extent as it was suggested by (Watson, 2014).

4.2.4. Project approval process

After land was identified and approved, the Buildings Department was then supposed to submit development application documents to the City Council. However, the procedure

was slightly different from the normal procedure as some of the things that are normally done were not done. When the researcher asked participants if the Buildings Department had access to the drawings of the design in advance, prior to the actual construction of the stadium, one participant from the Buildings Department said that he was not sure and did not remember seeing the document as explained:

Most of these projects we receive the designs or they send them in advance, but for the stadium no it was not submitted in advance to us, unless I have forgotten but I remember it was not (Interview with Buildings Department Official, 27 July, 2022).

However, one participant had a contradictory explanation regarding the access of the drawings for the design. The participant highlighted them in the following quotation:

The design was submitted to Buildings Department before construction for technical input and specification. It was not just adopted and there were several changes made to it. Some of the major changes were using of inspection bends to toilet lines in the duct, re-positioning of inspection bends underneath slabs, enhancing natural lighting and ventilation. (Interview with ex-Building Department Official, 28 July, 2022).

This contradiction as noted in the above quotation may suggest that if corrections were indeed made then they were done on a much higher level since the second participant held a much higher position during the construction of the BNS. However, all this raises questions on the level of coordination amongst the technicians as actors in the implementation of the project. In addition, the second participant acknowledged that it was hard to understand the design because it came in Chinese language. This was also highlighted by the first participant who further stated that they had to send back the design for translation and by the time it came back construction had already started. This means that by the time construction was starting, the architects still did not have a good understanding of the design and if corrections were indeed made, then it was very minimal.

Further inquiry established that since the design was made in China by Chinese architects, it meant that agreements to use it had already been made between the two governments during the signing of the contractual agreement. In addition, the local architects began engaging with and understanding the design properly after construction had already started and politicians were the ones who engaged with the projects in early phase. One of the participants explained that:

...even when it came to viewing the drawings, it was the politicians who went to China to see the design' (Interview with Buildings Department Official, 27 July 2022).

This quotation show that what happened with the process is contrary to what was supposed to happen because architects have to engage and understand the design so that they are able to make proper recommendations for change before applying to the planning directorate of the city council for development permission. This contradiction, may have possibly affected the whole process with regard to planning regulations. Participants from the Directorate of planning and development of the Lilongwe City Council further acknowledge that there was no complete submission of development plans (including the design) from the Buildings Department. One of them explained that:

...the only submission that came from the Buildings Department was a submission of the concept to construct the stadium. (Interview with LCC Planner, 28 July 2022).

This is contrary to section 46 of the Malawi Physical Planning Act of 2016 which states that all developments are to submit applications for development permission and one of the elements is the submission of building plans which in this case was not fully done. when asked why this happened, participants explained that;

...since it was a government project we felt there was no need to be serious with applications (Interview with Buildings Department official, 27 July, 2022)

This therefore indicates that the formal process of development application process was disregarded in the implementation of the BNS. Despite this however, the directorate of planning and development did acknowledge that they received the design at a later stage when construction had already started. This however was irrelevant as it was too late. In addition, participants acknowledge that other formalities like payment of scrutiny fee could not be done and this was attributed again to the project's nature. One of the participants reiterated that:

...because it was a government project, scrutiny fee was not paid (Interview with LCC Planner, 26 July, 2022).

All this shows that the approach used with the BNS does not reflect the normal development establishment process. Apart from that, it also does not fully reflect the role that was played by the Physical Planning Authorities, especially urban planners prior to construction. This indicates that there exists a weak urban governance system in Lilongwe because the planning authorities fail to control developments and exercise their legal powers when it comes to LUDs because the central government has greater powers. as noted by Chiweza, (2019), the existence of such parallel sources of authority makes it difficult for effective urban planning governance. It also shows lack of an effective planning system in Lilongwe which fails to fully control development of areas within its jurisdiction as it was earlier highlighted by Brown, Jones and Mwayambire (2024) in their study on the state of urban governance in Malawi. In addition, it exposes a weak local government which fails to control development within its jurisdiction as it has been the case in other African cities like, Harare and Addis Ababa (Cirolia and Berrisford, 2017) The analysis of the approval process however points out some of the roles played by various actors in the implementation of the projects including the restraints and

constraints they had in exercising their responsibilities in the implementation of the BNS. Therefore, one would conclude that the Planning Directorate of the city council had a limited role to play in the BNS project.

4.3.5 Outcomes of deviations relating to planning procedures

This section presents and discusses findings related to how failure to follow the guidelines in development planning affected the project. The study identified a number of problems associated with the design of the stadium post-construction. The first problem was lack of connection to the sewer line. It was found that the design of the stadium did not consider connection to a sewer system. One of the participants from the Directorate of planning made the following observation:

We had an issue to do with the sewer. It was a very big issue because the contractor said the grant had parameters and they were supposed to operate within these perimeters and not go beyond to provide what is not in the agreement. In this case, the sewer line was not within the parameters (Interview with LCC Planner, 26 July, 2022).

This quotation above show that this is a consequence of non-disclosure agreements because it seemed only the contractors were aware of the parameters within which they were operating while the local stakeholders did not. This may have brought misunderstandings and therefore affected the working relationship between the Chinese contractors and the local stakeholders and possibly affect the outcomes of the project in general. For instance, the problem of connectivity with the sewer contributed to the delay of the official opening of the stadium because government did not have money to fund the sewer connection since it was not within the parameters of the grant. The Daily Times Newspaper in one of its articles on the BNS stated that the government admittedly lacked funding to install the sewer system and other facilities which were not part of the Chinese package (Chinoko, 2017). One of the participants attributed the problem of the sewer line to the lack of involvement of technocrats and planners in the first place and had this to say:

...if we were involved from onset we would have picked this sewer problem
(Interview with Buildings Department Official, 27 July, 2022).

This comment shows how lack of involvement of technicians from both the Buildings Department and the directorate of planning and development from the onset of the project affected its outcomes. It therefore implies that if the technicians were involved, they could have picked this issue at an earlier stage and plans with the government of Malawi on how to incorporate the sewer at an earlier stage even before the project started.

Another problem of the BNS identified in the study was inadequate car parking space. Considering that the stadium hosts about 40,000 spectators, it only has 400 parking spaces which does not match the number of people it can host. In another interviews, one Local Leader complained of how parking is a problem for the community as explained:

But, there is a problem with the stadium. They did not consider a parking area because cars reach our homes when there is a football match, this disrupts our daily activities (Interview with Local Leader, 1 August, 2022).

Similarly, in one of the local newspapers, it was also reported that shortage of parking space was one of the major challenges during the first match played at the facility on January 2, between Nyasa Big Bullets and Be forward Wanderers (Nkhoma, 2017, January 4). This was further reflected in The Daily Times Newspaper article in which Football Association of Malawi (FAM) offered its land which is adjacent to the stadium for parking during the official opening of the stadium. Officials from FAM stated that without this, people could be trapped within the premises of the facility for hours (Mpasu, 2017 January 12).

The third problem was associated with the poorly designed entrance gates of the stadium for spectators. These were condemned for compromising security and safety when there is a large crowd. A local leader for one of the areas close to the stadium explained that:

For us people from Mtandire we were filled with sorrow on 6 July in 2017, during independence celebrations when 8 people died while over 30 others got injured as they were trying to enter through the poorly designed gates of the stadium (Interview with Local Leader, 29 July, 2022).

Further to this, another participant from the Ministry of Sports explained the following in relation to the entrance gates:

The entrance gates were designed in China with the dictatorship kind of rule and for them they cannot have problems of people climbing over fences like it happens here. The security is a little bit compromised considering our behaviour as Malawians (Interview with Ministry of Sports Official, 27 July 2022).

In agreement another local leader explained that there is need to find a solution to this problem, this is what he said:

There is need to rethink on how they can control the crowd who wants to enter the stadium whenever there is an event otherwise the gates are not good for large crowd entry. (Interview with Local Leader, 01 August, 2022).

All these quotations prove that the design of the stadium in terms of the entrance gates is poor and possibly needed adjustments especially before construction started. They also show how un user friendly and ill adapted they are to the local people, posing a threat to life.

Furthermore, the roofing of the stadium was condemned for being too high as such it may not perform its intended purpose of providing shelter and protection to the chairs as well as spectators. This was further pointed out by a Maravi posts article on Facebook in which officials from the government recommended a canopy for the VIP section during one of their visits to the site in the last phase of construction (Malawi Government to consider

recommendations on BNS, 2016, February 12). This problem was also echoed by one of the participants during interviews as highlighted below:

The roof is too high, it is supposed to provide shelter for instance, to the VIP area but since it is too high you will find out that the chairs that are at the VIP stand are exposed to adverse weather conditions like rains, the sun and dust (Interview with BNS Official, 25 July, 2022).

The quotation above illustrates that the initial design of the stadium did not consider important aspects like; shelter, and protection from adverse weather conditions hence, not suited to the local environment. This therefore, required modifications before actual implementation of the project keeping in mind the local weather conditions.

