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The Bright Lights Grow Fainter

Livelihoods, Migration and a Small Town in Zimbabwe

Agnes Andersson

Abstract

The Aids pandemic and structural adjustment policies (SAP) have had effects on lower income households in Zimbabwe which have been devastating and people have been required to adapt their livelihood strategies. Small towns meanwhile are growing rapidly in Zimbabwe and mobility towards these towns may be connected with the changes being forged by SAP on the economic landscape. This study seeks to establish how the individual migrant uses mobility to negotiate this landscape. This involves mobility directed *towards* small towns to access advantageous provisioning possibilities, and also the engagement in a multitude of family linkages *from* the small town to other places within the settlement system. Substantiated through a case study of Rusape, this study suggests that lower living costs, higher food security and a more accessible labour market may be attracting migrants from higher level urban centres. The role of the network of kin relations in mobility is important and migrants' networks over space cover both rural homes and urban areas. The access to networks, however, is being stratified under SAP and the ability to maintain linkages with relatives is declining, suggesting a rising vulnerability connected with the inability of leaving places and entering others.

Key Words: Zimbabwe, livelihood, migration, mobility, provisioning, structural adjustment, Rusape, small towns, kin networks

The Bright Lights Grow Fainter

Livelihoods, Migration and a Small Town in Zimbabwe

Academic dissertation for the exam of Doctor of Philosophy at Stockholm University
to be publicly defended at the Department of Human Geography
in the De Geer Hall, the Geo-Science Building, Frescati, Stockholm
on Friday, 7 June 2002 at 13:00 hours

by

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The Aids pandemic and structural adjustment policies (SAP) have had effects on lower income households in Zimbabwe which have been devastating and people have been required to adapt their livelihood strategies. Small towns meanwhile are growing rapidly in Zimbabwe and mobility towards these towns may be connected with the changes being forged by SAP on the economic landscape. This study seeks to establish how the individual migrant uses mobility to negotiate this landscape. This involves mobility directed *towards* small towns to access advantageous provisioning possibilities, and also the engagement in a multitude of family linkages *from* the small town to other places within the settlement system. Substantiated through a case study of Rusape, this study suggests that lower living costs, higher food security and a more accessible labour market may be attracting migrants from higher level urban centres. The role of the network of kin relations in mobility is important and migrants' networks over space cover both rural homes and urban areas. The access to networks, however, is being stratified under SAP and the ability to maintain linkages with relatives is declining, suggesting a rising vulnerability connected with the inability of leaving places and entering others.

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List of Abbreviations

APA: African Purchase Area
CA: Communal Area
CAP: Community Action Programme
CSO: Central Statistical Office
ESAP: Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
FER: Framework for Economic Reform
ICES: Income, Consumption and Expenditure Survey
IFI: International Financial Institution
IMF: International Monetary Fund
LSCF: Large-Scale Commercial Farm (area)
MERP: Millennium Economic Recovery Plan
NGO: Non Governmental Organisation
NPA: Native Purchase Area

NRZ: National Railways of Zimbabwe
OGIL: Open General Import License
PAAP: Poverty Alleviation Action Plan
PASS: Poverty Assessment Study Survey
PSHP: Private Sector Housing Programme
RTC: Rusape Town Council
SAP: Structural Adjustment Programme
SSA: Sub-Saharan Africa
SSCF: Small-Scale Commercial Farm (area)
UDI: Unilateral Declaration of Independence
Zanu-pf: Zimbabwe African National Union, Patriotic Front
ZESA: Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority
ZIMCORD: Zimbabwe Conference on Development and Reconstruction
ZIMPREST: Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation
Zupco: Zimbabwe United Passenger Company
USAID: United States International Agency for International Development

A note on currency and prices

The Zimbabwe dollar was devalued on August 2, 2000 from Z\$38 per USD to Z\$53 to the USD, and in October of 2000 to Z\$55 to the USD. On the parallel market the USD trades at Z\$330 (*The Financial Gazette*, April 11, 2002, “Devaluation to Lift Debt to \$1 Trillion”). If not referred to specifically as USD, the use of the term dollar refers to the Zimbabwe dollar.

The producer prices of agricultural goods (i.e. prices paid by the parastatal Grain Marketing Board) during the time of my fieldwork were: Z\$5 500 for one tonne of maize (April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2001), Z\$ 9 300-9 500 for one tonne of sunflower seeds (August 2000) and Z\$18 500 for one tonne of unshelled groundnuts (June 2000) (correspondence, Prof. Tony Hawkins, February 22, 2002).

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Stockholm in April 2002

Agnes Andersson

1 Introduction and conceptual framework

1.1 Introduction

The global process of liberalisation and the economic and structural changes that follow in its wake have repercussions also for the countries of the South. Such changes, given the small economic margins characteristic of most people's livelihoods¹ in these societies, have even more drastic effects on the welfare of households and individuals there than in industrialised countries. States that have formerly provided at least a modicum of social welfare and protection are increasingly relied upon as the executors of the structural adjustment agendas of the World Bank and the IMF.

Although structural adjustment in the long run is intended to produce conditions conducive to poverty alleviation, the short-term effects on the poor, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, have been devastating with many households experiencing a reproductive squeeze (Simon et al. (eds.) (1995), Mlambo 1997, Rakodi 1994). Increasing economic hardship is in this context connected with for instance the deregulation of external and internal markets for commodities and finance, rapidly rising inflation and the withdrawal of subsidies on basic foodstuffs and farm inputs.

Another significant source of rising poverty in African countries especially, is the Aids pandemic, which is having profound and arguably unique effects on the demography of many societies. Again, households are experiencing a situation in which smaller resources must be stretched to cover a large number of members as income-earners are afflicted by the virus. Thus livelihoods are being subjected to enormous pressures as provisioning possibilities are

¹ A useful definition of livelihood is provided by Carney (quoted in Rakodi 1999:316), who defines a livelihood as "the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is considered to be sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base", cited in Tostensen (2001:4).

shrinking in the face of economic hardship, as a result both of structural adjustment policies and the Aids pandemic.

As suggested by the informalization perspective² the costs of both production and reproduction of labour are increasingly being shifted from “fiscally troubled states and large-scale capital” to “family, community and ethnic structures” (Meagher and Mustapha 1997:65). The extended family network as a support system is thus being challenged through a process of informalization as well as through generally rising poverty. Households and individuals meanwhile are increasingly required to adapt their livelihood strategies in the face of shrinking economic margins.

One such strategy involves the physical movement of people, either on a household basis or, as has been suggested by neo-classical migration theory, through the deliberate spreading of household members across space as a form of risk diversification. The migration of male labour within the migrant labour system as found historically in Southern and Eastern Africa, for instance, for a number of institutional reasons required this division of the household across space to ensure the livelihoods of its members.

In Zimbabwe, this system of circular migration between the rural home and an urban centre, despite the widespread stabilisation of labour in the late 1970s and early 1980s, in some fashion persists also today. Indeed, an austere economic climate in many urban areas may induce the return of urban migrants to rural areas in times of unemployment or illness, while the rural part of the household may be growing increasingly more dependent on urban remittances. The theme of rural return migration and the reliance on rural links among urban household members are issues which have been raised in the literature on Zimbabwean migration by numerous researchers (Potts 2000, Potts with Mutambirwa 1998, Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo 1995).

Yet, as suggested by recent reports³, the challenges to the livelihoods of Zimbabwe’s poor are unprecedented since 1970 and individuals and households may in this context consider a wider range of locations in their decision to migrate. The rapid growth of small and intermediate sized urban areas in Zimbabwe as noted by Zinyama (1994) for instance, suggests that mobility⁴ is occurring not only to traditional destinations like Harare or as has been recently noted from Harare to rural homes. Given the recent population expansion in small towns, the causes of mobility to such lower level urban centres, deserve attention. Conceivably this type of mobility may be linked to

² This perspective has been propounded by Castells and Portes (1989) and developed in the African context by Meagher (1995), Meagher and Mustapha (1997) and Lourenco-Lindell (2002) for instance.

³ See for instance UN Integrated Regional Information Network, homepage, www.irinnews.org, “Zimbabwe Economic Crisis Set to Worsen”, Wednesday, February 20, 2002.

⁴ My interest is in migration, defined as a change of residence. Although the term mobility suggests a more temporary nature of movement, I use the two terms interchangeably to refer to migration.

the sources of advantageous provisioning possibilities found in a small town vis à vis other urban and rural areas.

Mobility is on one hand connected with this search for places which offer opportunities for enhancing one's livelihood, but also with the ability to remain in such places. Spreading sources of livelihood across space through negotiating the various parts of the settlement hierarchy can be an important source of welfare as well. Given the challenges to the household mentioned above, mobility can be perceived as a way of improving livelihood options primarily on an individual basis, albeit with the wider extended family as a backdrop. The structural parameters of such mobility are, however, paramount and need to be considered without risking the derogation of the individual actor. Giddens' (1979, 1984) view of structures as both enabling and constraining to human agency may in this context prove inspiring in handling the complexities of contemporary African migration.

This study aims for a synthesis of agency, structure and place, by moving from the general to the individual. Firstly, the idea that small towns, in the context of recent structural changes, provide concrete advantages to prospective dwellers, vis à vis rural areas, and also with respect to other (mainly much larger) urban centres will be explored. Informalization and other effects of structural adjustment policies, attach different types of significance to various kinds of places. The small town in this context presents the arena for a balancing act between the various facets of the rural and the urban, for the migrant squeezed between urban and rural poverty. Secondly, I will argue that in the context of structural adjustment, the ability to access places through the use of the wider household system found across the settlement hierarchy may present considerable advantages.

This study seeks to establish how the migrant uses his or her mobility to negotiate the social and economic landscape crafted by structural adjustment. This involves not only mobility directed *towards* small towns as a means of accessing advantageous sources of provisioning, but also the individual's engagement in a multitude of family linkages *from* the small town to other places within the settlement system. The ability to invest or directly engage in such linkages, like the ability to harness the advantages of life in a small town, or indeed the wider economic landscape, will conceivably be differentiated according to the access to assets in general.

1.2 Conceptual framework

This book thus wishes to reconcile structure and agency in exploring the current surge in mobility directed towards small towns in Zimbabwe. In this endeavour I wish to consider three separate theoretical schools of thought. Firstly, perspectives on livelihood strategies serve as a useful tool in

discussing the challenges to the household. Secondly, migration theory presents a framework for the perceived motivations behind migration among individuals and households. Lastly, small town theory may offer insights into the phenomenon of small town growth.

Livelihood strategies and migration theory

Household livelihood strategy approaches and actor-oriented perspectives on development in general, have been formulated by, for example, Long (1992). Their endeavour to place the actor's knowledge at the forefront reiterates some of Giddens' (1984) terminology. Such approaches tend, however, to focus on rural livelihoods rather than on migration *per se*. Krokfors (1995) suggests an application of livelihood strategy approaches to migration, but concerns himself largely with the rural household and the role of migration for rural livelihoods. Wright (1995) considers a structurationist perspective on the historiography of the migrant labour system in the context of Southern Africa.

Most current explanations of mobility, however, despite a call for a more comprehensive approach to migration made by Gilbert and Kleinpenning (1986) can instead be found in neo-classical household models⁵ of migration (e.g. the work of Stark 1991). Evans and Pirzada (1995) working in this tradition, for instance argue that the migrant's decision is founded on the conditions within the household and its immediate surroundings rather than on the exogenous appeal of urban areas. The survival strategy of a rural household centres on a set of risk elimination procedures, where the possibility of diversifying sources of income becomes the prime vehicle of this strategy. The dispersal of household labour to its most productive uses becomes crucial to survival in the most desperate cases of rural poverty. In less dramatic scenarios diversifying sources of income by decentralising members from the household unit via migration remains a productive method of securing non-farm incomes and widening the household's income base. In this sense the household becomes a spatially, and sectorally divided, but highly interconnected economic unit.

As Chant (1997) argues, however, the new household economics approach assumes that households are "unified entities where income is pooled and labour allocated according to principles of comparative advantage" (p.6). In this context, the household strategies approach to gendered migration, as first developed by Radcliffe (1986) in the context of rural-urban migration in Peru, is an important contribution to migration theory which instead problematises "the divisions of labour and power within households, and how these affect the propensity and freedom of different individuals, according to gender, age

⁵ This approach is also termed the new household economics approach.

and their relationships to other household members, to engage in cityward migration” (Chant 1998:9).

In terms of external challenges, economic pressures weigh heavily on the household under structural adjustment. For this reason also it is perhaps questionable whether households are able to act as risk-minimising vehicles of mobility. The critique towards neo-classical perceptions of mobility with its focus on the internal workings of the household can in combination with structuralist approaches (e.g. Wolpe 1972, Legassick 1975) to migration in Africa, prove fruitful, however, as the household clearly is one of the more important structures within which migration occurs. The structural parameters of African society are changing radically, and need to be considered more profoundly. Such changes are, in turn, connected with a general tendency towards the liberalisation of global markets for finance and commodities (as suggested by Sassen 1999, Castells and Portes 1989, Meagher 1995, for instance). In the African context, this translates into structural adjustment policies, geared to open up economies, both internally and externally to private enterprise. At the local level, such policies have profoundly negative effects on livelihoods and the very foundations of the extended family are being challenged by structural adjustment, as Rwezaura et al. (1995) suggest in the Zimbabwean context.

Under conditions shaped by informalization, economic liberalisation and agrarian socio-economic stratification, a more flexible conceptualisation of the household needs to be based on the recognition that household members today are hardly ever spatially co-resident, as suggested by Ncube et al. (1997a) and Findley (1997). The fundamental structural logic of agency is being altered and a situation of constant flux with respect to both mobility and employment among a large section of the population is today a prominent characteristic of African societies.

Migration can under present conditions be perceived as a spatial response on the part of the individual or indeed the household, to conditions created by structural adjustment. For people use places as well as structures to negotiate their livelihoods. Few authors, however, dwell upon the geography of structural adjustment, while household livelihood approaches, with the exception of Krokfors (1995), in general do not concern the spatial aspects of migration. Yet, elements of the livelihood strategies approach to migration, particularly its emphasis on the household, can be retained and widened. As Chant (1997) argues, the household needs to be approached as a more flexible set of social relations than allowed for in neo-classical models. Moreover, as suggested by the literature on African family structures, the tendency to assume that Westernised notions of the household also apply to African settings is largely fallacious (Ocholla-Ayayo 1997). Rather, the broader web of the household network can be said to provide the most immediate structure within which the individual exercises his or her agency and mobility.

Meanwhile, the ability to negotiate space, as a way of exercising agency, by means of migration carries important implications for social and economic differentiation. This of course is nothing novel, given the massive interest for migrant selectivity that guided much of the early focus on population studies (Gilbert and Kleinpenning 1986:4, Gugler 1992) as well as Lipton's (1980) differentiation of push and pull factors on the basis of rural resources, where poor people are pushed into migration and rich people are pulled by the attractions of urban life.

What needs to be stressed, however, is the individual's (and the household's) relative ability to harness the opportunities presented within the new structures of deregulated economies, while avoiding the negative aspects. Also of importance are the spatial effects of such mobility and the ways in which such mobility influences other people (and places). As Massey (1993) argues:

For it does seem that mobility and control over mobility both reflect and reinforce power. It is not simply a question of unequal distribution, that some people move more than others, some have more control than others. It is that mobility and control of some groups can actively weaken other people. Differential mobility can weaken the leverage of the already weak. The time-space compression of some groups can undermine the powers of others (p. 62).

In addition, however, in the study of small town growth, the dualistic view of space (and of places) which characterises much of the literature on African mobility needs to be widened. Within this literature in general there exists a view of migration as occurring primarily from rural areas to large urban centres, a view which may possibly be informed by dual sector neo-classical models and structuralist explanations of the migrant labour system. Dual sector neo-classical models such as Nurske's (1953) and Lewis' (1954, 1955) labour surplus model, as well as Harris-Todaro's (1970) model of rural-urban migration, like behaviourist migration theory such as Lee's (1966) push-pull model tended to rest upon this division between the rural and the urban. Economic push-and-pull factors became the main explanations for movement, while the lure of the city and the attraction of "bright lights" were social components often stressed by authors working in this tradition.

This traditional interest in rural-to-urban migration has to some extent been replaced by a focus on rural return migration as *the* spatial outcome of structural adjustment and rising poverty⁶. These studies of contemporary

⁶ For examples of the connection between rural return migration and rising urban poverty, see Murphy (2000) for China, Wegren (1995) for Russia, Silvey (2000, 2001) for Indonesia, Yeboah and Waters (1997) for Ghana, Ferguson (1990, 1999) for Zambia, Mbonile (1994) for Tanzania, Robin

migration, although valuable in terms of illustrating the influence of structural adjustment and general economic hardship on mobility, suggest that a *spatial* preoccupation with certain mobility patterns run the risk of over-generalisation. To the extent that urban-urban mobility is analysed, a kind of “conventional wisdom” guides much of the discourse assuming that step-wise migration from smaller to larger urban centres is the dominant type of movement (for examples of this view of step-wise migration see e.g. Oucho 1998, Van Dijk, Foeken and Van Til 2001).