Lastly, the VIP section does not relate well with the other section of the stadium because there is no demarcation between the two sections. This means that if chaos erupts, they would easily reach the VIP section thereby affecting the essence of the VIP section which is to separate important people from the rest of the general public. One of the participants commented as follows:

There is nothing like a good barrier that can prevent some people to go to the other side. So, each time there are activities there must be a human war trying to control the people not to go across so that is also another major weakness (Interview with BNS Official, 25 July, 2022).

The VIP sections is supposed to separate people of different classes, however from this quotation, the design removes the essence of the VIP section which is an important aspect for a stadium. This again depicts the need for the design to be modified before the implementation phase so that this problem could be resolved in good time.

Generally, projects that are associated with failure to follow the formal procedure in planning permission are evidence of poor enforcement of planning procedures and

development control which came about because of lack of involvement of the Directorate of planning. The outcome of the structure signals lack of scrutiny in the early stages of implementation. This raises questions not only on the role played by the architects who were involved in making amends to the design but also the influence played by both architects and planners on the project. Apart from that, it raises questions on the effectiveness of the changes on the design that were made by some architects. In addition, it shows lack of an effective planning system (Brown et al, 2024) and problems brought about with multiple actors who have varying interests. The identification of these problems shows how the structure is less adaptable and suited to the local public as it was suggested by Paller, (2021) in his study.

These problems associated with the structure have direct implications on the efficiency as well as effectiveness, as it will be discussed in Chapter 5. Considered together, it can be argued that the Directorate of planning and the Building Department failed to adequately enforce development regulations and control on the BNS and their input was less significant in the outcome of the project.

4.3.6 Understanding the logic of deviations from planning procedures

Participants were asked to explain what they did to correct the errors with the design of the stadium as they came out during construction phase as this was yet another time in which they could use their influence and expertise to influence the outcome of the project. The study found that there were a number of problems encountered in their efforts to influence changes during construction. Firstly, the study revealed that there was communication breakdown between the Chinese and the local professionals due to language barriers. Some of the participants of the study explained:

The biggest challenge was language. So normally they would have an interpreter on site so one of the challenges is that the interpreter is not technical so when you tried to explain technical things that interpreter

doesn't know and understand, they would interpret wrongly. (Interview with Buildings Department Official 1, 27 July, 2022).

The major challenge was communication as at some point the workers would pretend that they were hearing our instructions when they were not. The other thing is that there were only two Chinese workers who could understand English and most of the time we were communicating through an interpreter and this was problematic (Interview with ex- Buildings Department Official 2, 28 July 2022).

Although it was mentioned that there were interpreters who would constantly interpret Chinese language to English for easy communication as noted in the quotations above, it was not helpful because the interpreter would give false information at times. This suggests that this may have affected the outcomes of the communication between the two sides which also affected the outcomes of the project in general.

Secondly, the study further revealed that stakeholders had difficulties working with the Chinese because they could not take their contribution during construction. One of the participants from the, physical planning department of Ministry of Lands had this to say:

The technical plans for the stadium came from China so it was quite difficult for them to take our point of view, you know our Chinese friends, sometimes they don't want to take local advice... I don't know what to say maybe they are stubborn. But it was sometimes difficult for them to take your ideas. (Interview with ex-Ministry of Lands Official, 28 July, 2022).

In agreement, another participant explained the following:

The Chinese were undermining our capability which led to them not adhering to our technical advice most of the time. (Interview with ex-Buildings Department Official, 28 July, 2022).

The quotations above suggest that failure to listen to local input affected the progress and the outcome of the project.

The third problem was lack of knowledge by technicians on a facility of this nature. This was largely because most of them had never been involved in a huge project like this before. One of the participants from the Buildings Department had this to say:

For us, that structure is advanced, the technologies that were being used there were advanced so most of us, we were doing more of learning than the actual supervision. (Interview with Buildings Department Official, 27 July 2022).

This quotation suggests that the architects from the Buildings Department failed to make meaningful contribution on the project because they lacked knowledge of a facility of that nature hence had nothing to contribute. This may also have affected the outcomes of the project.

Based on the findings overall, the study established several challenges which affected the proper coordination of crucial actors in the BNS project such as the Buildings Department team and Planners and Development Control Officers from the Directorate of planning and development of Lilongwe city council. The fact that there was communication breakdown in terms of language meant that the contractors failed to understand what the local technicians were suggesting and as a result, the input from local experts was minimally considered. Moreover, technicians did not know much of the modern construction methods used by the Chinese contractors which had implications on the quality of suggestions on the project. Thus, it implies that technical expertise from local professionals was not meaningfully incorporated in the project. All this shows that the actors both local and international that were involved in the projects had varying roles, responsibilities and interests all of which had either a negative or positive contribution to the project in general.

4.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the findings obtained from the research conducted about the role of urban planning in Chinese Large-scale Urban Developments (LUDs). The formal guidelines that apply when developer wants to implement a project were laid out. This was compared to the actual process that the BNS, as the case study followed in its implementation with regards to physical planning guidelines. It was observed that in the case of the BNS, formal processes in planning were by-passed and disregarded and one of the major reasons was that it was a project of national interest (government project). Although this is the case, we see various actors performing various roles in the implementation of the project. This demonstrates the negotiated way of planning. Thus, actors in development projects can shape urban developments through the decisions they make. This negotiated process in planning has implications on the outcomes of the project which in turn has implications on public benefits and on the maintenance of the structure. Considering all this, it is important to highlight the impacts of such projects on people's lives and the development of the urban landscape in general because this will bring out the consequences of bypassing legislations in planning. Such impacts can either be positive or negative. The next chapter, therefore, aim to extend this understanding of planning as negotiated process involving a wide array of actors, to investigate the outcomes of this emergent mode of planning as they relate to impacts on the urban landscape and everyday lives of the surrounding communities.

CHAPTER FIVE

EMERGING PLANNING PROCESSES: OUTCOMES AND IMPLICATIONS ON URBAN LANDSCAPES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter presents and discusses the findings related to the impacts of Large-scale Urban development (LUDs). It presents and discusses the finding of the study on planning interventions used in the implementation of the BNS in particular and the implications this has on Lilongwe City and on the lives of its ordinary citizens. The structure of the chapter is categorised in three forms namely; urban form and landscape, economic landscape and neighborhood development, and social landscape. The chapter also includes a description of the cost implications related to the management of the stadium. The findings of the study within each theme are interpreted using relevant literature.

5.2 Urban form and physical landscape

This section presents and discusses the findings related to the impacts of LUDs on the urban landscape. Planning and implementation of Chinese LUDs is expected to bring positive urban changes which lead to urban growth as well as realisation of modernisation and improvements to services which are essential for development. Because of this, the research extended further to consider the implications this has on urban landscape development as well as lives of people.

Actually, despite the construction of the BNS has a great impact on the urban development in Lilongwe. The study found that Lilongwe City and the surrounding areas of the BNS have experienced urban growth in two dimensions. Firstly, the study found that the BNS contributes to the beautification of the City. During the interviews with participants, the study revealed that Area 48 and other surrounding areas are “beautiful” as a result of the facility. One the participants who stays close to the stadium, specifically in Area 49 reiterated the following:

The area is beautiful so when we have lights in the night, you move around and you feel it that the place is beautiful. It is indeed beautiful. (Interview with BNS Official, 25 July, 2022).

The above quotation solidifies the point that the BNS adds beauty to Lilongwe City in general. Similarly, in his remarks at the official opening ceremony of the stadium, the then President of the Republic of Malawi, Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika described the stadium as one of the most beautiful stadiums in Africa and one of the best facilities in the region (Chinoko, 2017).

Secondly, there is an ongoing establishment of various investments following the construction of the stadium. Most participants stated that infrastructure like the BNS attracts other investors to come and establish their businesses. During the interviews, the participants gave examples of the new facilities that have come as a result of the stadium. The following are some of the notable quotations from the interviews:

There are quite a number of developments that maybe can be said to come as a result of the presence of the facility, there are Shops, Glalle, Gas Station, Hall and new houses/flats being constructed to match the standard of the facility. (Interview with Local Leader, 29 July 2022).

Opposite the MERU station you can see they tried to make it look better, and then there is what is called Glalle, we have entertainment shows, there

is also a shopping complex. There is quite a lot of shops. But also, they tried to make it modernized, it is the influence of the stadium. (Interview with ex-physical planning official, 28 July 2022).

The area is looking good, shops have been built close by and other nice buildings like guest houses and the place is no longer as it used to be. (Interview with local leader, 01 August 2022).

The comments made by the participants, suggests that the transformation that has taken place around is visible such that it cannot go un-noticed. This was also substantiated by the researcher's observation as depicted in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 which shows Mount Meru gas station and Glalle shopping centre respectively. The two were identified as the most prominent developments around the BNS as pointed out by the participants.



Figure 5. 1: Mount Meru Gas Station, shops and a gym.

Source: Researcher (2023)



Figure 5. 2: Glalle Enterprise

Source: Researcher (2023).

To further substantiate what participants pointed out, Google earth images of 2009 were captured to show how the area looked like before the construction of the stadium (refer to figure 5.3). These images were then compared to images captured in 2023, almost 6 years after the completion of the stadium (refer to figure 5.4). This was done to show how the area has transformed owing to the stadium.