The rapid growth of small and intermediate sized towns throughout the African continent (as noted by Findley 1997 for West Africa, Holm 1992 for Tanzania and by Tacoli 1998 for Sub-Saharan Africa in general), which by many commentators is thought to constitute the majority of Africa’s urbanisation (World Bank 2000, Satterthwaite 1996), suggests the relevance of a broadened perception of urbanward migration. Giraut (1997:26) for instance using evidence from a number of West African countries notes “*the acceleration of the growth of small towns in a context of a slight decline in overall urban growth rate* (emphasis in the original).” Yet, the source of such growth is not explored further, and the occurrence of urban-urban migration is dismissed by for example Potts (2000) in the Zimbabwean context. In this way, much of the literature bypasses the downward link between the large urban centres and the settlements found at the lower levels of the urban hierarchy.

I wish to suggest that the growth of smaller urban centres can be linked conceptually to the radical structural changes which have characterised most African societies since the late 1980s and early 1990s, which in turn have given rise to highly complex and fluid migration patterns and household constellations. Studying the role of agency in circumventing and shaping structures may in this context be relevant in an attempt to capture the inventiveness with which people have used their mobility to cushion the impact of economic downturn.

For clearly, different places offer different advantages and disadvantages at different times. This fairly basic assumption is, however, one that tends to be disregarded in much of the migration literature. Thus, a more geographically informed approach to mobility is called for in the study of small towns. In the case of small town growth, the small town must present some locational or other advantage to the migrant. The following question can therefore be posed: to what extent does the theoretical literature on small towns offer any clues to the reasons underlying their growth?

(1992) for Ivory Coast, Thylefors (1995) for Burkina Faso and Oucho (1998) for Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole.

Small town theory

The theoretical discussion on small towns in the South remains essentially locked into a debate concerning the nature of urban areas in general, and small towns in particular, within the development process. This discussion is polarised between those who regard urban areas as inherently exploitative of the rural hinterland and their opponents who suggest instead that small towns should be perceived as instruments of regional development. The former standpoint is represented by proponents of Lipton's (1977) hypothesis of urban bias and dependency theorists such as Frank (1967). The most negative perception of small towns is perhaps expressed by the anthropologist Southall (1979, 1988, and 1998). Advocates of growth pole theory such as Rondinelli (1988) and Perroux (1955), represent a more positive view that perceives small towns as engines of local economic growth. Friedman's (1988) and Friedman and Douglass' (1978) model of "agropolitan development", embraces a more holistic view of spatial development, but nonetheless also suggests a positive role for small urban areas.

In this context the definition of what exactly a small town is, is clearly relevant. In the context of Zimbabwe, Kamete (1998) suggests a definition of 2,500 to 9,999 inhabitants while Pedersen (1995, cited in Kamete 1998) regards a range of 2,000 to 50,000 as advisable. Thus, definitions and benchmarks vary considerably and contextually. Simon (1992), however, reminds us of the lack of viable definitions and instead advocates an approach which is "functional and relative rather than absolute, embracing centres which are small in the context of their respective national urban and economic systems" (p. 31). I wish to concur with this definition. My concern moreover, is with the attractions of lower level urban centres, and the role of mobility towards small and intermediate sized town in provisioning in times of economic and social stress.

The focus of much theoretical discussion is generally placed on the role of small towns within the development process as a whole, as a state of the art review by Baker and Claeson (1990) suggests. For this reason much of the literature on small and intermediate sized towns in the South is concerned primarily with the nature of the small town, rather than with explanations for its population growth. The focus is on the small town as a component of development or exploitation depending on the ideological standpoint of the scholar, rather than on urban growth as a process. The seminal work by Hardoy and Satterthwaite (1986) resulted in a realisation that the role of small towns within the development process varied a great deal from place to place, however.

Despite this recognition of regional and local differences however, emphasis is still placed on the role of the town as a *given* spatial constellation, with certain morphological and functional aspects, rather than as a constantly evolving arena of social, political and economic processes. Pedersen's (1997a)

study of the economy of two communal area centres, and Rasmussen's (1992) work on the entrepreneurial milieu in two rural district centres, are representative of this tradition in the Zimbabwean context. The introduction to a recent study of small towns in Latin America (Czerny, Lindert and Verkoren (1997) eds.) suggests this focus on function quite clearly:

Even after more than thirty years of study concerning the roles and functions of small and intermediate towns in rural and regional development, our empirical knowledge is still limited. Available material is quite fragmentary, and closely related to specific regions in specific time-windows. Consequently, it is not easy to come up with clear answers. Do urban markets and market systems play a role in the modernization of the rural areas? Is it really possible to tie the urban service apparatus to rural and regional development? Are small towns really able to stem the flow of rural migrants to the large cities? (p. 13)

Whereas much study of small town growth thus remains preoccupied with the structure and function of the small towns themselves, urbanisation on the whole is explained by dependency advocates as being a result of global capitalism. This perspective, however, argues Sjöberg and Woube (1999) fails to account for differential urbanisation (especially given that those urban centres which are growing the fastest, i.e. small and intermediate sized towns, are the least connected with the global economy).

Those explanations of small town growth which can be found in the literature moreover revolve around specific explanations. Mabogunje (1986) in the African context for instance suggests a link between informalization and small-scale urbanisation. The informal sector is in this context thought to provide:

services and goods for the poorer class in the population and low capitalized activities, neither of which can have regular access to identical services or goods produced in the formal sector. As such, the relative importance of informal sector activities increases with decreasing urban size. Eventually, in the small town, it encompasses the whole of the urban economy and constitutes a major means of maintaining constant relations with the countryside from where most of the poor come (p. 186-187).

The emphasis is however, placed on the role of the informal sector within an existent urban economy, rather than its attraction to the prospective migrant.

However, it is uncertain to what extent small-scale informal sector activities dominate the economies of small urban areas and the discussion needs to be widened beyond singular explanations. Other explanations of small town growth are provided by Giraut (1997), also in the African context, who stresses factors of location such as route intersections, proximity to borders and other urban centres, as well as the decentralisation of administrative functions as a result of settlement policies intended to encourage growth at the lower echelons of the urban hierarchy.

A more conceptually imaginative view of the growth of small and intermediate sized towns in Sub-Saharan Africa is provided by Bryceson (1995) who argues that “intermediary nodes between the rural and urban settlement and the convergence of rural and urban household livelihood strategies give rise to a higher likelihood of intersecting economic interests” (p. 103). In this way the accessibility of rural modes of livelihood can be combined with urban income earning possibilities, making the small town more suitable for combining both sources. As Tacoli (1998) suggests, the social linkages of small town residents often serve to obscure the boundaries between the rural and the urban.

I wish to argue, however, that the process of urbanisation in general is more complex than suggested by either of these perspectives, where the preoccupation with singular factors risks blurring the larger picture. Settlements need to be approached in the context of their situatedness in time and space, suggest Sjöberg and Woube (1999:4) (citing Vartiainen (1995:250), and from a structuration perspective argue that urbanisation is the result of “a series of situated social practices through which demography, economics, politics, and ideology specifically intersect on different geographical scales”.

Synthesising actor, structure and the small town

A study of the growth of small towns thus needs to consider not only the fundamental structural changes taking place within African society, but also the role of the actor in adapting to and shaping such change through mobility directed at enhancing his or her livelihood.

Here, a synthesis of migration theory and settlement theory becomes necessary to understand the growth of small and intermediate sized African towns and cities. The perspectives of academics working on the construction of social space, such as Harvey (1982, 2000) and Massey (1995) can also provide useful insights. Indeed, Thornström (1989) notes the important influences of perspectives on social space and spatial structures (as found for instance in Gregory and Urry 1985 eds.), on Swedish development geography in the 1980s. For as Massey (1995) argues, “just as there are no purely spatial processes, neither are there any non-spatial social processes” (p. 51).

Massey (1995, 1993) has, in a large body of work, been concerned with the uniqueness of place, and what she terms a progressive approach to place. Places become the arenas of a

distinct *mixture* of wider and more local social relations and, further again, that the juxtaposition of these relations may produce effects that would not have happened otherwise. And, finally, all these relations interact with and take a further element of specificity from the accumulated history of a place, with that history itself conceptualized as the product of layer upon layer of different sets of linkages both local and to the wider world (1993:68, emphasis in original).

Just as Harvey (1982, 2000) notes the “spatial fix” available to capital to escape overaccumulation, this tendency may also be applied or translated to the capacity, or indeed necessity for labour to manage different spatial options and constraints. This relates to the call for a labour sensitive geography, or “labour’s spatial fix” as suggested by Herod (1997), through which labour aims to “create particular spatial fixes appropriate to their own condition and needs at particular times in particular locations” (p. 17). In this sense labour explores the opportunity surface created by capital, adapting to the mobility of capital to some extent, while it is also part of the constant struggle between the two fixes. In a similar vein, Massey (1995) contrasts the spatial mobility of capital, and the relative spatial fixity of labour. In the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, however, this difference is perhaps less striking than in the developed world, simply because labour exercises less choice in Sub-Saharan Africa: capital may up and leave, but labour may to some extent follow suit, or engage in informal enterprise locally. The ability of labour to retain what Massey (1995) terms “geographical solidarity”, may in the African context be dependent on the ability to straddle the rural and the urban, the informal and the formal, and in this regard involves not only places of residence or work in themselves, but also places found within the extended family network, or the rural hinterland, places which provide alternative livelihood options.

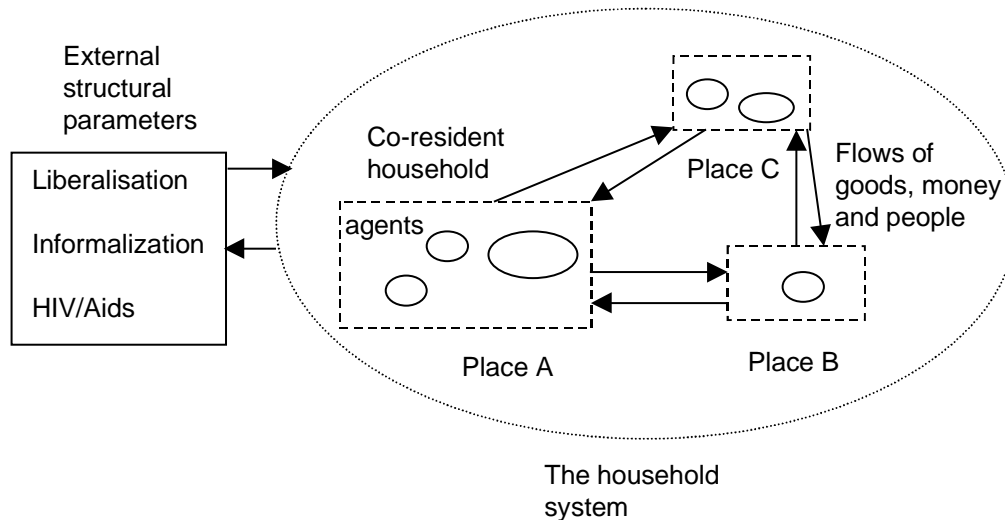
Nonetheless, certain places offer the ability for their inhabitants to exercise “labour’s spatial fix”, and geographical solidarity, more readily than others do. The ability to navigate, or indeed control the spatial outcomes of such social processes, is an important asset. Warde (1988) suggests that provisioning possibilities vary across space, according to “local access to all kinds of resources involved in the reproduction of labour power” (p. 83), and the entry into such places in themselves is therefore an important source of socio-economic differentiation. As suggested above, the ability to straddle the rural and the urban is an important source of provisioning in the African context. Nonetheless, attention to the specificities of place, and recognition of the

varying abilities of individuals and households to exercise power over their mobility on the one hand and their access to certain places on the other, calls for a synthesis of agency, general structural factors and their spatial outcomes.

For migration does not occur to *any* place, or indeed *any* small town, but to a place which can provide social and/or material resources. The undifferentiated view of place found in much of the migration literature as being *either* “rural” or “urban” (and here the literature on rural return migration is something of an exception as it is implied that migration to the rural areas occurs predominantly to rural homes) thus needs to be refined. As I have argued above, inter-urban mobility does not only occur from smaller to larger urban areas, but also takes place in the opposite direction. Yet, mobility directed downwards in the urban hierarchy may also have a component of provisioning which is connected not only with the place itself but also with its location. Conceptually, the necessity to combine rural and urban livelihoods means that migrants from larger urban areas choose to move to small (but not too small) towns close to their rural homes, but do not opt to settle in their rural areas.

In Figure 1.1, a rough conceptual model of the interplay between agency, structure and mobility is elaborated.

Fig. 1.1 Conceptual framework



The ellipse indicates the wider household system. Smaller co-resident households are indicated by the rectangles. The dotted lines indicate the flexible structure of both these household set-ups. The ellipses inside the rectangles are agents, and their varying size suggests the unequal division of power and resources within individual families. A non-unitary household is thus the norm. Of course, individual co-resident households may exercise more or less power over the entire household

system. Linkages between individual agents may also be stronger outside the co-resident household than within the co-resident household. Aspects of place and distance have not been included in the model, although conceivably, certain places are more advantageous than others both to the wider household system, the individual co-resident household as well as the individual agent. Place A, B, and C, may be located in the same village, but are more likely to be spread at least between a rural and an urban area. The strength of linkages between different co-resident households and agents may vary.

External pressures on livelihoods are suggested in the form of liberalisation, informalization and the Aids-pandemic. Within this context, the household system, defined very loosely as a set of relations among whom are exchanged goods, money and/or people, operates over space. Of course, the flow of goods, money and people may not be regular, or symmetric, and may be resorted to in times of stress by certain members of the system more frequently than others. The household has been defined on the basis of co-residence and may therefore include members outside the nuclear family. A household may in this context consist only of a single member, but nonetheless be part of a wider household system. This system serves as the most immediate enabling and constraining structural aspect of people's lives outside the co-resident household. The household system may, nonetheless, be the context within which migration occurs. The spatially divided household system may exist in numerous areas, of different types and sizes. The various components of this figure will be used to structure the remainder of this book.

1.3 Methodology and structure of the study

My methodological approach has combined a number of methods. Secondary literature has been gathered on the general structural backdrop to livelihoods and migration in Zimbabwe and has been used alongside official documents such as census data and poverty assessment surveys to depict the general structural conditions involved in mobility directed towards lower level urban centres. This is the subject of Chapter 2. The logic of livelihoods and mobility in Zimbabwe will therefore be charted not only as an introduction to later empirical work, but also as an explanation for the wider parameters of small town growth. The legacy of the migrant labour system and the ways in which this historical backdrop continues to influence mobility and livelihoods are important and unique features of Zimbabwean society. In a country characterised until recently by a largely formalised workforce, the significance of wider structural forces such as liberalisation and informalization may be different than in most other African countries. Given Zimbabwe's unique characteristics, assembling a picture of the parameters of livelihoods and mobility in Zimbabwe is particularly interesting. This picture not only provides an explanation for the rapid growth of small towns in the

Zimbabwean context, but can also serve as a background to how individual migrants use their mobility to negotiate the economic landscape created by structural adjustment.

My original interest in small town growth grew out of this type of population expansion both in Zimbabwe, but also widely across the African continent as a whole. The particular small town that I chose as the subject of my fieldwork, Rusape in Eastern Zimbabwe, is not the main focus of my study, however. Rather the sources of advantageous provisioning possibilities found in a small town and the ways in which migrants use their mobility to shape their fortunes under the harsh economic conditions found under structural adjustment are the main subjects of inquiry. The particular advantages of provisioning found in a small town have been substantiated through a case study of one small town, Rusape. Chapter 3 introduces the survey methods which have been used in interviewing 143 migrants to Rusape.

Chapter 4 presents the setting of the study and situates Rusape spatially as well as historically. Hopefully this chapter sheds some light upon the town's position within the settlement hierarchy and how this position might be used by migrants' in their endeavour to negotiate the economic landscape. Interviews with key informants both in Rusape, and at various ministries in Harare, the consultation of official reports and documents and a collection of historical information on the town at the National Archives in Harare, the Rhodes House Library in Oxford, the Public Record Office in Kew and the British Library in London, form the core of this chapter.

Chapter 5 details the patterns of migration to Rusape as found among my respondents, and suggests the locational advantages of the town stressed by most interviewees.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8, deal with various aspects of provisioning in Rusape. Within the wider economic landscape and through the internal workings of the broader household system the small town offers significant advantages to the prospective migrant. These structural advantages are considered as an explanation for Rusape's considerable growth. Within the socio-economic reality of Zimbabwe today, the small town represents a possibility for realising a higher quality of life and access to empowering resources for the select few, while it offers the prospect of refuge from high metropolitan living costs and difficult rural existences for the mass of migrants. In this way, the small town serves as an illustration of the advantages of accessing certain places and the analogous avoidance of others. Small town migration also suggests migrants' differential access to places that under conditions of economic hardship provide concrete advantages.