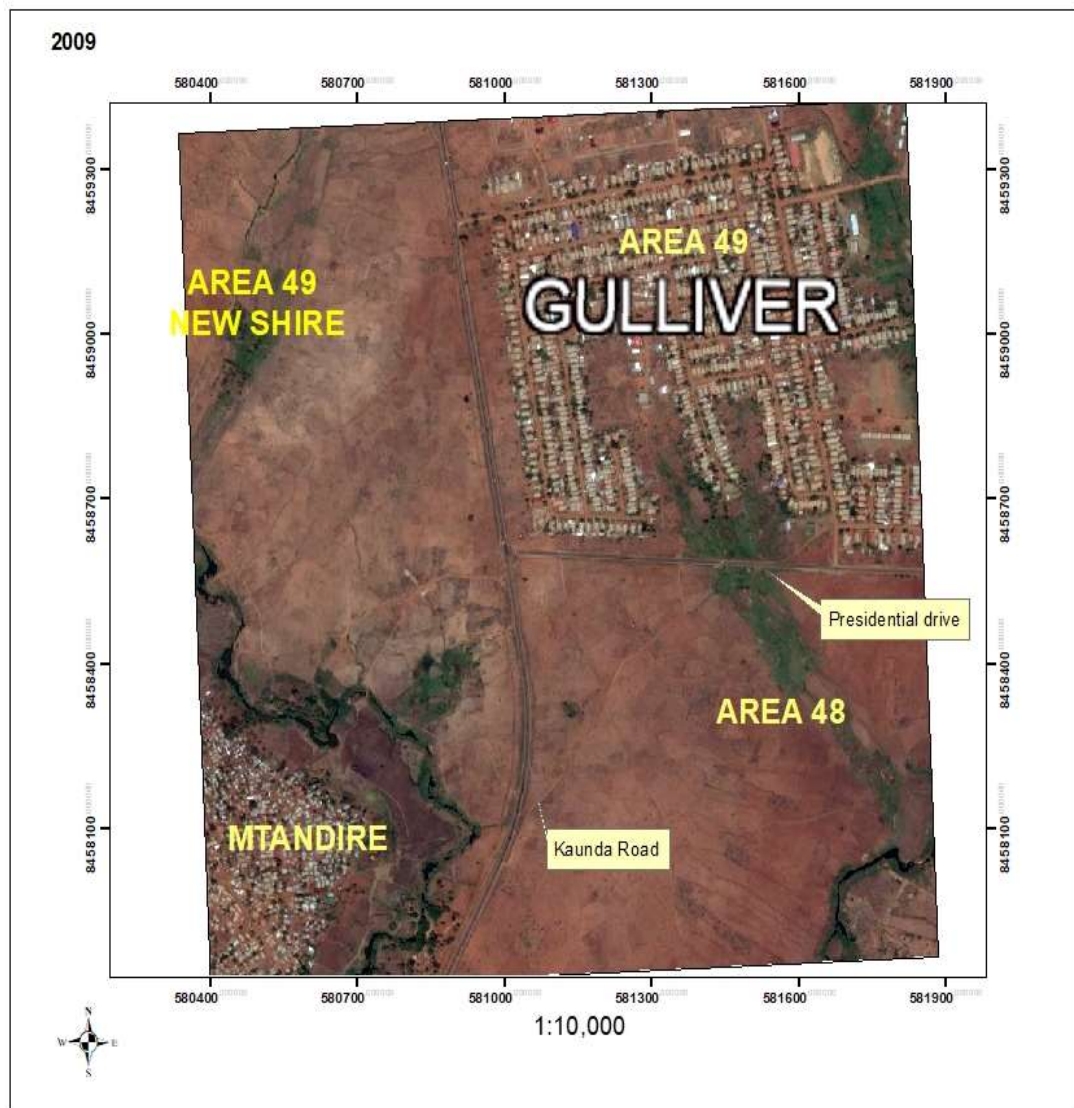


Figure 5. 3: Area 48 and surrounding areas before construction of the BNS

Source: Google earth (2009)

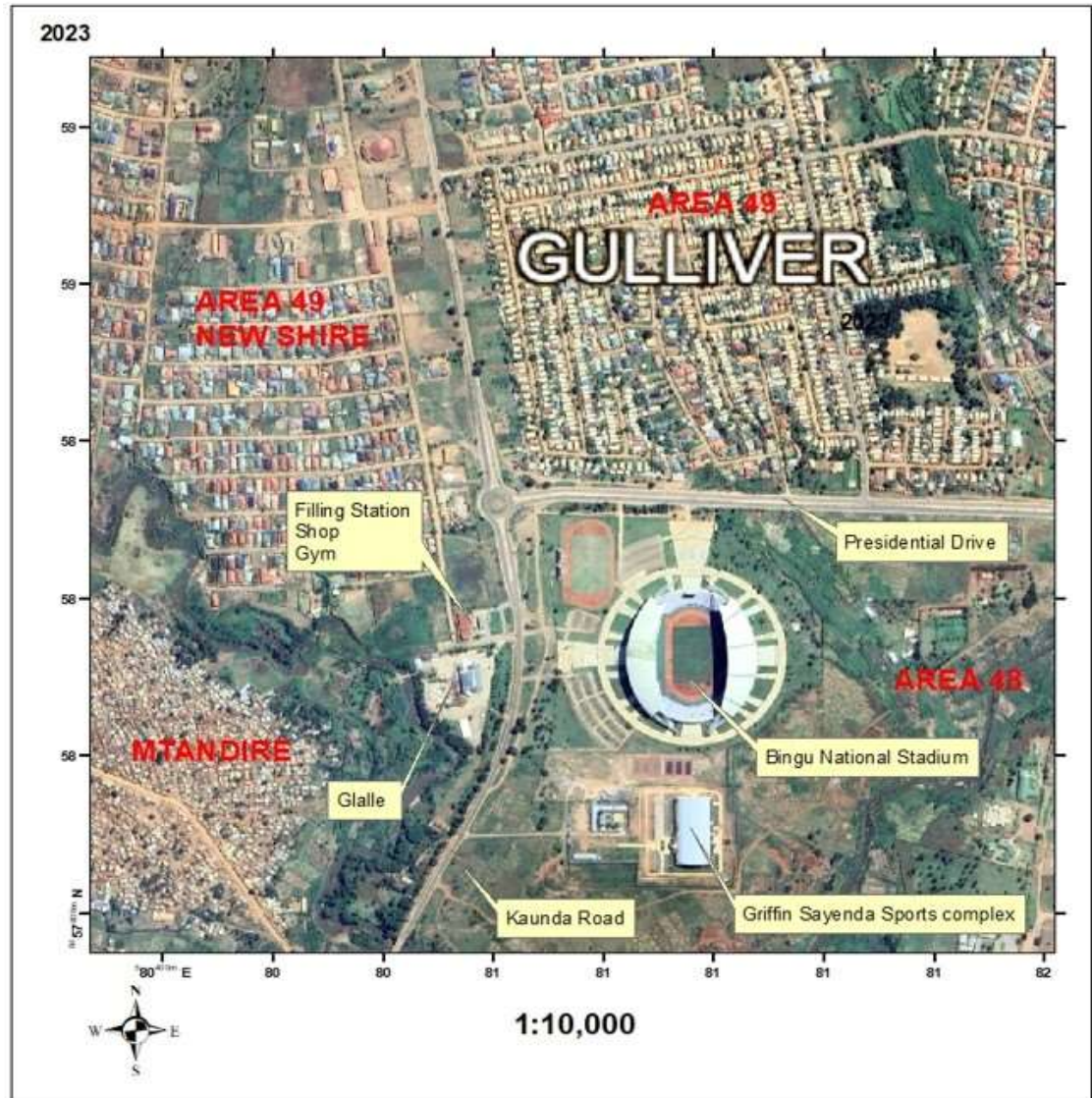


Figure 5. 4: Area 48 and its surrounding areas after the construction of the BNS

Source: Google earth (2023)

A comparison of the two images shows Glalle centre (enterprise), gas station (filling station), Presidential Drive and Griffin Sayenda sports complex as some of the developments that have developed over the years. In addition, a lot of urban houses have developed in the areas close to the stadium in area 49 Shire and area 49 Gulliver. All this confirms that indeed the areas has developed.

Although some participants mentioned the Presidential Drive road as one of the developments associated with the stadium, participants from the Directorate of planning disputed this stating that plans were already underway to upgrade the road from the interchange to the stadium even before the coming of the stadium. However, they still agreed that the road project might have been prioritised due to the congestion that was happening at the stadium when there are events. Interestingly, other participants especially Planners from the Directorate of planning felt that the iconic structure had not done much to develop the area. Firstly, some participants felt that the nature of the development limits the benefits, and secondly, the area was already in the process of development. However, participants still agreed that the area has experienced considerable developments.

In general, the findings indicate that LUDs cause spatial changes to the urban Landscape as it was noted by Brill and Reboredo, (2019). As a matter of fact, the study established that the area is not as it used to be 10 years ago. The findings therefore resonate with what Lisborn (1998) observed that where there is a flagship project, investors are likely to follow. Based on the findings, it is clear that the BNS has transformed the surrounding areas area with modern facilities. It should be noted that these benefits extend other sectors in the community. For instance, the road development has enhanced connectivity of the area with other parts of the Lilongwe City. These findings are in tandem with what Orlander (2022); and Paller (2021) observed in their studies that some notable Chinese investments have potential to transform the immediate surroundings. Besides, the researcher further observed that Lilongwe has attracted a lot of Chinese LUD such as MHC-Henan Guoji housing development in Area 49, Shire and other notable areas.

5.3 Economic landscape and Neighborhood Economic Development (NED)

The section presents and discusses findings related to economic development. On the economic aspect, the study identified a number of benefits. The first benefit is the creation of employment for the local people especially those from the surrounding areas. Out of 16 interviewees, 15 participants (representing 94 percent) agreed that the project created jobs especially those from the surrounding low-income areas of Mtandire and Mtsiriza.

However, the participants also pointed out that the employment that was created was only significant during the construction period since it absorbed a lot of labourers from the surrounding areas. The study further revealed that after the construction, only a few people were employed at the stadium. Some participants of the study explained:

A lot of people were employed at the stadium...even though this was at a high rate during the construction than it is now. Only a few people from Mtandire are still employed there. (Interview with Local Leader, 01 August, 2022).

People got employed at the stadium, the only difference is that, during construction, there were a lot of people who were employed as compared to now. Of course, people are still working there but a few, so still we have benefitted (Interview with Local Leader, 29 July, 2022).

Even though employment was pointed out as a benefit from the remarks of the participants above, the Chinese contractor brought in their workers from China and this reduced the number of employment opportunities for the local people. One of the participants from the Directorate of planning pointed out:

...mostly the Chinese like bringing in their people, they even brought labourers from China for the stadium which is why we had a camp next to the construction site. **(Interview with LCC Planner, 27 July, 2022).**

As a confirmation of having Chinese labourers, in an interview with Nyasa Times, before the official opening of the stadium, the Chief Architect in charge of the project from the Buildings Department, explained that about 2000 people were involved in the construction as workers out of which about 800 were Chinese (Kalowekamo, 2017).

The second benefit is revenue collection which is in two folds. Firstly, the study found that revenue generated from the operations of the stadium through hosting games and other

related activities. This does not directly affect local residents. Secondly, revenue generated by local people through small-scale businesses and other small-scale economic activities. In terms of revenue collected from the operations of the stadium, the Management of the Stadium explained that they are times they are able to generate a lot of money from the stadium. He gave the following example:

During the Malawi Ethiopia game, we collected about 74 Million Malawi Kwacha [an equivalent of 42700 USD]. Out of this, 15 million was the stadium's share while the remaining is shared amongst other shareholders like football association of Malawi (FAM). (Interview with BNS official, 8 May, 2023).

According to the records from the Stadium, the figure above was the highest amount to be collected since the official launch of the Stadium in 2017 until the day the study was conducted. Although such records were recorded once since the opening of the stadium, it shows that the stadium has the potential to generate a lot of money for the benefit of the nation. However, this is only viable during huge events. The study further established that the share for the stadium is sent directly to Malawi Government account number one [1] as part of government's revenues. It was further noted, however, that the share of the proceeds from the facility are not directly used in the Management of the Stadium.

More importantly, the BNS has the capability of hosting international games which attracts international delegates and athletes into the country thereby bringing in foreign exchange. One of the participants mentioned that although the African Union Youth games which are scheduled to take place in December, 2022 had not been played when the researcher was conducting the study, the Management of the Facility confirmed to have already started benefitting from the foreign exchange brought in by officials who were coming for the preparations of the games. He expressed confidence in the economic benefits as follows:

This year we have a competition known as African Union Youth games at the stadium, so the stadium is now very active because they opened a

company which is managing the games, so the lower floor is used as their office. Every fortnight international delegates are coming to prepare for the competition so forex again is being brought in and we are expecting to have over 3000 athletes coming here in December with their officials from 11 countries so it's a big thing (Interview with Ministry of Sports Official, 27 July, 2022).

The above excerpt, shows that the stadium has a great economic potential and with more international tournaments, it shall be able to generate a lot of money which can benefit the nation in general.

In addition, the stadium has a lot of spaces that were designed for shops, conference rooms, halls, office space and corporate boxes. Most of these spaces are being utilised and therefore generating money. The stadium official who participated in the study explained that:

There are companies and organisation such as Super Sync, Design plus, Netball Association of Malawi and Athletics Association of Malawi that are renting the office spaces. Each of them pays K125,000 per month which was [an equivalent of 75. 03 USD] payable quarterly. Corporate boxes were also used during events, for instance during the football match between Egypt and Malawi, all corporate boxes were fully booked (Interview with stadium official, 25 July, 2022).

This quotation further suggests that the office spaces designed as part of the BNS are indeed a source of revenue collection and are therefore contributing to the wealth of the nation. Nonetheless, the study further established that the shops within the stadium have never been used because they were left incomplete as seen in figure 5.5. This was what one of the officials from the Ministry of Sports narrated:

The Chinese just designed the spaces as shops but did not complete them. So, we were supposed to complete them to see what can we produce from this? What type of shop can we have here? The spaces depend on what you want to do with it. They have never been used before. (Interview with Ministry of Sports Official, 27 July 2022).

Contrary to the original stadium design, office space was included in the design as part of the package of associated investments around the stadium. However, the study found that offices were not constructed on the site. Consequently, failure to construct offices meant diminishing potential to generate more income as more spaces were not being used. In this way, utilization of the stadium including offices would mean more economic benefits attached to the stadium could have far been much greater than as is the case on the ground. Figure 5.5 show the open spaces that were left out for shops on the design of the stadium.



Figure 5. 5: Bingu National Stadium incomplete shop spaces

Source: Researcher (2023)

In terms of revenue generated directly by local people, the study found that the facility is providing a market to merchandise sellers whenever there is an event. Sellers usually flock

to the facility with their merchandise like drinking water, mineral drinks, freezes, Chiwaya take-aways, mandazi, zitumbuwa and other food stuffs. One of the local traders explained that:

Since the stadium has a big capacity, there are always a lot of consumers when there is an event and so on such occasions, we are assured that we will make profits. (Interview with a local trader, 21 August 2022).

These remarks were made during one of the observation sessions conducted by the researcher and it indicates that, business people in areas close to the stadium relied on the stadium's events to make more profits in their businesses. Similarly, one participant from the Directorate of planning who stays close to the stadium had this to say on the issue of revenue generation:

If I have a fridge then I know that I will sell water, people are going to buy water and buy drinks so commercial wise, it is good, it is near. I don't have to travel long distance with my goods to sell there, so it is good. **(Interview with LCC Planner, 28 July, 2022).**

Another interview with a resident who opened a full-time restaurant behind her house explained how she is benefitting from the activities that are happening in the surrounding area. She explained that:

If not for the stadium I could not have opened this restaurant because most of my customers comes from the activities that are happening around the stadium **(Interview with a local business person, 31 July, 2022).**

The activities she was referring to include, garages, gas station as well as shops at the gas station and Glalle Shopping Mall. This shows that indeed the presence of the stadium has created more income generating activities around the area.

Surprisingly, the study found the blooming of new businesses like car parking management and car guarding. These businesses have offered opportunities to the youths of Mtandire and surrounding areas especially the bouncers (body builders) to earn money whenever there is an event. When the researcher asked the participants how much they collect per car, it was revealed that people pay K1000.00 which is an equivalent of 0.60 USD after guarding over a car for the day. In addition, inadequate parking space around the stadium has made residents staying close to the stadium to start charging a fee for cars that park in their residential spaces. One of the participants from Area 49 had this to say:

People who are close can let their spaces for parking maybe twenty vehicles would park and your boys will receive Two Hundred or Five Hundred Kwacha for that (Interview with Ministry of Lands Official, 28 July, 2022).

Again, this is an income generating activity for the residents around the stadium. It was an interesting and surprising finding and it shows that the presence of the stadium has created more room for revenue generating activities for the benefit of many people.

However, most participants expressed worry on how the facility is functioning since it is not often used. Participants pointed out that this is affecting the benefits that could have been generated from it. In terms of the amount of money that the stadium can generate, one participant had this to say:

Because it is just idle, it does not make money. It makes money here and there or after a long time. (Interview with Local Leader, 01 August 2022).

Most participants agreed that if the stadium could be frequently used, a lot of money would be realised compared to what is generated during its infrequent use period. In agreement, the Management of the Stadium observed that: annually there are few games that are played. One of the officials at the stadium highlighted the following:

Usually from the past trend we usually have about six big activities, big games, about six on average, so it can be four in a year, or it can be ten the whole year. (Interview with BNS Official, 25 July, 2022).

This quotation confirms that the stadium is indeed not being fully utilized and it substantiates the claims made earlier by other participants in the study.

The findings suggest that the BNS has huge economic potential than what is currently generated from it. However, in terms of employment, the presence of Chinese labourers during the construction phase reduced employment opportunities for local people. This is so especially considering that levels of unemployment in Malawi are high pegged at 6.89 percent (Word Bank, 2023). Studies have observed that the inclusion of Chinese labourers is high in many Chinese projects (Dubinsky, 2021; Huaxia, 2022; Schiller, 2005). Perhaps it could be argued that this arrangement is possibly part of the agreements for the projects between the Chinese Government and the African Governments.