Primary data from my interviews, alongside Town Council records and focus group discussions have been important sources of information in this context. In addition, secondary sources, such as newspaper articles and

statistics have been useful in complementing interview data. Three aspects of provisioning, urban living costs, food security and employment opportunities, were singled out as particularly relevant motivations for mobility to Rusape and are discussed in relation to the wider theoretical literature on these topics. The focus, therefore, is not on the town itself, but on how sources of provisioning under severe economic pressure might be more easily available in certain places than in others, and how such resources are accessed by way of mobility. Advantages in this context may include aspects of beneficial provisioning conditions in general found in a small town, or proximity to rural livelihood resources, but also aspects of location with respect to the wider household set-up.

In chapter 9, attention is focused upon how the migrant negotiates the variety of options and pitfalls characterising the economic landscape by utilising the wider household system. In this synthesis of empirical findings, the agency of the actor in shaping mobility is elaborated upon and placed within the wider theoretical discussion on the household and migration. The strengthening of the family system is, in this context, essential as a means of enhancing one's livelihood, while the small town presents an arena for negotiating the settlement hierarchy through investing in and maintaining linkages to a variety of places. Lastly, the concluding chapter contains a summary of the study and a set of conclusions as well as a discussion of issues for further research.

2 Livelihoods, urbanisation and mobility in Southern Rhodesia and Zimbabwe

2.1 Introduction

The structural features surrounding livelihoods and mobility in Zimbabwe are in some respects unique, even in a general African context. Such parameters are inextricably linked to the country's recent colonial history and the heritage of the migrant labour system. Under structural adjustment, generally rising poverty and the HIV/Aids pandemic, however, the structural logic of Zimbabwean society is changing in directions in some respects similar to other African countries, but in others quite different. In a society dominated until recently by formal employment and seasonal labour migration, alterations in livelihood conditions and the necessity of straddling both rural and urban spheres of production and reproduction may be an important explanation for recent mobility directed towards small towns. For this reason, an analysis of the changing structural backdrop to Zimbabwean mobility, placed in the context of the Southern Rhodesian system of labour migration, is important.

2.2 Livelihoods and mobility in Southern Rhodesia

As suggested above, Zimbabwe can in some respects be said to have a unique tradition of rural and urban linkages and livelihoods that are dependent on a straddling of both spheres of production and reproduction. The explanation for such interconnectivity between the rural and the urban can be found in the historically important system of migrant labour, which in turn rested on the widespread alienation of land for European settlement and farming. This tradition of seasonal labour migration, despite a significant stabilisation of labour during the 1970s and 1980s, can possibly serve as an explanation for the commonality of rural-urban considerations in most studies of mobility both for the pre- and post-independence periods. Recourse to the rich literature on

Zimbabwean historiography may thus provide a reflection of the unique features of Zimbabwean mobility also today. The importance of rural-urban linkages is one such characteristic. The sophisticated pass law system, the attempts to stabilise labour in the post-war period, and later the sanctions busting efforts of the Smith-regime, acted to lay the foundations of a diversified industrial base and a largely formalised, predominantly male workforce. In this respect also Zimbabwe is different from most other African countries. Lastly, the importance attached to rural and urban planning in controlling and directing population movement is another distinctive feature of Zimbabwean society that can be directly linked to Southern Rhodesian experiences.

Given the historical importance of the connections between rural and urban livelihoods, it is hardly surprising that most historical literature dwells upon the importance of rural-urban linkages and the degree of proletarianisation of the labour force. The proletarianisation narrative of capitalist development in Southern Rhodesia, offered by Arrighi (1973) Palmer (1977) and Van Onselen (1976) for instance, suggests an interesting connection between the rural and the urban. The introduction of the cash economy, it is argued, resulted in the creation of a proletariat, whose members in most cases were temporarily dislocated from their rural homes to meet the labour requirements of the colonial state as well as of budding industries and farms. Remittances were made by the (male) members of the proletariat to wives, children and older men, who remained in the rural areas. Nonetheless as Wolpe (1972) has argued, “[the] accessibility to the migrant-worker of the product (and of the “social services”) of the Reserves depends on the *conservation*, albeit in a restructured form, of the reciprocal obligations of the family” (p. 434, cited by Murray 1980:143). The logic of the migrant labour system thus rested on the return of labour to the reserves upon illness or unemployment. This rationale also implied a means of subsistence in the rural areas that had to be carefully regulated to ensure the survival, but not the prospering of the peasantry.

Despite the early introduction of various measures aimed at controlling and directing mobility, such as different types of taxation (e.g. the hut tax of 1896, and poll tax in 1903), the pass laws of 1902 and the subsequent introduction of the White Agricultural Policy in 1908, the ability to resist migration varied from place to place as critics of the proletarianisation thesis such as Wright (1995) and Ranger (1985) have shown. Indeed Ranger (1985) suggests that colonialism was superimposed on already existing social and economic relations. For this reason too, estimates of the extent of proletarianisation vary, with van Onselen (1976), suggesting that proletarianisation on a large scale occurred during the late 1920s. Schmidt (1996), on the basis of a study of maize production in Goromonzi District, illustrates instead the dramatic decline in peasant production that the passing of the Maize Control Acts of 1931 and 1934 caused in that district. Schmidt (1996) argues, moreover, that

such proletarianisation was restricted to the male workforce, with “women, the backbone of the African peasantries [being]...only marginally proletarianized during the pre-World War II period” (p. 3). Raftopolous (1999) in a similar vein suggests that the enforcement of the Native Land Husbandry Act and the wholesale implementation of the Land Allocation Act following the Second World War for the first time reversed the ratio between foreign and local migrants in Salisbury⁷.

The degree of proletarianisation thus varied, while the penetration of the capitalist economy was a gradual and differentiated process. Given the deep-seated linkages between rural livelihoods and urban existences, it is hardly surprising that many of the indigenous Shona from the relatively well-endowed Mashonaland Provinces were able to resist proletarianisation and urban wage labour.

With the dramatic developments in land policy between 1930 and the late 1950s, the ability to withstand the need for urban wages in general diminished, as land shortages became endemic in the Native Reserves⁸. By 1930 the Land Apportionment Act had reserved 51 percent of all land, largely located in the most fertile regions, for the European population of 48 000 inhabitants of which 11 000 were settled on the land (Palmer 1977:186). The African population, meanwhile was allocated land on a communal basis in the so-called Native Reserves, and could to a lesser extent purchase land in the Native Purchase Areas. In practice, however, the implementation of the Land Apportionment Act was delayed in many parts of the country until the post-war period, and the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 was subsequently replaced by a new Land Apportionment Act passed in 1941 (Simon 1986:8).

The promulgation of the Native Land Husbandry Act from 1951, with time changed the situation radically. The link between labour and land was effectively severed for many sections of the peasantry, driving large numbers of workers off the land and into the urban centres. Land shortages would, it was assumed, be alleviated by the creation of a proletariat divorced from the rural areas and absorbed into the expanding secondary industry of the 1940s and 1950s (Tshuma 1997:25). In practice, the act resulted in a rising incidence of landlessness and increasing rural stratification of resources, a situation which was aggravated by a post-war boom of immigration from Europe.

The general trade-off between rural and urban fortunes, and the ability to resist migration through agricultural success is thus very evident in the historical literature. Raftopolous (1999) for example remarks that 70 percent of Shona migrants to Salisbury between 1953 and 1957 only worked for an average of 5.3 months before leaving the city, despite the launching in the

⁷ After Zimbabwe's independence the name of Salisbury was changed to Harare.

⁸ The Land Apportionment Act labelled areas reserved for African agriculture 'Native Reserves', in the later Land Tenure Act (1969) which replaced the Land Apportionment Act, African areas were renamed 'Tribal Trust Lands'.

early 1950s of the so called “partnership programme” aimed at stabilising the middle class (Bond 1999:188). Yoshikuni (1999) on similar grounds differentiates between migrants to Bulawayo and Salisbury, and suggests that migrants to Bulawayo were confined to labour migration as a result of the more meagre agricultural land surrounding the latter city. The role of rural-urban linkages in urban livelihoods was also the subject of a number of African Budget Surveys from the late 1950s, and the 1960s (CSO 1965, CSO 1970). Again, urban remittances to rural areas are found to be greater than flows in the reverse direction in the Bulawayo budget survey from 1958/59 (CSO 1960). This was in contrast to the information from the Salisbury budget survey (CSO 1958), a difference which is attributed to the poorer agricultural land surrounding Bulawayo (CSO 1960). Möller (1978) reports similar evidence from a number of surveys undertaken in Salisbury in the mid-1970s. Nonetheless, as Ibbotson (1943) suggests in an earlier survey of the conditions in urban areas in Southern Rhodesia, the connections with the rural area also varied with the economic status of the individual migrant in the city (File DO 35/1162, Public Records Office).

Despite the acknowledgement of the very real trade-off between rural and urban fortunes, and the assertion by among others Ranger (1985) and Andersson, J (2002) that engagement in migrant labour varied with the characteristics of the *local* rural economy, accounts of spatial linkages are, however, focused on the existence of rural-urban links. Historical accounts of urban migration tend, moreover, to concentrate almost entirely on Southern Rhodesia’s two largest cities, Salisbury (see Parry 1999, Raftopolous 1999, Bond 1999, Barnes with Win 1992, for instance) and Bulawayo (e.g. Barnes 1999, Lunn 1999, Yoshikuni 1999, Thornton 1999). For this reason, urban-ward migration in Southern Rhodesia is portrayed essentially as rural migration directed towards large urban areas.

Given the lack of industries outside the main cities, and the industrial boom in Salisbury in the post-war period, as noted by Andersson, J (2002:57), it is likely that rural-urban migration towards the cities was the dominant form of migration. Likewise, it is probable that the migrant labour system forged connections centred on linkages between rural and urban areas. The vast changes in the structural and demographic parameters of Zimbabwean society, primarily over the past twenty years, suggests however, the need for a new approach which encompasses the extreme fluidity of migration and superimposes the multitudinous character of spatial links on the historically important rural-urban connections.

2.3 Structural change, livelihoods and mobility in Zimbabwe

Post-independence Zimbabwe, like many other African countries, has been characterised by a severe economic downturn coupled with the devastating effects of the HIV/Aids pandemic. The incessantly worsening economic climate in Zimbabwe for this reason means that both rural and urban livelihoods are being increasingly constrained. The literature on Zimbabwe's descent with respect to most social and economic indicators is abundant (e.g. Skålnes 1995, Bond 1996, Stoneman 1991, 1993, Kadhani 1986).

My focus here, however, will be placed on the implications of such increasing hardship on livelihoods and mobility. A general picture of livelihood conditions is presented on the basis of official poverty estimates (e.g. CSO 1998a, *The Poverty Assessment Study Survey from 1997*⁹), work specifically on the social consequences of structural adjustment (Mlambo 1997, Mwanza 1999, Makoni and Kujinga 2000, Sachikonye 1995, Tevera 1995) and less recent data on rural livelihoods (for instance Cousins and Weiner 1992, Pankhurst 1991), in general dating from the mid-1980s. The substantial literature on informalization of urban employment and the informal sector (Brand 1986, Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo 1993 and 1995, Mupedziswa and Gumbo 2001) and urban livelihood strategies (Rakodi 1994, Matshalaga 1996) has been an important source of information. Work which suggests the importance of rural-urban linkages (Kanji and Jazdowska 1995, Andersson, J 2002) and Ncube et al.'s (1997a, 1997b) informative studies on the family in Zimbabwe and on women's access to resources have been used to supplement the limited secondary literature on internal migration (e.g. Potts and Mutambirwa 1990, Potts 2000, Potts with Mutambirwa 1998) to produce a picture of the structural conditions influencing livelihoods and mobility.

Structural adjustment

Following independence in 1980, the newly elected Zanu-Pf government sought to engage in a set of redistributive policies. The policy document *Growth with Equity* (Government of Zimbabwe 1981), laid out these policies which were aimed primarily to redress the social injustices of the colonial era, and were made possible by a post-independence boom, in turn a result of the lifting of sanctions following the peace agreement at Lancaster House in 1979 (Mlambo 1997:37, Ericsson and Gibbon 1993:35). With time, however, this economic boom and the welfarist aspirations of the government proved unsustainable. Consequently, that which Tevera (1995) terms "an IMF-

⁹ The *Poverty Assessment Study Survey* was published by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare in 1997, and is based on data collected between August and November of 1995. It will henceforth be referred to as the *PASS Report*.

inspired stabilisation programme” was operational between 1983 and 1990. In 1990, this programme was replaced by a home-grown structural adjustment package, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), launched as a wholesale “general development model rather than merely a set of technical economic policy changes (Ericsson and Gibbon 1993:40)”. A second phase of adjustment, The Zimbabwe Programme for Social and Economic Transformation (ZIMPREST) was introduced in 1998, and followed in 2001 by the Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP). Before the land reform packages and nationalisation policies presented in the latest document, structural adjustment Zimbabwe-style had focused on the same set of reforms as elsewhere, namely trade liberalisation, liberalisation of forex regulations, deregularising the economy and downsizing the state (Brown 1999:77).

In terms of social consequences, adjustment has been devastating, although Zimbabwe twinned its launching of ESAP with a Social Dimensions of Adjustment fund to cushion its anticipated short-term negative effects on the most vulnerable sections of society, such as the landless and the unemployed. Despite this fund, and its successor, the Poverty Alleviation Action Plan of 1995, which is in the process of implementation (pers. comm., Mr I.C. Mashingaidze, Community Action Programme Specialist, Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Harare, September 5, 2000), the short-term effects of adjustment on the Zimbabwean population as suggested by a range of statistics, have been predominantly negative. The cost of living index, for instance, has risen from 100 in 1990 to roughly 1225 by January 2000 (*Zimbabwe Standard*, February 20, 2000 “Formal Employment Loses Favour as Economic Woes Tighten”). Price increases have, moreover, affected items purchased by the poorer strata disproportionately (Sachikonye 1993:259).

Taxation to enable the reduction of the budget deficit, while attempting to cater to the demands of vociferous interest groups on the domestic political scene, such as the so-called war veterans, has resulted in additional financial burdens for the majority of households. Real wages have fallen considerably, with non-farm wages reaching a twenty-year low in 1994 (Mlambo 1997:85). In the context of mass retrenchments, (with formal unemployment in early 2002 standing at over 60 percent¹⁰), and rising prices, it is hardly surprising that poverty, both rural and urban is intensifying. Most official poverty estimates suggest that between 60 (CSO 1998a) and 75 percent (*The PASS Report 1997*) of all Zimbabweans were living in poverty by the mid-1990s, although the latter percentage is dismissed as too high by the CSO (1998a). In a more recent news report, however, Zimbabweans were described as seven percent poorer in February of 2002 than in 1970 (UN Integrated Regional Information Network, homepage, www.irinnews.org, “Zimbabwe Economic Crisis Set to Worsen”, Wednesday, February 20, 2002).

¹⁰ As suggested for instance in “Economist Fear Worst for Zimbabwe”, BBC News Business, www.news.bbc.co.uk, March 18, 2002.

Following the introduction of ESAP, and the general social and economic decline that has characterised Zimbabwe since the mid-1980s, stresses to both rural and urban livelihoods have been apparent. In turn, the extended family network that spans both these spheres of production and reproduction is placed under enormous pressure as a result of hardship on both these fronts. The ability to straddle is in this sense being curtailed by poverty, while the necessity to engage economically in both rural and urban areas is steadily increasing.

Rural pressures

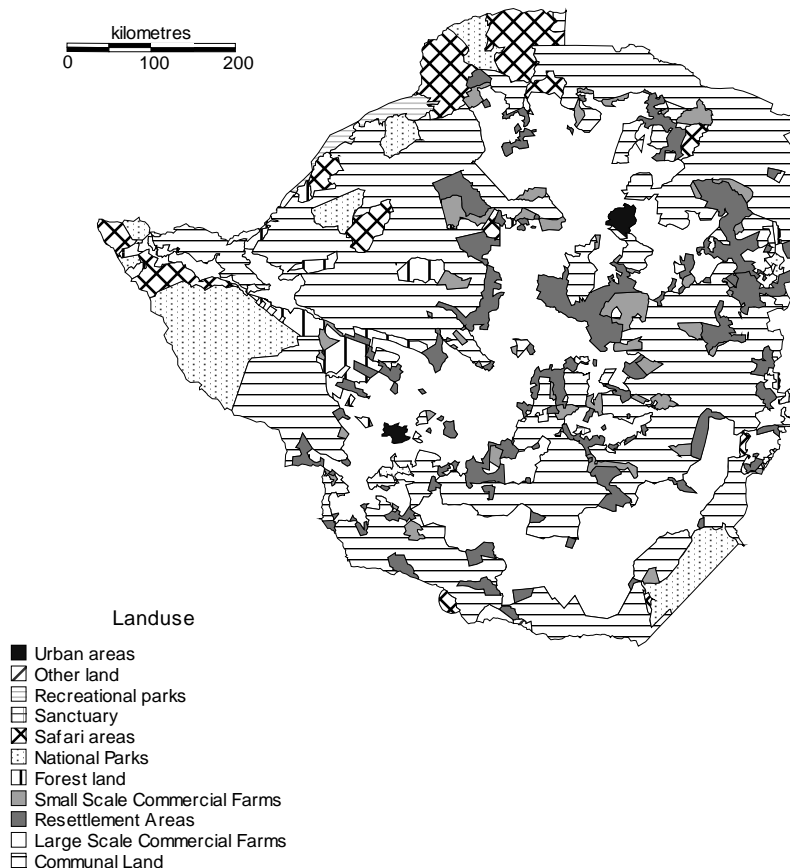
Despite the recent radicalisation of the land question, the independent government's land policy has largely failed to resolve problems pertaining to the unequal structures of land ownership. The most salient characteristic of the land reform process has thus until recently been the continuation of the colonial state's agrarian policies in general, coupled with a desire to consolidate the ruling party's influence over the rural areas, while cementing the state's relationship with the rapidly growing class of African, large-scale commercial farmers. In addition, the plethora of economic reforms that have been introduced since the mid-1980s have largely benefited capitalist farming élites (Moyo 1995:1, Moyo 2000, Tshuma 1997, Masilela and Weiner 1996, Palmer 1990, Herbst 1992, Potts and Mutambirwa 1997). Thus, as Moyo (1995:129) suggests, the communal area population of around six million, or one million households, are cultivating mainly marginal land, with 85 percent of households using fields located in natural regions III, IV and V¹¹.