In addition, failure of the Management of the Stadium to utilise the spaces within the stadium for shops and offices agrees with what Dubinsky (2021) found that African Governments do not have resources to manage huge infrastructures which negatively affect people. Similarly, the infrequent use of the stadiums is observed in countries like Angola, Ghana and Gabon due to maintenance costs thereby reducing the anticipated benefits (Dubinsky, 2021; Paller, 2021). Although the study found that business people make huge profits during events, this is done once in a while considering that the stadium only hosts a few games annually. Thus, it can be argued therefore that the stadium has been less beneficial to the residents around the stadium than expected but, it has potential to do more

5.4 Social urban landscape

This section presents and discusses findings regarding social urban landscape. Based on the findings, it was revealed that the stadium has both positive and negative impact on the

daily lives of people. On the positive effect, firstly, the study found that the stadium provides venue for social and entertainment activities. Records from the stadium indicate that a number of political party celebrations, rallies and religious conventions are held at the stadium. According to the Management of the Stadium, two notable religious events took place at the stadium by the Enlightened Christian Church of Prophet Shephard Bushiri and the Seventh Day Adventist annual gathering. Nyasa times online newspaper also highlighted other social benefits like hosting of events such as National Independence Celebrations and other activities (Kalowekamo, 2017). In addition, the stadium can be used as a centre in for other activities that usually do not happen if there is need. One of the participants explained that:

The stadium can also be used for other functions beyond celebrations. If you remember in 2020, it was used as both an isolation centre and a vaccination centre for Covid 19, even patients were also being kept there so yes it was helpful. (Interview with Local Leader, 01 August, 2022).

In this case, the stadium provided refuge to the citizens in times of a health crises and it shows that the stadium can benefit the nation in multiple ways, beyond what people can even expect.

Furthermore, the stadium has a police station which provides security to the communities surrounding the stadium especially Area 49. Local leaders were excited that the police station was instituted at the stadium provide security to the surrounding areas. One of the local leaders commented the following:

There is a police unit at the stadium, so when we have disputes, we run to the stadium. Before the stadium, we used to go to Area 18 Police Unit which is far. (Interview with Local Leader, 01 August 2022).

The introduction of the police unit at the stadium is critical in providing security to the stadium premises as well as the surrounding areas. Apart from that, security lights that

were mounted around the stadium have reduced security threats to people. The study established that in the past where the stadium stands used to be a scary place. One of the participants stated that:

People used to be robbed there, once you jump out of a bus, you would be attacked. There was even a passage there before the houses were built, a woman was raped (Interview with local leader, 01 August, 2022).

people were attacked, robbed and even raped before the construction of the stadium but presently the situation has changed. The construction of the stadium has cleared the forest and people are safe to move around anytime even at night without problems.

The other positive effect that was found in the study was sports development. The youth from the surrounding areas are given opportunities to use the facility. Similarly, students from various secondary schools and athletes uses the facility for trainings and other school related activities. Again, athletes at national level also commended that the stadium will enhance their competitiveness on the international level. One athlete in an interview with The Nation Newspaper reiterated the following:

The track shoes we put on when running will now match with the modern track at the new stadium. In general, this facility is a morale boost to our preparations for international competitions (Nkhoma, 2017).

This shows that the stadium has modern facilities that will eventually boost international sports activities and possibly enable athletes to adequately compete in international tournaments.

In addition, the availability of spaces for jogging and gym at the facility improve the well-being of the people and contribute to their fitness levels. Although most participants singled out the importance of the facility in sport development and health benefits, others felt the

benefits would somehow not depend on one's location because even those from distant places travel to patronise the services.

There were however, problems that were identified as related to the stadium and how it affects people's daily lives. For instance, local leaders complained on how people lost their land. One of them reiterated by saying that:

On that area there were farms and these were destroyed when they started clearing the land for the stadium. There were some contestations from the owners but still at the end of the day they knew the place did not belong to them so they gave up. (Interview with local leader 29 July, 2022).

The construction of the stadium therefore meant that people of surrounding areas like Mtandire and Mtsiriza lost their farm land to the stadium. This may have negatively affected their livelihoods.

Apart from that, it was established that there is disruption of local residents' daily lives whenever there is a big event at the stadium. This disruption comes about with the overflow of cars which extends into nearby residential areas. One of the participants explained that:

There are cars everywhere...sometimes you even find some people parking at the gates. So, for example as the owner of the house you want to go to the hospital maybe a child is sick, it becomes difficult for you to go out with your car because the spectators' cars have blocked your way (Interview with local leader, 01 August 2022).

This problem as noted in the quotation above is largely attributed to inadequate parking space at the stadium forcing people to park anywhere even in private residents' spaces thereby blocking owner's movement within their localities. To add on this, the researcher observed that parked cars would go beyond Mtandire, Area 49 MHC- Henan Guoji Houses and reach up to Area 18 along the Presidential Highway.

Participants further explained how it is easy for chaos that are happening at the stadium to affect the local residents. Quite often when there is violence, commotion or riots at the stadium, local residents are easily affected. In one of the interviews with a local leader the participant explained that:

...when the police use teargas and they reach our homes, we suffocate.

(Interview with Local leader, 01 August, 2022)

This quotation shows how the closeness of the stadium to people's residents negatively affects people's lives since it disrupts their everyday life and also has a negative impact on their health. Circumstances associated with violence also calls for security concerns because sometimes thieves take advantage of the situation to steal from people at the stadium and even in the surrounding areas. One of the local residents explained the following:

When there is violence, thieves may come as if they are running away, as they are going out, they have stolen somethings and off they go. (Interview with Local Leader, 01 August, 2022).

Generally, the findings indicate the importance of the stadium to the community as highlighted by Xue et al. (2019) that stadiums are landmark developments related to social, political, and daily life. The study findings established that the stadium is crucial for social and political developments, and people's lives. However, the study also found negative effects of the stadium which include loss of land for domestic purposes. These findings agree with studies by Paller (2021) and Watson (2014) who found that people lose their livelihoods when the land is cleared for LUDs. This implies that the stadium has both positive and negative effects. Surprisingly, the study found security concerns from local people in Area 49 Gulliver. Such concerns were striking considering that the land was approved by the Directorate of planning as a suitable place for this facility. This raises questions on the factors that were considered when allocating land for various purposes.

This questions the factors that are considered when allocating land to avoid negative implications on people's lives. Nevertheless, the stadium has positive effects which largely benefitted the local people socially and economically despite its negative implications.

5.5 Cost and managerial implications of the BNS

This section presents and discusses the cost implications of the stadium in relation to how it is being managed and taken care of for its sustainability. One of the issues that the study found was inadequacy of funds to take care of the facility. The stadium official explained that:

...in terms of managing the stadium, we have to go by the funding from treasury which goes through parliament during the national budget so the other recurrent Transactions (ORT) is what we use here. This is made available upon request by us, the management from the treasury and usually it is less if we compare it to the bills we usually have. So, we do not use what we collect from the gates as this is sent directly to governments account number 1. (Interview with stadium official 14 May, 2023).

Although this is a norm within the government, it makes the management of the facility to have problems in running it as they usually do not have enough money to cater for their expenses. The Management further reiterated the following:

...for instance, the government gives us 2 million per month, like it has been the case sometimes, yet our costs are 8 million per month. So, you just imagine, that's why we accumulate so many bills because ORT is usually not enough. Our electricity bill can be 4 million, water bill is 2 million other things 2 million and we have been given 2 million. You can see it is not enough and cannot even pay half of the electricity bill. There is only one thing that happens there, so the electricity bill gets accumulating. And we end up in debts (Interview with BNS Official, 14 May, 2023).

This indicates that lack of financial resources is one of the problems that the management of the stadium is facing. This negatively affects how the stadium functions.

Actually, records show that the stadium had arrears to pay to the Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi (ESCOM) amounting to 34 Million Kwacha which is an equivalent of 21,199 USD (see Figure 5.6). This suggests that the stadium is failing to sustain itself despite generating huge sums of money though not frequently.

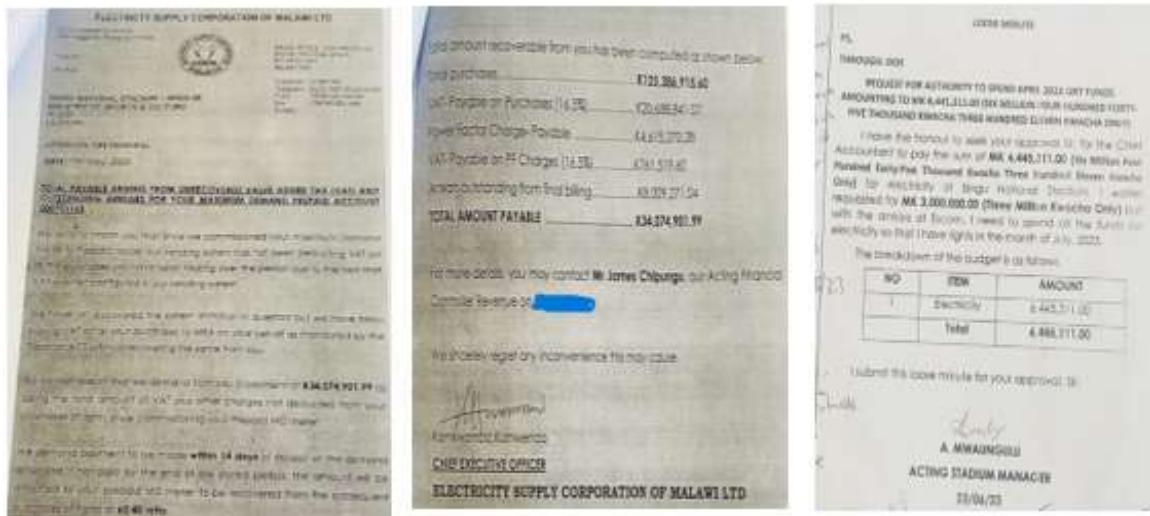


Figure 5. 6: Documents showing arrears owed to Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi (ESCOM) on the left (2 images) and a Request for ORT to settle electricity bills (right)

The documents displayed as figure 5.6 shows proof of how the management of the stadium struggles with bills they cannot easily settle due to inadequate funds. This further shows that running a facility of this nature is costly and therefore requires enough financial resources as well as a good management plan.