Following the post-independence extension of agricultural services, credit facilities and marketing depots to also cover the formerly isolated communal areas¹², Zimbabwe's success in peasant agriculture was hailed in development circles as the "Zimbabwean miracle". The success story of peasant production turned out to be deceptive however, as the myopic focus on aggregates of production obscured the wider picture of social stratification in both communal lands, small-scale commercial farming areas and resettlement areas (Zinyama 1992:182). Evidence of generally deepening social differentiation in the communal areas is common in the literature (Cousins and Weiner 1992, Zinyama 1992, Kinsey 1999, Jackson and Collier 1991, Pedersen 1997b).

¹¹ Zimbabwe is divided into five natural regions on the basis of annual rainfall and agricultural potential, with Natural Region I being the region of highest agricultural potential. As Tevera (1994) writes, "About one-third of large-scale commercial farming land and less than one-tenth of communal land lie in agroecological regions I and II, which is land with the highest agricultural potential. On the other hand, about half of the large-scale commercial farming land and more than three-quarters of communal land fall in the agriculturally marginal regions IV and V (pp 41.43)."

¹² After independence 'Tribal Trust Lands' changed name to Communal Areas. The system of communal tenure, however, still persists, with the land being officially owned by the president.

Meanwhile, the resettlement programme which by 1998 had provided around 55 000 households with land, has on the whole failed to alleviate poverty in the rural areas, with resettlement areas still suffering from “pervasive poverty” (CSO 1998a:9). In addition, structural adjustment has been instrumental in the deterioration of rural livelihoods in general, through the fall in producer prices and increasing costs of agricultural inputs (Pedersen 1997c:57). The extremely unequal land structure in Zimbabwe (see e.g. Simon 1986) makes the situation perhaps more severe than in other countries as the effects of land degradation are likely to be more acutely felt as a result of the small size of marginal landholdings. Map 2.1 illustrates the current (1998) land use pattern in Zimbabwe, and suggests the central location of most large-scale commercial farmland.



Map 2.1: Land use in Zimbabwe. Source “Zimbabwe Land Classification”, Surveyor General (1998)

Of most relevance to the functioning of the household unit over space, however, is the importance of (urban) wage income in rural livelihoods as has been suggested by much research carried out in the mid 1980s (e.g. Adams’

(1991), Bonnevie (1987) and Pankhurst (1991)). Data from the more recent *Poverty in Zimbabwe* (CSO 1998a) covering 1995/6 confirms the notion that wage income is perhaps the most significant factor of differentiation within the rural economy. In rural areas as a whole, 51 percent of households with one member in formal employment were found to be poor and 26 percent were considered very poor, compared with 80 percent and 54 percent respectively for households without any formally employed members.¹³ Those rural households whose main source of income was salaried employment recorded poverty levels of 52 percent poor and 25 percent very poor in comparison with 87 percent poor and 63 percent very poor for those families whose main source of income was either communal or resettlement farming (CSO 1998a: 44-45).

The importance of remittances in diversifying sources of income and enabling investments into rural agriculture meanwhile blurs the distinction between rural and urban spheres of production and reproduction, and suggests that the ability to straddle both these economic arenas is a significant source of stratification. The access to wage income has faltered in recent years, however, providing yet another challenge to the household as a functioning livelihood system. As Makoni and Kujinga (2000) suggest: “[Urban] transfers were however neither reliable nor common to everyone: unreliable in that those who were employed earned too little to feed themselves, let alone supplement other people’s income” (p. 88). This situation is also suggested by Sachikonye (1995) on the basis of a study of workers in the (formal) agro-industrial and beverages sector, who as a result of incomes “so far below the poverty line” found it “almost impossible” to send remittances to their rural homes (p. 94).

The effects of rural poverty on mobility are a moot point, however. Berkvens (1997), on the basis of a study in the arid Mtoko district, for instance argues that labour migration from communal areas to urban areas has in fact decreased in importance as a result of the growth of agricultural production and non-agricultural rural employment (p. 3). In contrast, a number of authors (e.g. Sachikonye 1993, 1995, Gwaunza 1998) point to the continued and rising significance of movement to urban areas, a phenomenon which they link to the necessity of securing waged income in the face of declining agricultural productivity. Potts and Mutambirwa (1990, 1997) moreover connect migration to Harare with increasing landlessness. Such evidence can be linked to wider continental trends of de-agrarianisation, and the stratification of access to rural resources as noted by Bryceson (1997), Habtu (1997) and Ibrahim (1997) for instance.

¹³ *Poverty in Zimbabwe*, published by the CSO on the basis of surveys undertaken in 1995/96, aims to identify both the extent and depth of poverty. For this reason the figures on the very poor are included in the figures for total poverty.

Urban pressures

The household is thus subjected to reproductive pressures on the rural front, but also on the urban. Zimbabwe's employment structure has, until recently, been predominantly formal in nature. However, a number of studies strongly indicate an ongoing process of informalization and casualisation (see Rakodi 1995a, CSO 1998a) of the urban labour market. The urban labour force has increasingly been forced to seek work outside the formal sector, or to engage in wage employment on terms outside the ambit of labour legislation. Informalization of urban employment is a well known consequence of adjustment as suggested in the Zimbabwean context by the work of Brand (1986), Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo (1993, 1995), Mhone (1993), Kanji (1995) Kanji and Jazdowska (1993, 1995) and Potts (2000).

Thus, urban households are being subjected to economic pressures reminiscent of those in the rural areas. The diversification of income sources and the necessity of relying on multiple modes of provisioning are themes that resonate within the literature on urban provisioning in the adjustment era. Such strategies include the letting out of rooms to lodgers (Rakodi 1994, Potts with Mutambirwa 1998, Tevera 1995), the engagement in urban agriculture (Tevera 1995, Matshalaga 1996, Rakodi 1994) and attempts to consolidate linkages to rural areas (Potts and Mutambirwa 1990, Kanji and Jazdowska 1995, Rakodi 1994, Potts with Mutambirwa 1998). Unlike urban-ward migration, urban to rural migration in the form of return migration, is a movement pattern that is directly connected with structural adjustment in much of the literature. Potts' (1995) article on urban-rural migration in the context of Africa in general is informative in this respect, as she focuses on urban poverty as a cause of rural return migration. Based on official census statistics from a number of African countries, her conclusions should be treated with some caution, as for example Simon (1997) suggests. In later work, Potts with Mutambirwa (1998) support the notion of rural return migration on the basis of interview data collected from migrants to Harare in 1994. When respondents were asked about their perceptions of the impact of structural adjustment on the communal areas return migration following retrenchment was one of the consequences of ESAP identified as problematic. Again, however, caution is warranted as comments such as "Retrenched workers are causing over-population in the communal areas" and "people made redundant in town go to the communal areas but are not absorbed in communal area activities" (p. 64) have been singled out as indicative of the types of responses given by the migrants. Yet, upon closer scrutiny, only four percent or seven respondents actually mentioned such migration. Nonetheless, Potts' (1995) article proposes a conceptually important link between adjustment and stalled urban migration from rural areas, and rural return migration. Conceivably, however, the necessity to secure a waged income in conjunction with the insecurities of (urban) labour markets and rural poverty,

suggests a need for circulation *between* different urban areas, possibly using the rural home as a temporary base.

HIV/Aids

In the context of household transformation and general economic hardship the Aids pandemic is of obvious relevance. The effects of Aids on the household and wider family constellations have been analysed in the Zimbabwean context by, among others, Ncube et al. (1997a, 1997b), who note the rising incidence of Aids orphans and the shifting of their care from parents to grandparents, especially maternal grandparents. Also, the death of adult children, who traditionally support their elderly parents, in lieu of a functioning social security system, means that many of the formally retired continue working until they are incapacitated by old age, simply because there are few alternatives. The tendency towards impoverishment among household members, especially the elderly, is accentuated by customary law which stipulates that the patrilineage inherits the property of the deceased, while gaining access to the eventual benefits of female orphans dowry payments (Ncube et al. 1997b). Ncube et al. (1997a) also note that “usually such orphans end up at their maternal grandparents’ home, rather than with their paternal kin” (p. 171).

Thus Aids has dramatic effects on the provisioning possibilities especially of already marginalised households. This has been noted by Mutangadura, Mukurazita and Jackson (1999:19), who argue that small poor households are the most vulnerable in the context of the pandemic. In this context the reduction in public spending on health care as a part of ESAP, and the introduction of user fees (including fees for condoms), are also likely to have affected the spread of HIV and the ability to control illnesses related to Aids (see for example Tevera 1997). In this sense the informalization of the reproduction of labour has effects also on the spread of the pandemic.

The question of where Aids-orphans and those needing care are placed, puts further strains on already crumbling household resources, as suggested by Makoni and Kujinga (2000:96) who note the return migration to communal areas of Aids-sufferers for the purpose of home-based care. Together with the structural transformations evident within Zimbabwean society since the early 1990s, HIV/Aids has devastating effects for such households.

Livelihoods, household structure and migration

It seems evident that structural changes of the kind of magnitude brought about by ESAP and the Aids pandemic, have significant effects on mobility, as

both rural and urban households are increasingly made more mutually dependent on their rural and urban counterparts. The literature however, tends to focus on either the rural or the urban in undifferentiated terms. Sachikonye (1998) and Ncube et al. (1997a) note the occurrence of “split families” for example. Ncube et al. (1997a: 164-165) identify a number of types of commuter households, namely rural-urban, and mine-rural commuter families. In these household constellations the husband, possibly with one or two children, lives either in an urban centre or on a mining compound, while his wife resides in the rural areas. Such splitting of families approaches a variation of the traditional migrant labour set-up and for this reason is perhaps not a new phenomenon as such, although dire economic conditions may be preserving parts of the migrant labour system.

Ncube et al. (1997a) also use the term “repository families”, however, to describe new family constellations fashioned by socio-economic hardships. The sending of children for schooling to their grandparents is a common phenomenon in this context, as is the return of daughters to their parental home upon divorce or separation. Other types of reposittees are children born out of wedlock, Aids-orphans, elderly parents and more rarely other relatives. Again, however, the rural home is perceived as the focus of such mobility.

2.4 Conclusion

The literature, despite its recognition of the occurrence of various kinds of mobility under economic hardship, remains largely focused on a roughly hewn division between the rural and the urban. This may conceivably be a result of the historical heritage of the migrant labour system. It must be stressed however, that rural return migration and migration to large, urban centres are likely to be occurring in Zimbabwe today, and that these types of mobility doubtlessly deserve the interest they have received. Nonetheless, I believe a widening of focus is necessary to acknowledge the new and spatially complex outcomes that structural adjustment and household adaptation to economic and demographic hardship are producing. For instance, the informalization of the labour market means that urban existences are becoming increasingly insecure, which may produce a labour circulation reminiscent of the colonial era. Meanwhile, the necessity of supporting unemployed or elderly family members, and the constrained income earning opportunities in rural areas in Zimbabwe generally, suggest that rural return migration is not necessarily a permanent decision. The perspective therefore needs to be widened to include also movements among different urban areas of various sizes and indeed also between rural areas. Whether Harare and Bulawayo’s sizeable out-migration (noted in the sample census of 1997, i.e. CSO 1998b) is directed predominantly, or even entirely, to rural homes, or is halted somewhere on the

way between the metropolis and the countryside, can only be speculated upon. Nonetheless, with respect to small town growth it is indisputable that the populations of many small and intermediate sized centres *are* increasing.

3 Field methods

3.1 The case study approach

The case study approach to qualitative research has been discussed by Merriam (1994) among others, as a methodology particularly relevant to the study of processes, or what Cronbach (1975:123) terms “interpretation in context”(cited in Merriam). The strength of the case study approach lies in the study of an isolated phenomenon, institution, social group or place, which in turn enables an in-depth understanding of the complexities of a situation or process. A case study for this reason is heuristic, inductive and descriptive in nature (Merriam 1994:226-28). Unlike more conventional approaches, the qualitative case study methodology does not advocate the use of any particular method, but instead encourages the combination of multiple sources of information, such as interviews, documents and artefacts.

The qualitative case study also poses a set of problems, however. Merriam (1994:47) identifies three central drawbacks. Firstly, limits on time and other resources may mean that the “thick” description, which is the central aim of the case study, is unrealistic. Secondly, case studies may oversimplify or exaggerate certain factors. Thirdly, case studies (like most qualitative approaches) are dependent upon the researcher’s sensibility and integrity.

In the context of a geographically isolated case study, the second limitation is perhaps the most relevant. To what extent a single place can say everything about a particular phenomenon is of course debatable. Yet, constraints in terms of time and resources in general, mean that a more complete picture of complex processes may emerge through the in-depth study of those processes in one place, than through the use of a more shallow but spatially comprehensive approach. Clearly, however, the choice of place for carrying out a case study may influence the final results and indeed the ability to make generalisations on the basis of these results.

3.2 The choice of case location

The population growth of small towns in Zimbabwe has been expressed anecdotally in the literature by Wekwete (1990) and Pedersen (1997a, 1997b, 1997c) for instance. Zinyama's (1994) discussion of the growth of eight small and intermediate sized towns in the inter-census period between 1982 and 1992, is the most comprehensive account of this phenomenon, however. In four cases growth is explained by one or two factors identified by the author himself while the expansion of the remaining four towns (Victoria Falls, Chiredzi, Beightbridge and Rusape) is left unexplained. Conceivably, the rising population of Victoria Falls can be connected with tourism, that of Chiredzi to a newly established sugar plantation, and the growth of Beightbridge as the border post with South Africa does not appear surprising. Rusape's expansion in terms of population is more puzzling. As Bjerén (1985) suggests as the basis for her case study of Shashemene in Ethiopia, it is advisable to choose a town without any establishments which "might attract 'labour migration' in the sense used by the literature, such as industries, large-scale aid projects or plantations (1985:9)" when studying more general migration patterns towards smaller urban centres. The choice of Rusape as the setting for my field study was informed by Zinyama's (1994) article and Bjerén's (1985) criteria.

Vengere, Rusape's only high density suburb, was selected as the survey area for a number of reasons. The low-income segments of the population are more likely to be found in the high density area of town, while more recent migrants can be thought to rent rooms in this area. Most academic work on urban areas in Zimbabwe tends to focus on high density suburbs, and for comparative purposes the choice of Vengere also appeared attractive. The character of the chosen location is elaborated in Chapter 4.

3.3 Survey method

I carried out a pilot study of migration to Rusape in May and June of 1998, which suggested the broad themes of inquiry for my main stretch of fieldwork during the latter part of 2000. I was interested initially in capturing the reasons for small-town growth as identified by migrants to the town and used a very broad definition of the word migrant, covering anyone who had moved to the town at any age. The conclusions from that study can be found in a Minor Field Study report written in 1999 (Andersson, A. 1999). This study is not based on fieldwork carried out during the pilot study, although the results from the pilot study were used to guide my research interests in later fieldwork. I have subsequently spent two stretches of fieldwork in Rusape and my main

fieldwork period was used to conduct a survey of 143 migrants¹⁴ in Rusape's high density suburb of Vengere¹⁵.

Kruger (1995) describes the difficulties associated with Zimbabwean policy on foreign researchers, and the research permit clearance process in my case extended over two years. Two weeks after the parliamentary elections of July 2000, I arrived in Rusape, which during the elections had been one of the most affected electoral districts in terms of violence towards the opposition and the white minority. Practical considerations shaped by sensitivity to the political atmosphere therefore came to guide much of my sampling and interviewing. A number of respondents were interviewed in each section¹⁶ of Vengere, related to the size of the ward in which the section was located. Each ward has approximately the same number of residents. The aim was to spread the interviews between new and old housing areas. Initially I aimed to select respondents with varying urban background through snowball sampling. Snowballing was rejected however, as people were found to associate more with their urban neighbours rather than with people who share a similar migration history. Finding migrants who had moved from smaller urban areas was moreover difficult. Twenty migrants, (ten male, and ten female) were interviewed in the larger sections, ten (five male, five female) in the smaller ones, and five (three female, and two male) in the hostels. Two male respondents were later removed from the sample, giving a slightly skewed sample. A total of 143 migrants were interviewed, 73 women and 70 men.

My aim was to attain an understanding of the considerations guiding migrants' decision to move to a small town, and the importance of establishing a good rapport when collecting life histories (discussed in more detail below) and discussing often politically sensitive issues, such as land ownership, was deemed essential to the study. For this reason migrants who themselves offered to speak to me were interviewed. As I was cautioned by my research assistant, in Shona society an implicit "taboo" surrounds approaching people in their houses. Although perhaps more of a psychological barrier, this cultural code was nonetheless very obvious and most respondents were therefore interviewed outside their houses, mostly in their gardens. For this reason also, informants were approached in the street while engaging in business or on their way to other places. Many respondents were conscious of the political climate and I often encountered an initial suspicion that I was part of the opposition, or a journalist who might make them the subject of unwanted publicity.

¹⁴ A migrant was defined as anyone who had moved to Rusape above the age of eighteen.

¹⁵ After independence, "high density suburb" replaced the colonial term "township". Nonetheless, Town Council employees as well as Vengere's residents refer to Vengere as a "township".

¹⁶ A 'section' varies greatly in size both in terms of residential units, and population. Map 4.8 details Vengere.

In general the interviews were carried out mainly during weekdays and Saturdays and no later than six in the evening as the government at this time was practising what was termed “load shedding” with all electricity being switched off from five thirty to eight p.m. Also, interviewing in the winter season meant that temperatures fell rapidly after sunset. Interviewing in the agriculturally slack season was, however an advantage. Since most men were working until five, finding male respondents was quite difficult. Interviewing on Sundays was also problematic as people in general were attending church services or socializing.

3.4 Interview approach

I chose to employ a life history, or biographical approach, the advantages of which have been raised by a number of researchers working on migration, e.g. Skeldon (1994), Halfacree and Boyle (1993, 1995), Vandsemb (1995). In the context of the study of mobility the life history approach presents one major advantage, namely the possibility of constructing a chronology of events, which during the course of the interview can be annotated with explanations and comments. The flexibility of the life history approach also suited the necessity of interviewing in a tense political climate, as questions could be tailored to the emerging situation. The importance of establishing a good rapport with the respondent directed much of the interview procedure, and the direction which the interview took guided some of the questions. My very rudimentary knowledge of Shona in many instances served to break the ice. Although I was unable to actually interview in Shona, a fact which added some distance to the interviewees, on the whole the interviews were characterised by a friendly atmosphere.

Despite its advantages, the life history approach also poses a number of problems. The individual’s version of events is occasionally difficult to corroborate and may also leave room for respondents to romanticise or exaggerate past events. In one or two cases I discarded information from migrants which I felt was unreliable. In other instances dates would be forgotten, but in general complete migration histories could be constructed. On the whole, however, very similar accounts of previous migration and current livelihoods emerged from the respondents. The individual rather than the household was emphasised. As the theoretical discussion suggested, the household concept, and the delimitation of what exactly a household is, presents a number of difficulties. The specifically gendered power relations within the household is moreover suggested in the Zimbabwean context by Ncube et al. (1997b) adding an empirical complication to the conceptual one suggested in the theoretical discussion. Also, my interest was with the individual and what considerations had guided her/his mobility. The way in

which the household was felt to influence such decisions was explored in the interviews. The household was approached as a structural context for individuals' lives, and Bozzoli's (1991:236) observation that informants in general viewed themselves as "decision-making existential being[s]" was reflected by my sample. As I was cautious of the escalating political violence in the country I was eager to complete my fieldwork before it intensified further and time constraints also guided the pace and depth of the fieldwork.

The interviewed migrants were therefore not always household heads (for a discussion of the problems of defining household headship, see Chant 1997), but were felt to provide valuable information on their own mobility nonetheless. A migrant in the context of my method was perceived to be someone who had moved to Rusape at the age of eighteen or later. This cut-off point was felt to be appropriate to capture migration as an adult decision. Another criterion used for selection was not to interview members of the same household, as the same story would most likely emerge. During my pilot study I had interviewed eleven informants from the same household, who all presented similar accounts of their movement to Rusape, and for this reason I decided to limit my interviewing to one member of each household. I did however, aim to gather information on other household members in my interviews, as this presents the possibility of collecting much information within a short space of time, as suggested by Potts with Mutambirwa (1998). In some instances, other household members were present and could supplement and/or corroborate information. Triangulation through a more determined questioning of neighbours and other household members was to some degree rejected, however. This was the result of time constraints, but also because of the practical difficulties it implied in terms of tracing what were essentially historical decisions as well as confirming personal perceptions of events and phenomena.

This emphasis on historical data in a large number of cases meant that migrants had been household heads (often as young single males, or females) at the time of migration, but had since married, or moved in with parents, uncles, or siblings who were perceived to be senior to them in terms of both age and the leverage they exercised on household decisions.

The use of newspaper articles, archival material, official documents and interviews with key informants were moreover, intended to evaluate the narratives my respondents were providing. Another important source of information was provided by my host, Mrs Mary Marwisa, her children, neighbours and friends, who were also invaluable sources of general knowledge of Rusape, and local gossip. Access to her knowledge of neighbours who were interviewed, and other respondents, also served to confirm information gathered through the interviews. My credibility was moreover raised significantly by being able to say that I was indeed staying in Vengere (and not in town) and that I was staying at her house. A second

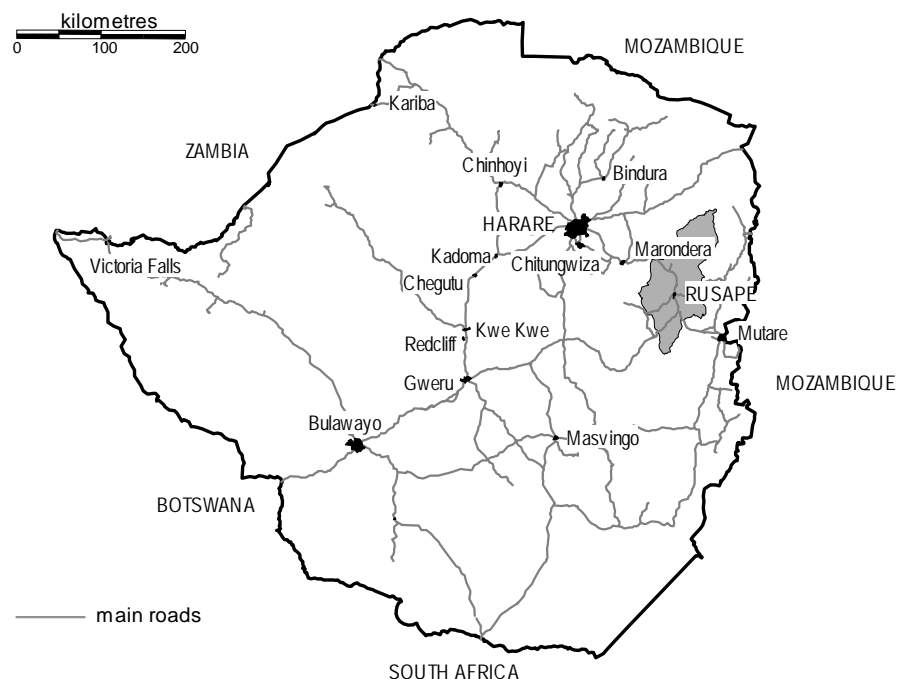
source of very valuable information was my research assistant, who had been born in Rusape and had lived there for most of her life.

4 Rusape, the setting of the study

4.1 Introduction

Founded in 1894 as a British South Africa Company administration post, Rusape is the district centre of Makoni District, Manicaland Province. The town is located approximately 170 km Southeast of Harare along the main road between Harare and Mutare, and derives its name from the Rusape river (“the river which never stops flowing’ in Shona) which flows through the outskirts of town. Surrounded by communal lands and resettlement areas as well as large-scale commercial farming areas, Rusape is the centre of an important agricultural region. Ranger (1985) who on the basis of extensive interviews and archival work uses the district as a case study in *Guerrilla War and Peasant Consciousness* provides the most vivid and comprehensive historical account of Makoni District. Moyo (1995) moreover, uses a communal land in Makoni District as a case location for his study of *The Land Question in Zimbabwe*. In addition to these works of roughly three hundred pages each, very little has been written on the district, with the exception of a working paper by Jansen and Olthof (1993) on rural centres and enterprises in Makoni. Archival sources on the town are also hard to come by, which suggests a fairly anonymous historical existence. An important source of information on the town itself has been the *Rusape Master Plan* published by the Rusape Town Council (RTC) in 1996, as well as interviews with Town Council representatives and other key informants¹⁷.

¹⁷ The Town Secretary (Mr O. Muzawazi) and the Director of Housing and Community Services (Mrs F.B. Matsanga) at the Rusape Town Council assisted me in selecting three senior citizens (Mr Makanza, Mr Mapa and Mr Nyawata) for a focus group discussion on the history of Rusape. The focus group discussion was held on December 16, 1999. Mrs Matsanga was moreover present as translator and facilitator at this discussion and some of her comments have been added to those of the three men to balance the gendered account of the history of the town. This discussion forms the basis of the historical section on Rusape, and the participants are presented in the reference list.



Map 4.1: Rusape in Zimbabwe (Makoni District indicated in grey).

4.2 Makoni District

Despite the rapid growth of Rusape, my interviews with the Town Council's Director of Housing and Community Services¹⁸ paint a bleak picture of the socio-economic situation in the surrounding rural areas. This is in keeping with the general picture presented in the *PASS Report* (1997), where Manicaland emerges as the poorest province in the country¹⁹. On the basis of

¹⁸ The official title of this office at the Rusape Town Council is The Director of Housing and Community Services, generally the title is abbreviated to Housing Director. I use the two titles interchangeably.

¹⁹ The CSOs (1998) report on Poverty in Zimbabwe in some respects contradicts the data from the *PASS Report* however, and places Matabeleland North as the poorest province.

this survey Makoni District, with 67 percent very poor, and 13 percent poor households, was selected as one of the programme districts for the government's Poverty Alleviation Action Programme which aims to mitigate poverty in a number of districts deemed to be especially poor.

This description of rural poverty is much at odds with Ranger's (1985) historical account of the Makoni peasantry, however, which instead paints a picture of a population intent on harnessing the entrepreneurial possibilities brought by colonialism. Indeed, "the peasant solution", made Makoni exceptional as the locus of the country's most successful peasant maize producers well into the 1950s.

According to Ranger (1985), this agricultural prowess, combined with the geographical consequences of land alienation, which in the case of Makoni provided relatively fertile soils for African peasants, and access to the urban market in Rusape, enabled Makoni's residents to avoid proletarianisation. The impressions made by Makoni peasants on the local administration, meanwhile, enhanced such possibilities as they provided an opening for a certain amount of co-operation with the colonial state, as suggested by Native Commissioner Ross' account of Makoni grain production in July of 1910:

The natives in many parts of the District [writes Ross in his official report] are still busy threshing their grain. While on patrol in the southern parts of the Makoni and Chiduku Reserves I saw splendid harvests...Labour supply has been very meagre, apparently owing to the natives being busy helping each other in their harvesting operations. At many kraals I visited I found gangs of young men engaged in threshing corn and in breaking up new lands for the coming season...I made further patrols during the month...and in all parts I found the natives civil and orderly and busy at their harvesting and conveying grain to trading centres for sale (cited in Ranger 1985:35).

The combination of relatively fertile soils, the railway and the surrounding white farming districts, enhanced the entrepreneurial spirit of what Ranger (1985:38) describes as an adaptation, rather than a resistance to colonial capitalism. In its ability to withstand, and indeed in the long run, to profit from the Depression of the 1930s, the entrepreneurial class of the Makoni peasantry was again atypical. The wholesale movement of people from their land into Native Reserves during the 1940s, surprisingly enough, caused little concern among the peasantry of Makoni district, as the shift from extensive to intensive cultivation enabled the maintenance of high yields. Indeed, argues Ranger (1985), "by the early 1950's Makoni District was in many ways the

model district in the eyes of administrators, agriculturists and conservationists” (p. 142).

The gradual implementation of the Land Apportionment Act, however, and in particular its clause on Native Purchase Areas, meant that local peasants were rendered landless as NPAs were awarded to outsiders, and the peasant option became no longer viable. Adaptation turned into bitter resentment towards the administration, and provided fertile grounds for the spawning of radical nationalism in the 1960s.

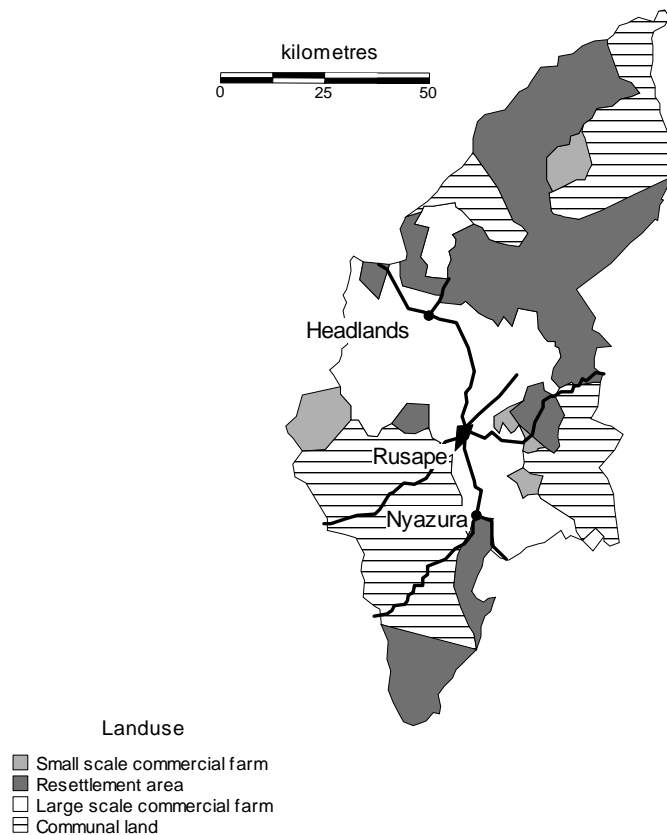
In the 1970s, land pressure intensified further as a result of the retrenchment of farm workers in the district, and the ineffectiveness of stock control measures during the war (Moyo 1995:204). Moreover, the intensity of the war in Makoni, and the recruitment of local chiefs such as Chief Makoni and Chief Tangwena, to enhance the interests of Zanu-Pf in the district and its surroundings, also lead “to increased control by elders and traditional leaders over local land resources for a while” (ibid., p. 189). Households responded to the legal hiatus created by the war by acquiring land more liberally, and also by squatting on surrounding large-scale commercial farms. The net result of wartime changes and post-independence administrative realigning, has been declining land quality and mounting demographic pressure on land. Meanwhile, the intensity of warfare in Manicaland in general, and in Makoni District in particular, means that Makoni today has the largest resettlement areas in Manicaland. Table 4.1 suggests the relative importance of resettlement land in Makoni District, although the largest concentrations of population are found in the communal lands.

Table 4.1: Land distribution: Makoni District

Sector	Area (sq. km)	Population	Density/sq. km
Communal lands	2 713	170 000	63
Resettlement land	3 000	47 000	15
SSCF	286	800	17
LSCF	2 000	24 000	12

Source: Moyo (1995:180).

Moyo’s (1995) study of the land question in Mhezi Ward (part of Chiduku communal land) in Makoni District is useful as an introduction to the contemporary geography of the district. Makoni District is one of seven provinces in Manicaland Province, and is “characterised by varying relief, rainfall, temperature, soils and natural farming regions” (ibid., p. 172). Land use in Makoni District is illustrated in Map 4.2.



Map 4.2: Land use in Makoni District. Based on “Zimbabwe Land Classification”, Surveyor General (1998).

This variability in physical endowments makes it difficult to generalise about the District, although most of the land is, by communal area standards, of high quality and is found predominantly in Natural Regions IIb (57 percent) and Natural Region III (ibid.). Makoni District is primarily rural, with agriculture providing more than 60 percent of the population with its main source of income. The average population density for communal lands in Manicaland was 45 per sq. km in 1992, with Makoni District recording a population density for the district as a whole of 52 persons per sq. km (ibid., p. 179). Jansen and Olthof (1993:13) however, note population densities ranging from 50 persons per sq. km in Chikore communal land, to 120 persons per sq. km in the most densely populated parts of Chiduku and Makoni communal lands.