The study further found that there are inadequate workers to take care of the facility. One of the participants explained that:

The workers are very few, as of now those that have to clean this whole stadium as you are looking outside, slashing all this whole campus, and to mop all these stands. As you can see, all this turf is worked on by eight people who are also the ground workers and they have to maintain that pitch as well (Interview with BNS Official, 25 14, May, 2023).

Consequently, the premises are not well taken care of and the stadium becomes unclean. This further affects how the stadium is managed since the number of workers does not match with the size of the structure. Similarly, in one of the observation sessions, the researcher observed that only four men were removing weeds on the football ground which is very big.

Furthermore, the study revealed that there is lack of access to proper maintenance resources. The Chinese contractors used more expensive materials to maintain the facility and that was difficult for the local team to purchase the maintenance materials outside the country after the expiry of the agreement between the Chinese contractors and the Malawi Government. However, the Stadium Management resorted to local materials. One of the participants under the Management of the Stadium reiterated the following:

When they were here, whenever a pipe burst they would use their machine to cut the slab, dig it out without problems without any cost to the stadium and they would get particular kind of materials from the Chinese Shops. But after they had gone, we tried to use their route to try go and buy the things that they were using but it was very expensive (Interview with BNS Official, 14 May, 2023).

This has implications on how the stadium will function because once materials are broken it becomes hard to maintain or worse still they may not be repaired at all. This may negatively affect the functioning of the facility.

In addition, the study established that local technicians failed to acquire technical skills from the Chinese technicians during the entire period of construction. Although the initial arrangement was that local technicians should learn from the Chinese technicians, it was revealed that local technicians did not acquire the necessary skills from the Chinese technicians due to communication breakdown which was a major challenge as already mentioned in the thesis. One of the participants from the Ministry of Sports explained:

Transfer of skills hasn't really happened or it has been very minimal coupled with understaffing. Even the technicians that are here now that were working with the Chinese did not absorb much. (Interview with BNS Official, 25 July, 2022).

This shows that there is lack of skilled personnel who can technically handle the facility and this also affects its functioning. In addition, being a facility, which is more advanced, failure to operate it may reduce the benefits that people can get from it.

Lastly, based on the findings, the study found that vandalism was rampant at the stadium. It was reported by local newspapers like The Nation newspaper and The Daily times. In one of the incidents, there was vandalism of water taps, a development which was later dismissed by Mr Ning'ang'a, the then Manager of the Facility. In his comment, he stated that the vandalism at the stadium was as a result of ignorance because some people did not know how to use modern things such as taps (Chinoko, 29 January, 2017). Further to this, in his remarks the then president during the official opening of the stadium stated that:

This is not a stadium for hooliganism or a place for vandalism",
(Chinoko, 29 January 2017).

This statement further attests to the presence of vandalism at the stadium. In addition, an interview with one of the workers at the stadium reiterated that:

...vandalism is so high such that we resorted to removing the toilet and bathroom facilities as a way of securing them, (Interview with BNS Official, 14 May, 2023).

This development was mistaken for a case of vandalism by the general public, however it shows that vandalism is a big problem at the stadium. It further shows efforts by the stadium management to protect the stadium.

Overall, the study findings suggest that there is poor management of the facility. The study established that the facility is unable to generate enough revenue for proper running of the facility. Worse still, all the revenues realised from the facility are submitted to the Malawi Government Account Number One which becomes difficult for the Management to be given the money for running costs. A comparison of the expenses incurred per month and the amount that the facility receives from the Government as ORT funds indicates that the government is failing to run the stadium. This results in the infrequent use of the stadium because of fear of maintenance costs as highlighted by the Management of the BNS. The findings resonate with what Ojo (2021) concluded in his study on stadium diplomacy that the Chinese diplomatic stadiums are nothing but white elephants because they are not frequently used for fear of maintenance costs. Dubinsky (2021) also made similar observations. Besides, lack of enough resources resulted in failure to employ enough workers to take care of the stadium.

In addition, lack of maintenance skills from local technicians coupled with the use of local materials compromises the quality and sustainability of the stadium. Worse still, practices of vandalism at the stadium negatively affect the essential services which are critical for the welfare of people that are patronizing the events. However, one wonders whether rampant vandalism at the facility is justified considering the presence of a Police Station at the stadium. This problem could be attributed to lack of human resource to guard the stadium. Apart from that, this suggests that the police officers working at the Stadium's Police Station are either inadequate or are not carrying out their duties professionally.

Another problem is lack of resources which affects the smooth running of the facility. Considered together, these problems affect the sustainability and usability of the facility. In general, these problems may have contributed to a ban that was imposed by the Confédération Africaine de Football (CAF) in August, 2021 when the stadium was declared unfit to host any games (Chirwa, 2017). Consequently, the ban had implications on revenue collection. Although the ban was later lifted in 2022, one would argue therefore that poor management of the stadium overall affects the realisation of various benefits of the facility.

5.6 Meaning and significance of the stadium

In relation to the impact of the stadium, the study sought to understand the meaning and significance of the BNS among residents of Lilongwe City plus other stakeholders. The study found that the BNS has dual meaning for the nation; first as a symbol of diplomacy, and second as a sense of national pride. As a symbol of diplomacy, it signifies the relationship that exists between the Government of China and the Malawi Government. During the official opening ceremony of the stadium, both the Chinese Ambassador, Shi-Ting Wang and Malawian Officials from the ministry of sports highlighted the friendship that existed between two countries (Ponje, January 27, 2012). Similarly, in his inaugural speech, the then President of the Republic of Malawi, Proffessor Arthur Peter Mutharika described China as a “*true friend indeed*” (Chinoko, 29 January 2012). In his speech, the Chinese Ambassador Shi-Ting Wang pointed out that the stadium would be one of the things that would improve the relationship that exists between the two governments, China and Malawi (Chinoko, 29 January 2012).

Regarding the symbol of national pride, the study found that the stadium has brought so much joy and pride to the people. Evidence from various participants including media houses indicates huge excitement amongst people. Generally, people describe the stadium as “*iconic structure*” and “*magnificent structure*”. During the opening ceremony, the then President of Malawi, Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika said that:

...The stadium is our national pride. This is one of the best facilities in the region, it is one of the best facilities in our time (Chinoko, 29 January 2017).

This suggests that the BNS is a monument of pride that exemplifies the strides that the country is making in terms of infrastructure development.

More importantly, local people from the surrounding areas felt privileged to have the stadium close to them and they use the stadium to give directions to their locations. One of the local participants during the interviews commented:

I usually tell people that I stay opposite the stadium and its easy for them to know the place. (Interview with local leader, 01 August, 2022).

In terms of the proximity, local people felt that they are highly favoured to have that magnificent facility close to their homes. One of the local leaders from Mtandire explained the following:

Us, the people of Mtandire, we gladly welcomed the idea. We feel good a lot because we save transport. Whenever there is an event, we just cross the bridge and we are at the stadium. (Interview with Local Leader, 29 July, 2022).

This signifies how proud the people of the surroundings are to be located close a such a magnificent structure. It also shows how useful the stadium is since people are considering that if they have to use it, it will be easier for them. Therefore, despite other social problems that may be associated with proximity to the stadium, on the good side, it offers economies of scale in terms of transport.

However, the idea to construct the state-of-the-art stadium in Malawi was criticised by some quarters as a waste of public resources. In an interview with a political commentator, Humphrey Mvula expressed disappointment with the construction of the sports facility. In

his remarks, he stated that the money that was used to construct the stadium could have been diverted into a basic provision that would improve the lives of people (Chisam, 2016). Nonetheless, this was trashed by the then President Professor Arthur Peter Mutharika during the official opening ceremony. The president dismissed suggestions from critics that the stadium was a waste of resources and sounded optimistic that the infrastructure would instead generate revenue for government. In his remarks, the President said:

“This stadium is not a white elephant and will be able to generate enough revenue” (Chinoko, 2012).

Although this comment was made, the infrequent use of the stadium defeats the efforts to achieve those gains. This may also suggest that the critics were right since it is not really yielding much benefits as expected. However, criticisms against the Stadium remains debatable especially among football lovers.