Thus, for the communal lands of Makoni District in general, land is comparatively scarce. In Moyo’s (1995) study, a quarter of his sample of Mhezi households considered that they had insufficient land to engage in

income-generating farming, while government estimates of landlessness in the area, thought to affect 30 percent of the adult population, confirm this perception of constraints to production (ibid., p. 196). As Moyo suggests, however, increasing stratification with respect to land access was occurring simultaneously:

Broadly, over 70% of the Mhezi households had difficulties accessing adequate land for their cropping needs. These problems included outright landlessness, minuscule cropping land plots, diminished access to and use of grazing lands, and deteriorating land quality. Some households openly lamented the problem of inequitable access to the limited land available, suggesting that a minority of households tended to dominate access to cropping and grazing lands. Indeed a small group of the households did not report shortages of grazing or cropping lands. Similarly, close to 30% of the households had an advantageous position with respect to land access as demonstrated by their ability to produce crop surpluses for sale and to hold viable livestock herds, which together guaranteed their access to cash incomes, adequate food, adequate draught power and reasonably sufficient quantities of manure (p. 199).

The image presented in Moyo's (1995) study is one of rural decline and stratification, tendencies that are also attested to in the literature on rural transformation in Zimbabwe in general.

4.3 A historical profile of Rusape

The tendencies towards rising poverty noted by Moyo (1995) for Chiduku communal lands are also reflected in the evolution of Rusape's history. Historically, people who came to town worked in shops, in general industrial employment or in domestic service. During the 1940s/50s, Rusape was something of a centre for the surrounding rural areas and migrants would travel by foot to Rusape. In those days people came in search of employment and jobs were easy to secure. Farmers' Co-op, a white farmer initiated shopping centre for farm inputs (now Farm and City), opened in 1951 and was a large employer at the time. Gibcan (which is now called Dees company and is owned by an Indian businessman who also owns Dees supermarket in town), a vegetable and fruit canning company near the river was another big employer from the 1960s onwards. National Foods located just to the West of railway line and close to Farmers' Co-op, was also a substantial employer,

along with Rusape Town Council. Domestic service for white families likewise provided employment.

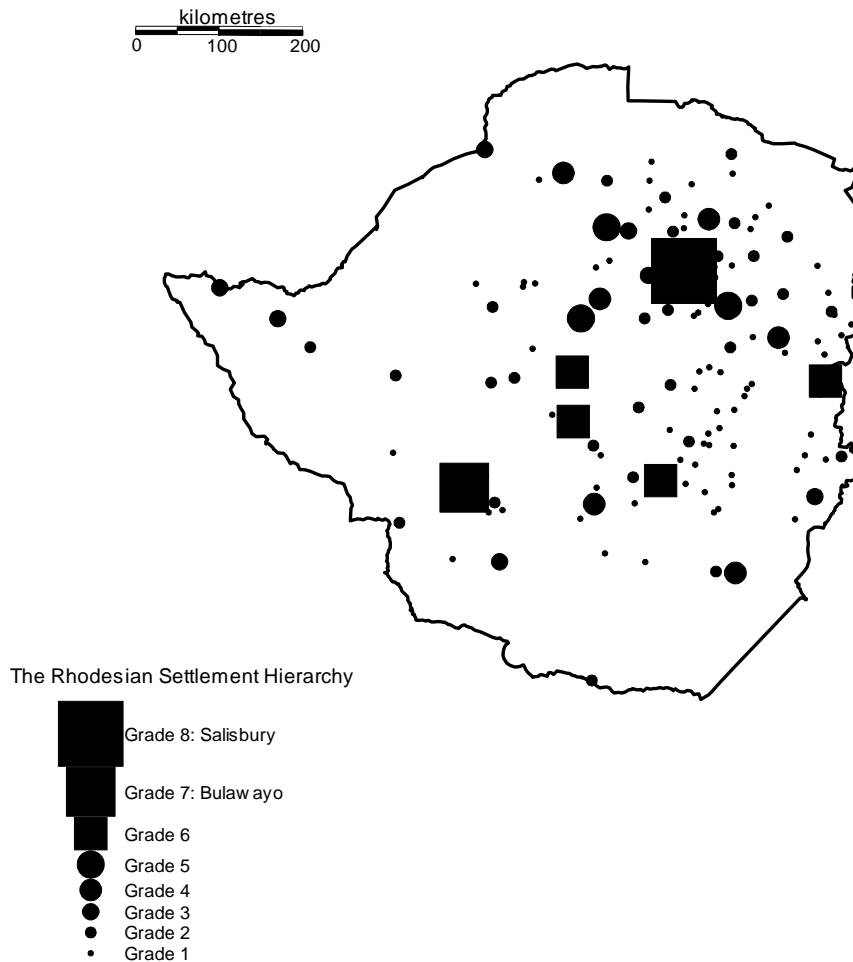
The booming informal trading which visibly exists all over town, including Vengere Township (described in more detail below), is a recent phenomenon, however. In the 1950s there were only a few stores and most shops have appeared since 1969. Independence in 1980 brought a number of changes, Africans were permitted to do business in town without their employer's approval as had previously been necessary. Fruit and vegetable vending started in the early 1980s when vendors were selling their goods off the ground. The stalls in the bus terminus were built by the Council in 1986. The widespread occurrence of hairdressing salons is also predominantly a new phenomenon (1986/87); the exception being an elderly man in Vengere who ran a barbershop from 1962/63 onwards. Tailoring has similarly only come about since independence while carpentry shops are also predominantly new business ventures.

4.4 Town profile and position within the settlement hierarchy

This historical description of the town's employment structure and role as an agricultural service and processing centre for the surrounding commercial farm regions conforms to Heath's (1990) study of service regions in Rhodesia. Although based on fieldwork undertaken between 1976 and 1978, this work in part remains a useful classification of Zimbabwe's settlement system despite the radical political changes that have occurred since that time. Published in 1990 as a supplement to *Zambesia*, the editor notes its strong "practical influence on planning studies and planning policies in Zimbabwe" (xiii). Moreover, Zimbabwe's peculiar spatial development under colonialism means that most higher-grade centres are still located in the large-scale commercial farming areas. Map 4.3 showing Heath's (1990) settlement hierarchy is thus roughly representative of the situation also today, although his ranking of lower order settlements (level 1 and 2) has become outdated (pers. comm. Mr A. Kamete, Lecturer, Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe, Uppsala, February 6, 2002). Despite the "development" efforts of the Smith-regime in the Tribal Trust Lands, during the 1960s and 1970s, and later post-independence policies of rural urbanisation, communal area urban centres are essentially peripheral to the Zimbabwean space economy (Pedersen 1997a: 72-78.).

On the basis of weighted functional units, which are in turn assessed by a ranking of central place functions, Heath (1990) divides the settlement hierarchy into eight different categories, with the lowest level centres labelled grade one and possessing only "the rudimentary requirements of a central place" (p. 24). It is argued that the populations of the different centres are

secondary to their functions, with second grade service centres varying in population from 520 to 8 390 (on the basis of the 1969 census, CSO1969).



Map 4.3: The Rhodesian settlement hierarchy, based on Heath (1991). A number of the Grade 1 settlements could not be located on the most recent (1998) land classification map of Zimbabwe. Map 4.3 does not include these settlements. The pattern of lower grade settlements is, however, very similar to Heath's (1991) original. Mr A. Kamete, lecturer at the Department of Rural and Urban Planning at the University of Zimbabwe has assisted me in identifying Grade 1 and Grade 2 settlements.

Within this ranking, Rusape is found at the Grade 4 level along with five other settlements, most of which are located in the major agricultural regions of Rhodesia. Specialisation of services becomes apparent at this settlement level, with specialist shops, churches, hospitals, agricultural collecting agents, industrial activity and legal functions (e.g. magistrates and prisons) appearing for the first time (p. 30). At grade 5 further specialisation occurs especially in terms of financial and professional services, while three out of the four grade 6 centres are provincial capitals with major administrative and industrial

functions. At Grade 7 is Bulawayo, the regional centre of the southern and western part of Rhodesia, while Salisbury as the capital of the country, alone represents Grade 8 centres.

Rusape's relative position within the urban system is largely confirmed by the settlement hierarchy used by the independent government, which places Rusape as a town at the third level (see Table 4.2). Again the system is divided into eight levels and comprises cities, municipalities, towns, local boards, growth points, district service centres, rural service centres and business centres. As in Heath's (1990) classification, the system is based on function rather than size.

Table 4.2: The Zimbabwean settlement hierarchy

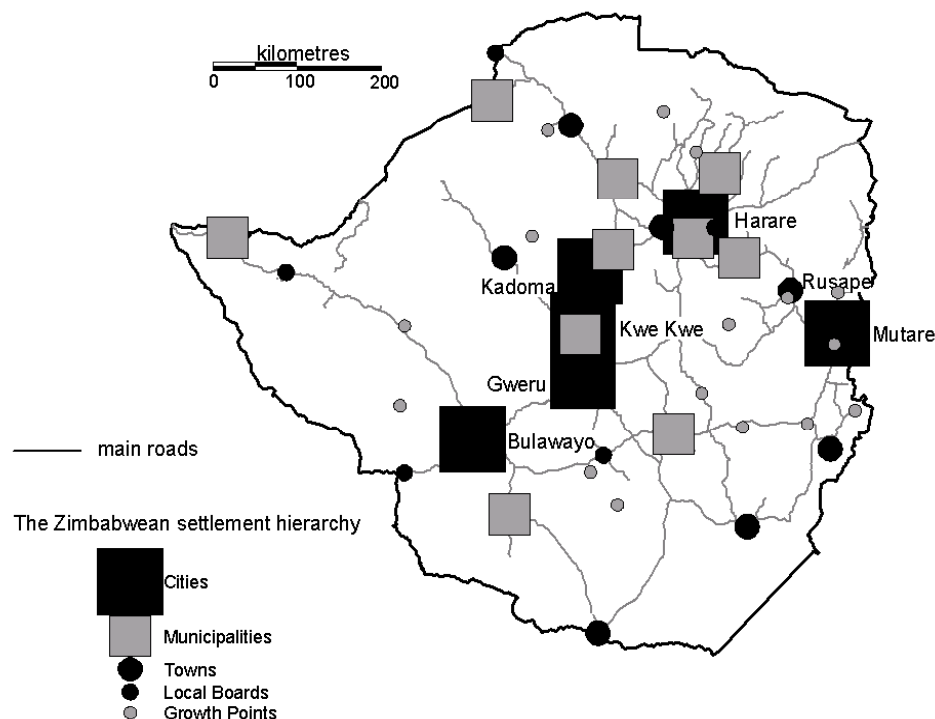
Cities	Municipalities	Towns	Local Boards	Successful Growth Points
Harare	Chitungwiza	Rusape	Ruwa	Gutu
Bulawayo	Masvingo	Norton	Hwange	Magunje
Gweru	Chinhoyi	Chiredzi	Chirundu	Zvimba
Mutare	Chegutu	Karoi	Zvishavane	Sanyati
Kwe Kwe	Marondera	Beitbridge	Plumtree	Guruve
Kadoma	Bindura	Chipinge		Mataga
	Gwanda	Gokwe		Mberengwa
	Kariba			Lupane
	Victoria Falls			Mukayi
	Red Cliff			Tsholotsho
				Matobo
				Sadza
				Chiweshe
				Nyika
				Makoni
				Mutasa
				Zimunya
				Birchenough
				Bridge
				Chimanimani

Source: Personal communication, Amin Kamete, lecturer, Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe, February 6, 2002.

From the growth point level downwards, settlements become extremely numerous, and district service centres as well as business centres cannot be considered urban. The large number of district service centres and business centres is reflective of the perceived political (rather than economic) role of small urban centres within post-independence rural development, as noted by Rasmussen (1992:134). Rural service centres present something of an exception, as they are essentially well-developed commercial centres with, in some cases, relatively large populations – e.g. Bengedzi with 30 000 inhabitants. All of these centres are located in the formerly white large-scale commercial farming areas, and by virtue of the system of unit taxation, have disproportionately large revenue bases. Left undesignated as urban centres by the independent government, rural service centres are nonetheless governed by

the Rural District Council, and as such lack an independent urban administration. (Pers. comm., Mr A. Kamete, Lecturer, Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe, Uppsala, February 6, 2002.)

As reflected in Map 4.4, the similarities with Heath's (1990) description of the Rhodesian settlement hierarchy are apparent, although the lower level centres have not been mapped in Map 4.4, and the higher levels of the post-independent settlement hierarchy contain a larger number of centres.



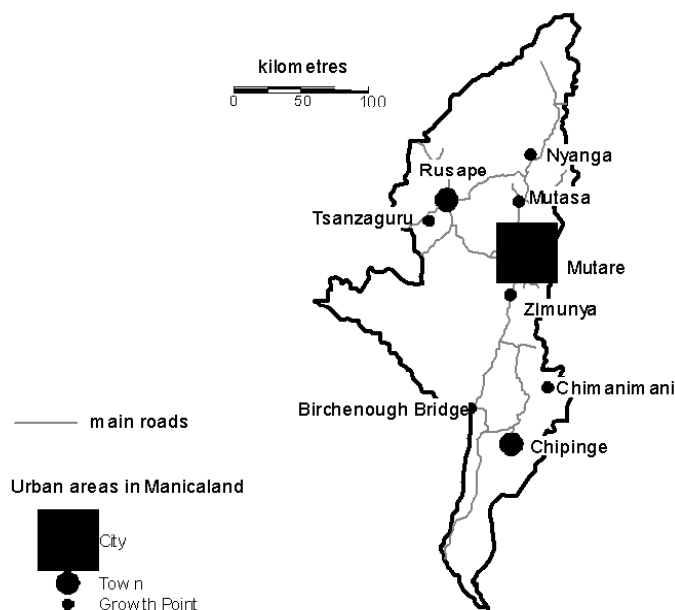
Map 4.4: The Zimbabwean settlement hierarchy

Rusape's relative position within the urban system is largely the same today (2002) as in the late 1970s and the attributes found in grade 4 centres in the late 1970s are relevant to Rusape also today, with the town being an important commercial centre for the surrounding farming areas. The town also has a light industrial complex including light engineering, timber processing, agricultural storage and agricultural industries (*Tabex Encyclopaedia Zimbabwe* 1989:332). However, despite a relatively highly developed service industrial base, the town has no "major industrial undertaking (Rusape Town

Council 1996:4)”. Rather Rusape’s role is primarily that of an agricultural service centre for surrounding large-scale commercial farming areas, resettlement areas, small-scale commercial farming areas as well as communal lands.

A number of banks, two petrol stations, three pharmacies, and outlets for the two largest supermarket chains in Zimbabwe, OKs and TM, suggest a relatively high degree of commercial specialisation. The administrative functions of Rusape as a district centre add a number of functions to the town such as the district hospital, Rusape Magistrates Court and the prison, as well as the local representation of a number of ministries.

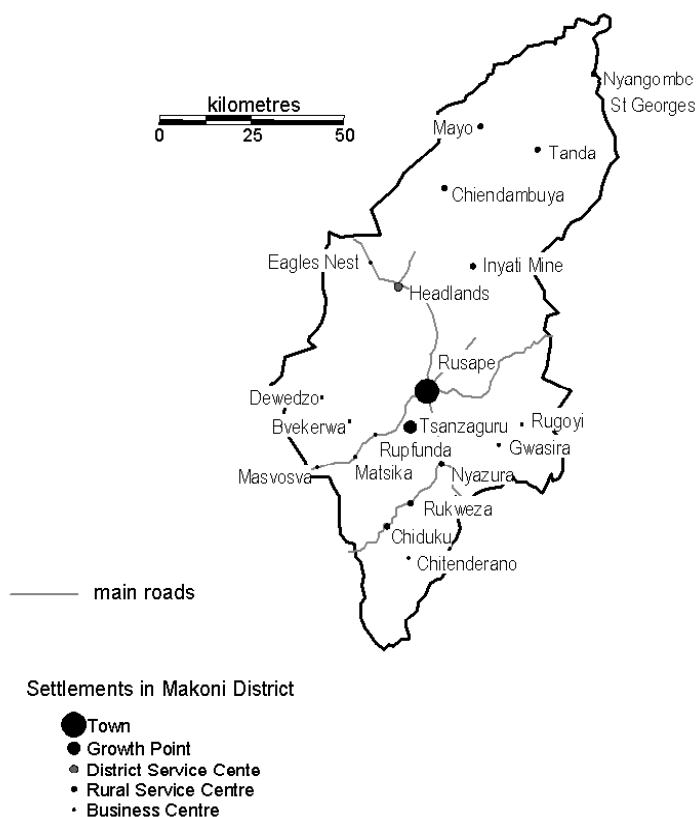
In the context of Manicaland Province, Rusape is the larger of two towns found beneath the city of Mutare in the settlement hierarchy, as suggested by Map 4.5.



Map 4.5: The Urban Hierarchy in Manicaland Province. Mr A. Kamete, lecturer at the Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe, has assisted me in identifying the grades of the settlements in Manicaland.

Within Makoni District, the role of Rusape as an important urban centre is confirmed by Map 4.6, in which it is evident that there are few urban areas in the district. Nonetheless, the provincial capital of Mutare and the municipality

of Marondera, which lies to the Northwest of Rusape along the Harare-Mutare main road, dwarf Rusape in significance. *The Rusape Master Plan* of 1996 suggests that “this location has had [a] serious depression effect on the development of the Town” (Rusape Town Council 1996, p. 4), and Rusape is described in this report as an administrative rather than an industrial town. Indeed formal industry is reported to provide permanent employment for only 500 employees (ibid., p.12).