Overall, the BNS acts as a symbol of friendship and signifies unity between the two governments namely; China and Malawi (Xue et al., 2019; Ojo 2022). The ties between the two nations are likely to bring more opportunities for the benefits of the countries. The study has shown that the BNS is considered as a source of pride for the nation and has several benefits such as revenue collection and create job opportunities. However, the infrequent use of the facility negatively affects the welfare of local people in terms of income generating activities. This finding relates to what Ojo (2020) pointed out in his study on how stadium diplomacy is a strategic diplomatic tool in China’s foreign policy in Africa that, many African stadiums with Chinese background are slowly turning into white elephants because they are not maximally utilized. This is largely attributed to lack resources for maintaining and sustaining the facilities in Many African countries.

5.7 Chapter summary

Building on the previous chapter, the present chapter has argued that by-passing the legislated process of urban planning has had implications not only on development control

but also on the emerging economic, physical and spatial landscape as well indirect benefits and/or disbenefits that the BNS has had on the wider public and communities around the urban development project. The BNS has directly or indirectly, contributed to the changing spatial form and urban landscape, economic and social landscape transformation through among other ways by creating job opportunities for youth from surrounding area; and by attracting small to medium scale investments in the area. However, deviating from the legislated planning process has potential to lead to consequences around the maintenance and sustainability of Chinese LUDs projects as is the case of BNS.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Chapter overview

The chapter provides a conclusion for the study, that is, the role that urban planning plays in the establishment of sovereign Chinese Large-scale Urban Developments (LUDs) and how the resultant planning outcomes impacts the urban landscape as well as people's lives. The chapter commences with a summary of findings and conclusions. Thereafter, the wider implications of the findings on urban planning in the Global South are presented; followed by recommendations and areas for further study.

6.2 Conclusions

To understand the link between urban planning and large-scale urban projects, first the study sought to compare the formal legislated role of urban planning and development processes with how Chinese large-scale urban developments (LUDs) are planned and implemented in Lilongwe City. The study also investigated outcomes of the negotiated urban planning processes with specific reference to the impacts of planning on the urban landscape and the everyday lives of communities.

6.2.1 The role of urban planning in Chinese Large-scale Urban Developments

Using the case of BNS, the study shows that the role of urban planning in the planning and implementation of Chinese LUDs was severely constrained.

The Physical Planning Act of 2016 requires the developer, in this case, the Buildings Department, to submit development plans, which are to be scrutinized and assessed by both sub-committee of the Town Planning Committee and then approved by the Town Planning Committee of the Lilongwe City Council as part of their planning and development control function. This procedure applies to the implementation of large-scale urban development projects, quite often, government projects. However, in the execution of the BNS as the study revealed, certain planning processes were bypassed and disregarded for practical logics such as expediting the project or other political reasons. Firstly, instead of submitting the drawings of the design, layout plans and site plans of the stadium, the Buildings Department only submitted a concept of the project. Arguably, there are two reasons for this: late access to the design drawings and consequently, there was no further assessment of the plans to ensure that the construction project is well developed within its context and that it should be implemented according to urban planning regulations. Secondly, there is general perception among state institutions that centrally driven large-scale projects such as BNS should not be subjected to rigorous planning approvals because they have already been agreed upon by the national government and the Chinese government. In this regard, the findings seem to suggest that national level decision making regarding large-scale urban projects, especially Chinese projects, have wider implications on planning and development control functions at local scale (i.e. city scale).

The study has also demonstrated that bypassing well laid out planning processes is not only observed at BNS but also at other Chinese LUDs. For instance, construction of the adjacent Griffin Sayenda Sports Complex started before completing the formal planning process. Quite often, Sovereign Chinese LUDs follow a top down decision-making process which usually disregards some of the steps in the formal planning processes just like the implementation of the BNS. This is because they are projects of national interests and practitioners in urban development believe that they do not need to follow formal processes since they are already approved by government. Therefore, contrary to the idea that Chinese LUDs are imposed on the urban landscape, the study has revealed that there are negotiations and agreements that are made between the Chinese financiers and contractors and local actors on their implementation. Arguably, therefore, the planning of the Chinese

LUDs in Lilongwe is not entirely influenced by urban planning principles and processes as stipulated in statutory guidelines and standards but rather through negotiations among national actors, local actors, and global actors, among others.

The study has further established that political interests have potential to shape urban developments in Lilongwe. Politicians including members of parliament, government ministers and the Head of State sometimes influence the decisions making processes around large-scale urban development projects, quite often for political and personal benefits. As a result, this practice makes declarations and decisions concerning large-scale projects to disregard the formal development processes. The construction of BNS shows how politicians were at the centre of the implementation of the project which resulted in neglecting and excluding experts like technicians that could provide useful insights on the project. This eventually had a negative effect on the outcome of the project. In other words, implementation of large-scale urban projects tends to suggest that planning in urban Malawi (or the Global South) is not entirely a technocratic exercise but one that involves a multiplicity of actors including politicians.

On the basis of the study, it can also be concluded that urban planners and technicians although available and with adequate capacity, are constrained hence unable to exercise agency as planners especially when dealing with large-scale urban development projects. Some aspects of the BNS were poorly designed and ill adapted to the local environment including the gates, the roofing, and absence of a sewer system. Both the Directorate of planning at city level and the Building Department at central government level failed to adequately enforce development control regulations on the BNS and that their input was less significant in the outcome of the project including minimal scrutiny and coordination of the entire project.

6.2.2 Planning Outcomes: Impacts and Outcomes on Communities

The second objective of the study sought to investigate outcomes of the negotiated urban planning processes with specific reference to the impacts of planning on the urban

landscape and the everyday lives of communities around the urban development project, i.e. the Bingu National Stadium. The planning of the Bingu National Stadium (BNS) through a negotiated process has yielded a mix of outcomes on the urban landscape as well as on the public. One of the planning outcomes relates to positive economic benefits such as job creation, and local economic growth through the triggering of small businesses and commercial activities around the stadium. The BNS has also transformed the urban landscape contributing to the city's aesthetic appeal and infrastructure development. On the other hand, the project has exerted negative impacts on the social well-being of people. Deviating from statutory planning procedures meant limited development control thereby raising questions about sustainability including the management and maintenance of the facility. The study, suggests the need for careful consideration of diverse actors' interests and potential tradeoffs in urban planning decisions. Besides, the study illuminates on importance of inclusive, negotiated planning approaches, especially their potential to balance competing interests and priorities in favour of equitable outcomes to maximizes the benefits of LUDs while minimizing their negative consequences.

6.3 Study implications for urban planning in Malawi and the Global South

The study concluded that implementation of Large-scale Urban Developments (LUDs) deviates from legislated procedures of urban planning albeit in a negotiated manner and that the negotiated planning process produces both favourable and unfavourable outcomes on the urban landscape as well as the surrounding communities. The findings of this study have, therefore, implications for urban studies in Malawi and Global South cities. First, while the planning and implementation of Chinese LUDs in particular, sovereign developments as it is the case with the BNS, exposes some weaknesses of urban planning system including its inability to perform development control function, these deficiencies do not render urban planning in African cities a failure. Rather, planning in African cities should be understood as a negotiated process that involves many actors and complex alliances and contestations with all these playing out through implementation of large-scale urban development projects. Furthermore, contrary to the wider held views that modernist planning (i.e. with zoning as the most common statutory instrument of land-use planning)

is unadaptable, exclusionary, inflexible and narrowly focused, it can be argued that in African cities, modernist planning (or statutory planning) is always evolving, and dynamic while at the same time creating room for further negotiations throughout implementation of urban projects.

Second, outcomes of urban planning such as the physical, economic and social impacts of the BNS cannot be separated from the existing statutory planning system and the resultant negotiated planning systems prevalent in African cities. In other words, the nature of urban planning should be understood in terms of the impacts on the urban landscape and the everyday lives of the communities around the urban projects including the potential of planning to redefine people's livelihoods and meanings they attach to large-scale urban projects such as the BNS.

6.4 Recommendations

From the conclusions and implications of the study, two major recommendations can be made:

a) Planners as an agency of the state should intervene in the implementation of Large-scale Urban Developments (LUDs) to ensure effective coordination and collaboration among all actors involved in the implementation of these urban developments. Relatedly, the rise of large-scale urban development in African cities entails multiplicity of actors in urban spaces. This, therefore, presents an opportunity for planning and planners to reflect on their role as negotiators in the production of urban spaces and that their role should go beyond designing plans but also as mediators to forge consensus.

b) One of the features of Chinese LUDs is that decision making around these investments is driven by national political elites who work with central governments thereby undermining local governments. Under these circumstances, it is crucial for local scale planning to exercise agency to ensure that large-scale urban developments align with statutory planning guidelines

and standards while at the same time ensuring that these large-scale developments offer benefits to the general public while also minimizing the disbenefits that result from these LUDs.

6.5 Areas for further research

The study findings pose as a starting point for other research in infrastructure development in African cities including Lilongwe. This research was limited to Chinese sovereign investments (e.g. stadium). First, future research on the influence of urban planning in infrastructure development should consider the role of urban planning in the implementation of other Large-scale Urban Developments (LUDs) financed by other circuits such as private circuits (e.g. SOGECO, MHC Henan Gouji) and developmental circuits (e.g. World Bank, JICA). Second, there is need for detailed research on the public benefits of large-scale urban developments.

6.6 Chapter summary

The foregoing chapter has presented a summary of the key findings in which it has been established that urban planning in Lilongwe is a negotiated process that involves various actors and it is an important aspect in urban development. The chapter has also presented recommendations of the research with reference to the results of the study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Ministry of Lands

1. Please introduce yourself and your position at this institution?
2. I understand the Ministry is one of the major landlords in the country. How did it get ownership of the land that it has now? (What category of land is owned by the Ministry? Where?)
3. In terms of selling land, what procedure do people follow when they want to get land from you?
4. One of the fast-growing communities in ownership of land is the Chinese community, have you had any dealings in land with the Chinese? (Did you sell land to the Chinese directly or indirectly) If yes, in which areas?
5. What is your role in the allocation of land to various government development projects?
6. Has there been any circumstance where you rejected any development on your land? If yes, why?
7. Does the Ministry work with the City Council? If yes, how?
8. What challenges do you face in dealings with land in urban areas of Lilongwe?
9. Was that land on which the stadium was built under your jurisdiction? If no, who was in charge of that land?
10. Were you part of the stadium development? If yes, how were you involved?

End of interview questions

Appendix B: Interview questions

City Council

1. What are the required processes that should be followed for one to develop on a particular piece of land?
2. In terms of Large-scale Urban Developments, how is the process like? Or is it similar to the other processes?
3. If you look at the developments that have happened and still happening in Lilongwe, would you conclude that the City is developing according to the plans?
4. One of the uprising developers are the Chinese in Lilongwe, what approach do these people use? Have you ever interacted with them in their developments? When they are coming, who do they negotiate with and why?
5. In terms of influence, does your office have any influence on the deals that are negotiated at national level? If yes, how? If no, why?
6. In terms of Large-scale Urban Developments like the national stadium, do you get involved? If yes, how?
7. Which other stakeholders did you work with?
8. Was this development in line with the master plan?
9. What processes were followed in the development of the stadium? (If you know?)
10. What was initially planned for this area? What events led to the location of the stadium on this land?

11. As a City Council, do you see any problems in terms of planning with the stadium? If there was any chance to revisit the project, what would you recommend?
12. If you look at the stadium, would you recommend this location for the project? (What would you say about the location of the stadium?)
13. What are the positive impact of this project to the surrounding areas?
14. Would you say that the stadium has negative impact on the lives of people? If no, how has it benefitted the people? If yes, what negatives can you point out on people's lives?
15. Would you conclude to say the landscape has been shaped by the coming in of the national stadium? If yes, how?

End of interview questions

Appendix C: Interview questions

Stadium Officials

1. Please introduce yourself and your position (When did you join the Stadium Management?)
2. When you were joining the stadium, at what level was it, completed or functioning/ construction stage?
3. If at all you know, what was on the land before the construction of the stadium?
4. Who was the initial owner of the land?
5. What would you say are the problems associated with the construction of the stadium if any on the surrounding environment and society?
6. Are you aware of any problems that were experienced during the construction of the stadium? (In terms of the location? Design? Cooperation of workers?)
7. Who is responsible for the maintenance of the stadium? I understand there was an agreement of maintenance between the Malawi Government and the Chinese Government for a period of three years, did this really happen? How did it end?
8. Overall, how can you describe people's perception and attitudes about the stadium?
9. Over the past years that you have been working under the stadium, are there changes on the urban landscape due to the construction of the stadium? If yes, how has it changed?

End of interview questions

Appendix D: Interview questions

Ministry of Sports Officials

1. Please introduce yourself and your position.
2. Were you present during the ground breaking ceremony? What role did you play?
3. I understand the Ministry owns the stadium, what problems have so far been faced with the stadium?
4. What exact procedures were followed in the construction of the stadium? Was the Ministry involved?
5. What are the general construction standards for a national stadium of this magnitude for the Ministry?
6. Who did the Ministry work with? City Council? The Chinese?
7. What role did they play?
8. Were there cases where the contractors did not agree with the stakeholders? If yes, why and how was it handled?

End of interview questions

Appendix E: Interview questions

Planners/ Planning Officials

1. Please introduce yourself. (You may tell us about your professional background and your position at the City Council).
2. Urban development plan/masterplans
 - i. Are the investments in urban development projects in Lilongwe guided by any framework of plan/planning?
 - ii. Is there any consultation process?
 - iii. Are these projects presented with a comprehensive plan or design document?
 - iv. There seems to be a concentrated area of the Chinese investing in urban development projects such as the stadium, sport complex, Henan Guoji and Grand Business Park, and roads. Are these in any of the plans? If not, what were the initial plans for those sites.
3. The Role of Planning
 - i. How are the City Authority (City Council, Planning Office) brought to the process? How do the approval of these projects work?
 - ii. How do the City Council exercise its powers in controlling developments? At what point are you supposed to get involved in the developments? To what extent?
 - iii. Have you ever encountered any challenges in dealing with developers in the City? Were there any instances where the Council was not informed of critical developments within its jurisdiction? If yes, how do you deal with such situations?
4. Relations with other government bodies

- i. Explain your relationship as LCC Planners with various central government departments. What was the nature of those relationships, for example, how often did you meet? Did you feel you could influence decisions? How did you feel that the central government influenced your work? (Probe: In what ways?)
- ii. Do you have any relationships with different departments? (For instance, the Ministry of Land, NRA, Water, MHC, etc? How was your relation with NPC?

End of interview questions

Appendix E: Interview questions

Community Leaders

Mafunso opita kwa atsogoleri m'madera a Mtandire ndi Area 49

Personal information (Mbiri yokhuzana ndi oyankha mafunso)

Name (dzina) _____

Sex

Place of residence (Dera lochokera) _____

T/A _____ (Mfumu _____ yaikulu)

Level of education (Sukulu mudalekera pati) _____

1. Do you know the Bingu National Stadium? (Kodi mumalidziwa bwalo la zamasewera la Bingu?)
2. As one of the people who has stayed in this area for long, do you remember what existed on the land on which the stadium was built? (Monga munthu m'modzi amene wakhala mudera lino kwanthawi yaitali, mukukumbukira chomwe Chinali pamalo amene pamangidwa stadium'yi?)
3. How did you hear about the construction of the new stadium? (Mudadziwa bwanji kuti kukumangidwa bwalo la zamasewera ampira atsopano?)
4. When did you get the news? (Mudadziwa liti?)
5. When you got the news about the construction of the stadium, were you excited or disappointed? (Nkhaniyi mudailandira motani, mudali osangalala kapena munakhumudwa nayo?)

6. Why did you feel the way you did in Question 5 above? (chifukwa chani munamva m'mene munamveramo pankani ya bwalo la zamasewerali [Funso lachisanu m'mwambamu]?)
7. Did you like the idea of the stadium being located where is it? (Kodi inu munagwirizana nalo ganizo lomanga bwalo la zamasewerali pamalo pamene lidamangidwapa?)
8. Why? (Question 7 above) (chifukwa chani?)
9. Did you take part in any activity that happened at the stadium? (Kodi munatengapo mbali pazochitika zili zonse pa bwalo la zamasewerali?)
10. Were you comfortable in the stadium? How did you feel? (Kodi munali omasuka mutalowako mu bwalo la zamasewerali? Munamva bwanji?)
11. In your opinion, how is the stadium important especially to the surrounding residents? (Mukuganiza kwanu, kodi bwaloli ndilofunikira motani makamaka kwa anthu amene ayandikana nalo?)
12. Why? (Chifukwa chani mwayankha m'mene mwayankhila funso lapamwambali?)
13. In your opinion, what are the benefits of the stadium to the nation? (Mukuganiza kwanu ndi phindu lanji lomwe bwaloli lingapereke ku dziko la Malawi?)
14. What are the benefits of the stadium to the local people living in the surrounding areas? (Kodi ndi phindu lanji limene anthu amene amakhala pafupi ndi bwaloli angapeze?)
15. What have you benefitted so far as a person who stays close to the stadium? (Kodi inu mwapindula motani monga ngati munthu m'modzi amene amakhala pafupi ndi bwalo la zamasewerali?)
16. What are the problems that are experienced in this area due to the construction of the stadium? (Kodi ndi mavuto ati omwe anthu

ozungulira delari anakumana nawo chifukwa chakumangidwa kwa bwalo la zamasewelali?)

17. What changes were experienced in the areas around the stadium? (For instance, new buildings, people moving away from the area, etc? (Kodi pali kusintha kotani komwe kwachitika mu madela omwe azungulira bwalo la zamasewerali? Mwachitsanzo, kumangidwa kwa nyumba zamakono, anthu kusamuka m'madera omwe amakhala?))
18. Do you think this change is important? If yes, how? (Mukuganiza kuti kusinthaku ndikwabwino? Ngati ndi choncho, ndikwabwino motani?)
19. How has the construction of the stadium changed the lifestyle of people in your area? (Kodi kumangidwa kwa bwaloli kwasintha bwanji kakhalidwe ka anthu mudera lanuli?)
20. In your opinion, do you think the area could have been the same without the stadium? (Mukuganiza kuti dera lozungulira bwaloli likanakhala chimodzimodzi ndi momwe liliri panopa ngakhale bwaloli kukhanakhala kuti kulibe?)

Mafunso athu athera pamenepa