Map 4.6: The urban hierarchy in Makoni District. Mr A. Kamete, lecturer at the Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe has assisted me in identifying the status of the settlements in Makoni District. Only the rural service centres and business centres found on the “Zimbabwe Land Classification” map from 1998 have been included.

In an effort to tap the growth potential of the town, Rusape has been designated a growth point, something which affects the town in two ways. Firstly, the central government is obliged to supplement the Council’s investments into infrastructure and resource development with respect to physical planning, and secondly, the government provides a number of

incentives to prospective investors in terms of taxation and tariffs (pers. comm., Mr O. Muzawazi, Town Secretary, Rusape Town Council, Rusape, November 22, 1999). While the Housing Director perceived the growth point status as an important potential in terms of attracting investment, the Town Secretary was less optimistic and argued that such measures only produce results when both aspects of the growth point policy interact, and make little difference when they do not. Nonetheless, in the government mouthpiece - *The Herald* - small towns were described as “winners” when the budget for 2000 was presented at the end of 1999 (*The Herald*, October 22, 1999: “Exporters and Small Towns Emerge the Real Winners”).

Roughly six months later, intensive advertising in *The Herald* by the Rusape Town Council was aimed at attracting investment to the town, the lack of which is perceived as a problem by the authorities. When asked if the rapid population growth was regarded as a problem in terms of servicing stands and providing urban services the Town Secretary argued that employment provision was a larger problem. A perception that was widely held by officials was that Rusape’s population growth was not being matched by an expansion of employment opportunities something which was attributed to the lack of an economic power base, as the formal economy of the town subsists largely on the basis of light, agricultural processing industry.

Such problems are, however not new, and in an issue of the now defunct *Makoni Clarion* from March 1975, it was reported that:

Recently a meeting was held in Rusape between council representatives and Ministry Officials to discuss the Government’s decentralisation policy and benefits which might accrue to Rusape. Rusape offers opportunity for development in both the industrial and commercial spheres and it is hoped that, with every assistance given by the council, such development will be encouraged in every possible way (p. 9). (National Archives of Zimbabwe, File S/MA 44)

The lack of heavier, industrial, formal investment thus is not novel.

4.5 A social profile of Rusape

To some extent, the relatively high rank of Rusape within the settlement hierarchy is contradicted by the picture of deteriorating living conditions for the majority and relative wealth for only the few as contended by the RTC administration. Rather, Rusape is characterised by very high unemployment levels, low education levels, households that in the majority of cases are headed by females, and a high prevalence of prostitution. The latter is linked

to the historical existence of a *tangwena* (illegal shacks) township, which until its demolition in the late 1970s housed female sex workers (pers. comm., Mrs F.B. Matsanga, Director of Housing and Community Services, Rusape Town Council, Rusape, November 11, 1999). The role of Rusape as a transportation node between Harare and Mutare and the Harare-Mutare main road and the Eastern Highlands is a possible explanation for the prevalence of prostitution.

For children with mothers engaged in prostitution, the RTC Housing Director perceived there to be few options open to them but to also enter into prostitution or begging. HIV/Aids consequently presents a very real problem, and the bulk of street children who eke out a precarious living by begging, were believed to be Aids-orphans. The death of breadwinners from diseases related to the virus leaves children who, because of the current socio-economic hardships, can no longer be supported by the extended family. The RTC Housing Director argued that a system that had functioned in the past was, as a result of the pandemic, being subjected to stress levels that it simply could not cope with. While urban life was prohibitively expensive for the poor, she felt that rural life had been rejected by the urbanites and that they consequently now had nowhere to seek refuge (pers. comm., Mrs F.B. Matsanga, Director of Housing and Community Services, Vengere, Rusape Town Council, Rusape, November 11, 1999).

This poverty profile of the town is corroborated by the top five conditions treated by the Council Clinic, that is, malaria, acute respiratory infections, sexually transmitted diseases, minor injuries and diarrhoea, conditions which are very much symptoms of poverty and poor living conditions (pers. comm., Mrs C. Hofisi, Sister-in-Charge, Vengere Community Clinic, Rusape Town Council, Rusape, July 19, 2000).

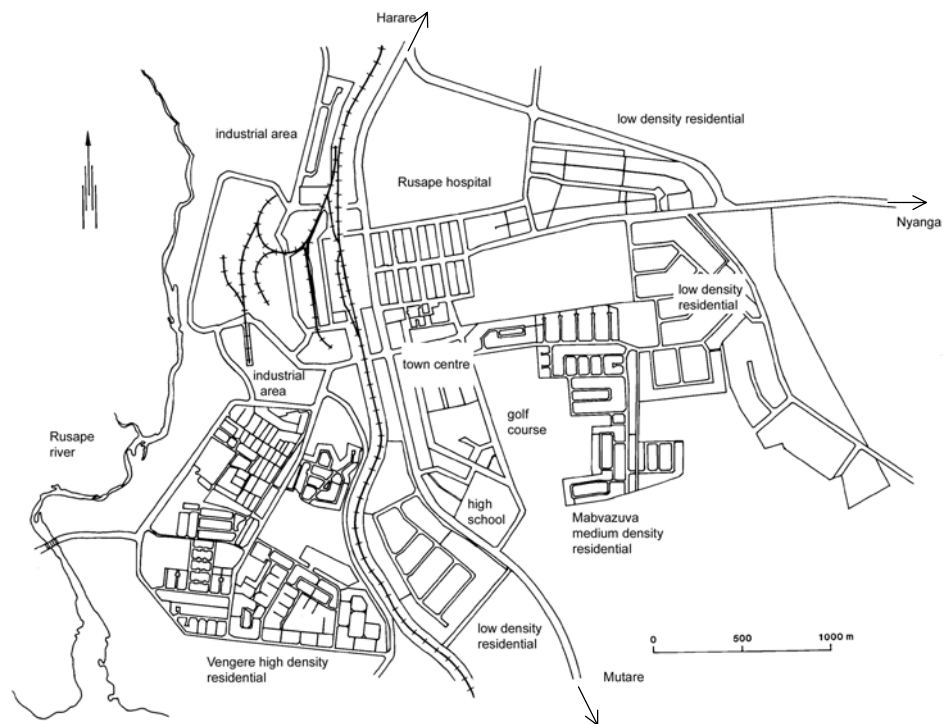
In spite of the population growth of the town, little formal economic growth is occurring and most people subsist by engaging in informal activities which include informal trading of goods and services (particularly vegetables and second hand clothes), cross-border trading, brick-making and building. The 1992 Census recorded an unemployment rate of almost 27 percent, where “persons who stated paid employee, employer, own account worker and unpaid family worker as their main activity during the reference period were regarded as employed (CSO 1994a:54)”. Government and local government employ more than 40 percent of those employed, “with the remainder being divided roughly equally between industrial and commercial activities in the private sector” (Rusape Town Council 1996:6).



Photo 4.1: Vegetable vending in Vengere

4.6 Vengere high density area

Rusape's high density residential area is called Vengere and lies on the outskirts of Rusape, with the industrial area and the railway track separating it from the town centre (see Map 4.7).



Map 4.7: Rusape, based on the Rusape Town Council Master Plan (2000).

The Vengere high density residential area contains approximately 2500 housing units (Map 4.8).



Map 4.8: Vengere, based on the Rusape Town Council Master Plan (2000). Sections T, G, R, B, VE, NE and ZBS are indicated. The NHF section is part of the NE section. Each ward contains the same population number.

Historically, the first residential sections (the B and R sections) of Vengere (see Map 4.8) were built in 1942/43 to house roughly 500 polish refugees. The refugees left around 1946 after the end of the Second World War. An American Red Cross Report from 1944, describes the camp as follows:

Camp Rusapi is a picturesque settlement of red brick and concrete buildings that are laid out in three adjoining sections on a level, tree-grown plateau approximately 4 700 feet above sea level. All of the buildings are constructed for permanence since, when they are no longer needed to house the Polish refugees, the army plans to use them as staging areas and housing projects for native troops and families. The total population of the camp is 455, and of this total 219 are children, 203 women, and 33 are men (p. 2) (Rhodes House, File MSS.Afr.R.116 (3), R.R. Johnston 1944)

Nonetheless, as material from the Public Record Office in London suggests, Rusape was not unique in harbouring refugees and internees. A report from the International Red Cross identifies five additional camps spread throughout Southern Rhodesia at the time, housing mainly Italian internees, and German citizens from Tanganyika as well as Palestinian and Iraqi prisoners-of-war (File FO/916/1212 and File HO 215/271). Moreover, as suggested by Krolkowski (1983) and Allbrook and Cattalini (1995) refugee and internment camps were spread throughout Southern and Eastern Africa in the post-war period.

African workers were at the time of the building of the camp staying close to the Farmers' Co-op's tobacco curing sheds, near Vengere Primary School and were not permitted to interact with the refugees, although some illicit contacts were made. At the end of the war, farm workers from a farm owned by a Mr Dixon, moved into the B section of Vengere to fill the empty structures left by the refugees. The communal kitchen was turned into a Council beer hall. In 1956, the Rusape Town Council finalised the purchase of Mr Dixon's farmland, which was located near where the Rusape dam is today. The RTC had prior to this been acquiring the land gradually (Focus Group Discussion, Rusape, December 16, 1999).

Like all objects of Rhodesian town planning, Rusape and Vengere were highly regulated by the authorities. In 1950, the Labour Officer to the Eastern Districts in a subsection in his Report for August ("Compounds and Sanitation" National Archives of Zimbabwe, File S1012/40, Compound and Labour Inspection Reports) had the following to say about housing in Vengere:

Owing to continued expansion the position in regard to native housing at Rusapi is deteriorating. The African location houses 552 persons (145 men, 110 women and 297 children) in 150 quarters. Whilst conditions in the location proper are reasonably good there is a large overflow in a kind of shanty township where conditions are deplorable and sanitation non-existent. Within a stone's throw of this area is the compound of the Tobacco Warehouse containing some 235 people. The condition of this compound is equally deplorable, there is no sanitation and the one end of the place is a morass of green, slimy water, a menace to the health of European and native alike" (p. 2). And further "The railway compound at Rusapi is also most unsatisfactory consisting of old pole and dagga buildings alongside the line without proper water supply. /.../The government cannot escape criticism at Rusapi either for no proper sanitary arrangements exist at the Native Messengers

Camp and the occupants are said to relieve themselves in the veld between the Camp and the European School (p. 3).

Today, sanitation and housing are generally better than suggested by the quote above, yet living conditions vary enormously, in terms of sheer space, as well as in standard (see photos 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4).



Photo 4.2: Housing in the G Section.

For this reason, it is difficult to provide a generalised description of living conditions. Nonetheless, compared to the situation in many other African countries, Zimbabwean living standards are high, and virtually everyone in Rusape has access to clean water. The 1992 census, for example, suggests that roughly 90 percent of households had water on their premises, either in-house or within the compound (CSO 1994a:101). The town also has a functioning sewerage system (with nearly 98 percent of households using flush toilets according to CSO 1994a:102) as well as centralised waste disposal. The costs associated with urban living are for this reason largely unavoidable as service charges are paid to the local authority, while housing provision is formalised in the sense that the option of squatting does not exist, nor occur in Rusape (Rusape Town Council 1996:9).



Photo 4.3: Housing in the NE section



Photo 4.4: Housing in the VE section

4.7 Conclusion

The picture painted of Rusape and the surrounding Makoni District, by the literature and my key informants is one of stagnation and poverty. Yet, in the context of this decline and the general structural changes, which to the majority of Zimbabweans have meant rising poverty, the town is growing very rapidly and the causes and origins of this population expansion merit some attention. In the following chapter, the growth of the town will be analysed on the basis of population figures, while my own survey data will be used to map the flows of migrants to Rusape.

5 Migration patterns to Rusape

5.1 Population growth

Rusape's rapid growth, especially over recent years, is illustrated in Table 5.1. The data are based on a compilation of statistics and estimates from a variety of sources and the table shows Rusape's population size since the mid-1940s. The enormous expansion in terms of population, especially since the last census in 1992 is reflected in the data.

Table 5.1: Population of Rusape 1946-2005

Year	Total	Females	Males
1946	1 567	573	994
1951	1 134	197	937
1962	3 060	1330	1730
1969	5 290	N/a	N/a
1982	8 196	3988	4208
1992	13 920	7105	6815
1998	24 000	N/a	N/a
2000	26 000	N/a	N/a
2005	36 873	N/a	N/a

Source: *Southern Rhodesia (1954) (includes data from 1946 and 1951 censuses)*, CSO (1964), CSO (1969), CSO (1984), CSO (1994a), pers.comm., Mrs F.B. Matsanga, Director of Housing and Community Services, Rusape Town Council, Rusape, September 1, 2000.

Nonetheless, the data sources warrant some caution. The drawbacks of colonial censuses are obvious in this context, with the 1946 and 1951 figures for example, including only "Natives in employment". Moreover, the large European population from 1946 is explained by the refugee situation in the town during that year. In the 1962 figure only the African population is included, and as cautioned by Simon (1986), the 1962 census was held at the peak of the harvest in April. For this reason population figures may be deflated by temporary movement to the rural areas. In the 1969 census, also taken in April, this problem was compounded by exceptionally good harvests. The

census from 1982 on the other hand “was conducted during the agriculturally slack month of August” (p. 12) during a drought year, a circumstance which “is known to have driven many rural dwellers into urban centres (ibid.)”. The 1992 census was also conducted in August and following the severe drought of 1991-92 which had prompted the temporary migration of rural family members in particular, to join household heads already resident in urban areas. Again, this may have inflated the figures, as Zinyama (1994:178) suggests.

Nonetheless, Rusape’s population on the basis of albeit unreliable sources, is thought to have increased rapidly, especially after the last census of 1992. In an article from May 1998 written by the then Town Secretary, Mr Ephraim Chiridza, the town’s population was stated to have reached 24 000 (compared to barely 14 000 in the 1992 census) (*The Manica Post*, “Town Derives Name from River” in “Rusape and Nyanga Supplement”, May 25, 1998, p. 23). According to the Housing Director of Rusape Town Council, the population of Rusape had by late 1999 reached 25 000, and a year later 26 000. These figures had been based on patient numbers at the clinic in Vengere. Such figures are however, estimates and are difficult to verify. The Council Clinic informs the Town Council of the number of patients, a figure that is then used to calculate an estimated population. With the introduction of user fees in late 1995, the number of patients fell. Patient figures dropped again in July 1997 when the fees were raised. Since then however, the number of patients has increased rapidly and now stands at around 5000 patients in a month, which argued the Sister-in-Charge suggests a rising population (pers. comm., Mrs C. Hofisi, Sister-in-Charge, Vengere Community Clinic, Rusape Town Council, Rusape July 19, 2000, and figures from the Rusape Town Council Clinic). The figure for 2005 is a projection used by the Rusape Town Council on the basis of a 7.5 percent annual growth rate (Rusape Town Council 1996:6). Rusape was not covered in the 1997 sample census of a number of Zimbabwean towns and cities.

These figures should be placed within a general trend of mobility directed towards urban centres of varying sizes, and a sizeable out-migration from Harare and Bulawayo. Although the sample census of 1997 recorded a population in Harare Province (i.e. including Chitungwiza) of nearly two million people, and an inter-census net migration rate of nearly 3 percent, an out-migration rate of 18 percent was recorded in the same period. In Bulawayo a corresponding figure of 21 percent resulted in a negative net-migration rate (CSO 1998b:47). Between 1982 and 1992, a number of cities and towns with populations ranging between 16 000 and 124 000 (1992) grew at almost the same pace per annum (5 percent) as Harare and Bulawayo together (Pedersen 1997a:27). In the same period, eight intermediate sized towns (one of which was Rusape) exhibited growth rates that were two to three times higher than the national average (Zinyama 1994:179).

The role of Rusape as a transport node between Harare and Mutare and its position as the district centre of Makoni District is presumably of some importance with respect to such growth. Data in the census from 1992, is lacking in terms of longer term migration statistics, with population enumerated in the district but residing elsewhere being listed as the only kind of migration. This hampers the scope for a more thorough statistical analysis, although the data can provide a snapshot of the connections between Rusape and other areas at a provincial level.

Table 5.2: Population enumerated in Rusape with usual residence in:

Rusape	Other districts in Manicaland	Other provinces	Other countries	Mutare urban	Total
10 984	1 760	948	61	158	13 920
		Mash. E.: 229			
		Mash. C.: 69			
		Mash. W.: 57			
		Mat. S.: 9			
		Mat. N.: 3			
		Midlands: 72			
		Masvingo: 118			
		Harare: 344			
		Bulawayo: 47			

Source: CSO 1994a:27. Mash. E.= Mashonaland East, Mash. C. = Mashonaland Central, Mash. W. = Mashonaland West, Mat. S.= Matabeleland South, Mat. N= Matabeleland North.

As suggested by Table 5.2, a strong regional orientation exists, with other districts in Manicaland accounting for most of those residing elsewhere, a situation which may be explained by the temporary movement of rural residents to town following the drought of 1991-1992. The role of Harare is also conspicuous with respect to migration from other provinces, but this is not surprising given the size of the city.

In conversations with Town Council officials, population growth through migration is thought to be fuelled mainly by movement from the surrounding rural areas. The Director of Housing and Community Services attributed this largely to rural-urban migration, where the retirement of workers who had previously worked on surrounding large-scale commercial farms was perceived as an important component. She also argued that the larger urban areas are spilling over into the smaller towns as a result of the relative low cost of residential property and commercial stands in Rusape (pers. comm. Mrs F.B. Matsanga, Director of Housing and Community Services, Vengere, Rusape Town Council, Rusape, November 11, 1999).

In press coverage and advertisements Rusape is presented as the gateway to Manicaland, emphasis being placed on the role of the town as a transport node between Harare and Mutare, and also as a haven for informal trading and

business, something which conceivably influences not only the popular image of the town, but also the prospective migrant's opinion of Rusape.

5.2 Sample data

To some extent, the perceptions of the Town Council and the media are corroborated by my sample data. The informal character of most employment in Rusape for instance was also evident within my sample. On the whole, a sample characterised by low educational levels and with a mainly unskilled or semi-skilled employment profile emerges. In terms of employment, most respondents were engaged in unskilled or semi-skilled labour as well as self-employed petty traders (see Table 5.3). This corresponds well with the employment profile of Rusape presented above, although female employment is even less formalised than male employment.

Table 5.3: Employment by sector among respondents

Sector	Females	Males	Total
Formal	6	28	34
Informal	42	31	73
Both formal and informal	3	7	10
Unemployed	22	4	26
Total	73	70	143

Source: sample data. The unemployed category includes students and homemakers.

The strong regional dimension and Harare's relative importance was suggested by short-term migration data in the 1992 census (Table 5.2) and is reflected also in the migration histories of my respondents. In addition, the rapid expansion of Rusape during recent years was obvious among my informants, as most respondents had moved to Rusape in the late 1990s, as illustrated by Table 5.4. Nonetheless, important qualifications with respect to the patterns of migration and the characteristics of the migrants also emerge in my data. Firstly, the relatively high age at migration of most of my respondents suggests a migration history previous to moving to Rusape (see Table 5.5). Secondly, for a large majority of my interviewees, this previous migration had been centred on numerous larger urban areas, mainly Harare and the provincial capital of Mutare.

My data suggest that most informants had migrated to Rusape as recently as three or four years ago, as can be seen in Table 5.4. The earliest migrant had arrived in Rusape in the late 1940s, however, and the sample therefore represents an interesting cross-section with respect to the historical aspects of mobility. This is especially pertinent as the study aimed to some extent to place the current rapid growth of small towns in the context of historically

contingent factors, while relating it also to ESAP, and the latter's possible effect on individual mobility. Although single informants can say little about an entire decade's mobility pattern, respondents in many cases could provide valuable comparative reflections on mobility in the past and the present, not to mention general historical information on the town and its surroundings.

Table 5.4: Year of migration to Rusape among respondents

Year of migration	Females	Males	Total
2000	9	14	23
1999	15	10	25
1998	6	1	7
1997	2	6	8
1996	2	7	9
1995	4	4	8
1994	5	4	9
1993	2	2	4
1992	2	1	3
1991	1	1	2
1990	1	2	3
1980s	11	8	19
1970s	10	4	14
1960s	2	3	5
1950s	1	2	3
1940s		1	1
Total	73	70	143

Source: sample data.

Selectivity in terms of age is perhaps one of the most obvious characteristics of migrants in general as suggested by Mabogunje (1986), Oucho and Gould (1993) and Gugler (1992) in the broader African context. This selectivity was to some extent manifested in the case of my respondents as suggested by Table 5.5, but with the general and significant difference that most migrants were relatively old, in the sense that they were apparently not recent school leavers, when they arrived in Rusape. The cluster of respondents in the 21 to 35 age group suggests a working life prior to migration to Rusape on the part of most migrants, although this tendency was more pronounced among male migrants.

Table 5.5: Age at migration among respondents

Age	18 to 20	21 to 25	26 to 30	31 to 35	36 to 40	41 to 45	46 to 50	51 to 55	56 to 60	61 to 65	total
Females	18	29	12	10	2	-	-	2	-	-	73
Males	6	27	20	10	4	1	-	1	-	1	70
Total	24	56	32	20	6	1	-	3	-	1	143

Source: sample data.

5.3 Previous urban experience of migrants

The previous urban experience of the migrants relates to their relatively high age at migration. As indicated in Table 5.6, the large majority of migrants had at some stage in their adult lives resided in one or many larger urban areas, in most cases Harare and/or Mutare, and occasionally Bulawayo. In additional cases, migrants had previously lived essentially urban lives²⁰ in nearby growth points, rural service centres or district service centres such as Nyazura, Headlands and Nyanga. In the table, migrants' previous urban experience is ranked by the settlement hierarchy. As can be seen in Table 5.6, not only do many migrants have residential experiences of larger urban centres, but in many cases, urban experience may have been gained in a multitude of different urban areas of varying ranks.

Table 5.6: Urban experience above the age of 18 among respondents

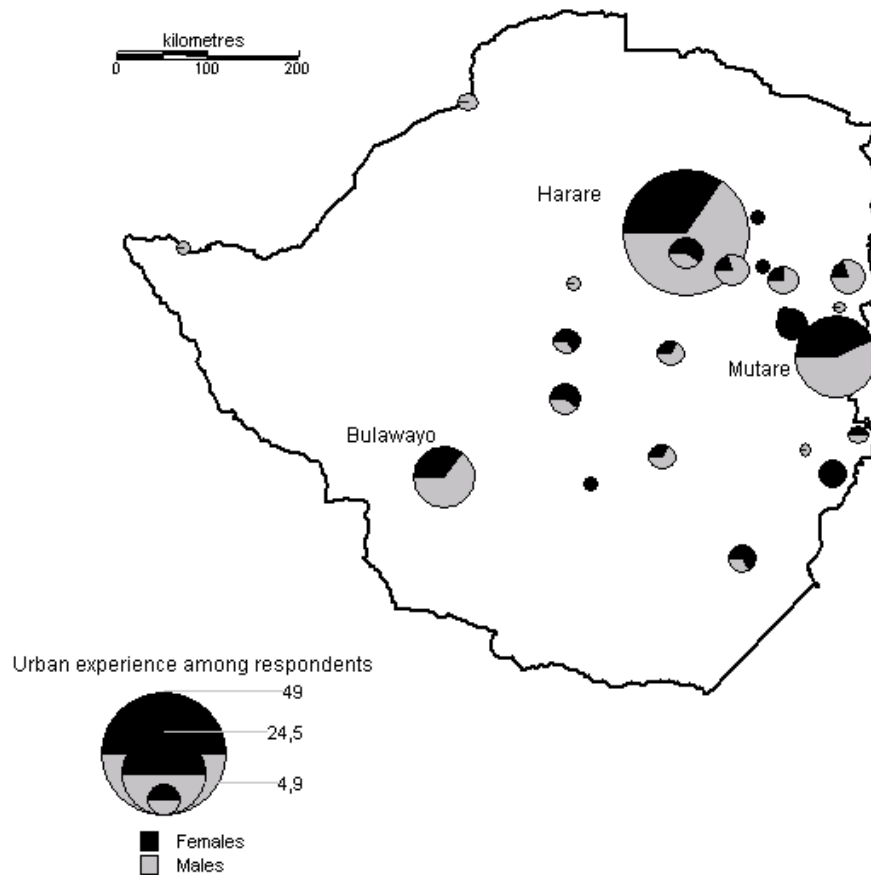
From	Females	Males	Total
A city			
Harare (only)	8	11	19
Bulawayo (only)	4	3	7
Mutare (only)	7	5	12
Gweru (only)	2		2
Kwe Kwe (only)	1		1
Kadoma (only)		1	1
More than one city	3	10	13
One or more cities and another urban area	7	12	19
One or more cities and a foreign urban area		1	1
<i>Migrants with residential experience from a city –total</i>	32	43	75
A municipality (only)	2	1	3
A municipality and a lower level urban centre	1	1	2
<i>Municipalities - total</i>	3	2	5
A town (only)	2		2
Lower level urban centres (only)	6	4	10
Rusape previously (only)	2	1	3
An urban area outside Zimbabwe		2	2
Total	45	52	97

Source: sample data. The total is the sum of "migrants with any experience of a city", "municipalities – total", "a town (only)", "lower level urban centres (only)", "Rusape previously (only)" and "An urban area outside Zimbabwe". Thus out of 143 migrants 97 had lived in an urban area before moving to Rusape. Out of these 97 respondents, 80 had lived in an urban area found in a higher level of the settlement hierarchy than Rusape. In turn 75 of these migrants had lived in a city, i.e. the highest level of the settlement hierarchy.

To gain an understanding of the predominant role of Harare, and to some extent the provincial capital of Mutare as previous places of residence, Map 5.1, includes *all* urban experience (above the age of eighteen). Migrants may

²⁰ For instance working in shops or within government administration.

thus be listed more than once, such that the figure for Harare for instance includes *all* (49) migrants who have lived in Harare above the age of eighteen.



Map 5.1: Previous urban experience among respondents.

As suggested by Map 5.1, and the younger profile of most female migrants in my sample (see Table 5.5), as compared to their male counterparts, female migrants had lived in fewer urban areas previous to their migration. This may in turn be related to a lack of resources.

Another aspect of previous urban experience is the prevalence of migrants with such urban background among respondents who had migrated to Rusape since the mid-1990s. Nonetheless, although most migrants who had previously lived in higher level urban areas had moved to Rusape in the late 1990s, more than half the sample population who had moved to the town in the 1970s had also resided in this type of urban area. The general tendency towards migration *down* the urban hierarchy, superficially resembles the findings of Bjerén's (1985) studies in the early 1970s of migration to Shashemene, an intermediate sized town in Ethiopia, where roughly a quarter of the more

established migrants in her sample had lived in Addis Ababa at some stage of their migration careers (p. 47). Indeed, Addis Ababa was the largest sender of inter-urban migrants to Shashemene. Trager (1995) reports similar tendencies among female migrants to home towns in Nigeria, who had on many occasions lived in Lagos previously. The reasons for this kind of migration from higher to lower level urban centres is not explored further in these works, however.

5.4 Regional aspects of migration

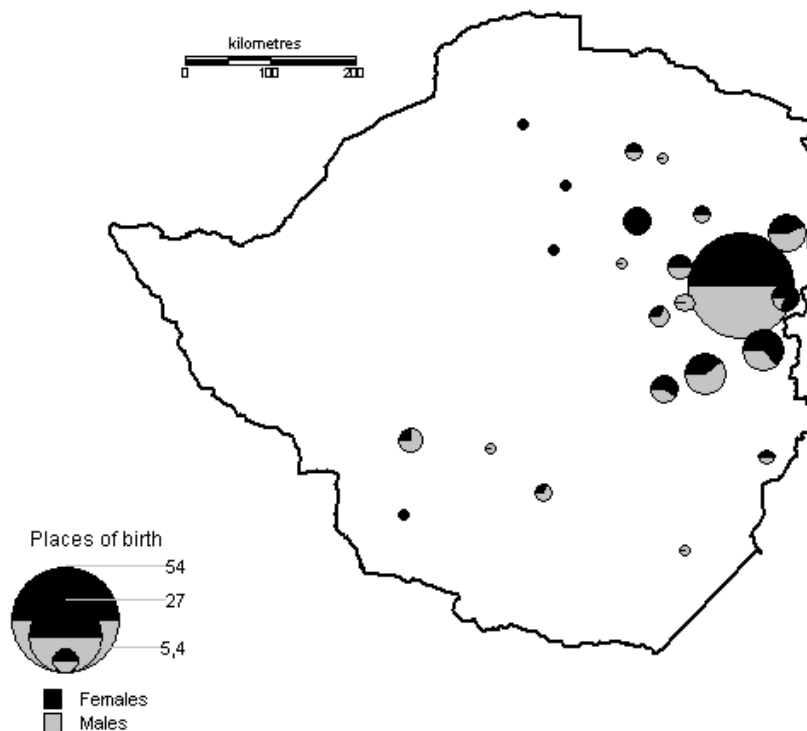
Despite migrants' often widespread experience of other urban areas, the regional orientation of mobility is apparent when places of birth are considered. Places of birth are detailed in Table 5.7 and on Map 5.2, and are plotted by district to facilitate data aggregation. Also, respondents who were born in different urban hospitals may have been living in a rural area since their birth, and for this reason differentiating between rural and urban places of birth may be deceptive.

Table: 5.7: Respondents' places of birth by district

District of birth	Females	Males	Total
<i>Makoni</i>	27	27	54
Other district in Manicaland:			
Buhera	4	6	10
Mutasa	4	1	5
Nyanga	4	5	9
Chimanimani	4	5	9
Chipinge	1	1	2
Mutare	7	4	11
<i>Total Manicaland (including Makoni)</i>	51	49	100
<i>Districts outside Manicaland</i>	20	21	41
<i>Born outside Zimbabwe</i>	2		2
Total	73	70	143

Source: sample data. The total is the sum of "Total Manicaland (including Makoni)", "Districts outside Manicaland" and "Born outside Zimbabwe".

Outside of Manicaland, as Map 5.2 suggests, districts surrounding Makoni but located on the other side of the Manicaland provincial border have a unique position in terms of places of birth.



Map 5.2: Respondents' places of birth by district.

Thus, the sample points to a type of return migration from predominantly higher level urban centres and which does not have a rural home as its destination. Rather, migrants stop halfway in an urban area proximate to their rural places of origin.

An explanation for this kind of migration may be centred on the desire, or indeed need, to remain in an urban area, but one which is closer to home and also possibly less expensive in terms of living costs than higher level centres. The beneficial aspects of small town living were noted by one of my respondents, Esther (Case 5.1), who moved to Rusape from Harare in 1976. A combination of advantages was presented all of which focused on the high living costs in Harare, and the relatively lower expenses associated with life in a small town such as Rusape.

Case 5.1: Esther

Esther was born in 1949 in Bonda in Nyanga District, Manicaland Province and grew up at a place called Silverbow Store where her father was a shopkeeper. In 1952 when she was three years old, the family moved to Rusape. They left Silverbow since her father wanted to run his own business here in town. Her father sold confectionery from a cart all over town – cakes, tea, etc. She finished her primary level schooling in Rusape and then left for Bonda Mission in 1965. Here she attended a girls' secondary school as there was no secondary school in Rusape at the time. She completed two years of secondary schooling and attained her Junior Certificate but as she had not passed the required six subjects (she had passed four) she could not continue her secondary schooling. Instead she tried to secure a place in nursing, but by the time she had found a place her parents lacked the money to pay for her further education. She finished her schooling by the end of 1966 and returned to Rusape to stay with her parents and began working at the Balfour Hotel in town, where a relative of hers was working. She did sewing and stocktaking and also catering and flower arrangements for the dining room. She was with the Balfour Hotel from the end of 1966 until 1969 when she had her first child. In 1971 she left Rusape to join her husband in Harare where he was working as a machine operator at a tobacco company. She stayed in Harare from 1971 to 1976 and initially sold fruit and vegetables from her home in Kambuzuma. Later she started making wedding and birthday cakes, but had to stop this business when the family moved to Chitungwiza, which was too far away to get orders. Prior to this the business had been good. She traded fruit and vegetables in Chitungwiza as well, but the profits were small as the market was flooded by traders. In 1976 her husband left his job as the company was closed. He had secured a job with Woodware in Rusape and they decided to leave Harare as the costs of living were high in Harare. There were also problems involved with commuting between Chitungwiza and Harare. By this time they had three children and the food was expensive, so they thought it was better to return to Rusape where it would be cheaper to stay. Esther has been staying in Rusape ever since and imagines that she will stay here for the rest of her life - she had no plans to move and enjoyed staying in Rusape since she felt that it was cheaper to live there than in Harare. She perceived the growth of Rusape to be related to its low expenses and the saturation of markets for small-scale businesses in Harare. She also suggested that: "A lot of robberies are happening there [Harare] so people thought it wise to come here [Rusape], but now the same things are happening here".

5.5 Purpose of migration and perceived benefits of migration to Rusape

The melange of components with respect to decisions governing mobility described in Esther's life history, is characteristic of the purposes of migration

as noted by the respondents in the late 1990s. In Table 5.8 however, I have aimed to isolate the *primary* purpose of migration on the basis of the migrant's life histories. This is of course a relatively subjective exercise, but nonetheless provides a picture of the expectations guiding migrant decision-making. In Table 5.9 the stated reasons for specifically choosing Rusape are summarised.

Table 5.8: Respondents' primary purpose of migration by year of migration

Purpose of migration	2000	1990s total	1980s total	1970s total	Pre- 1970	Total
Employment /trade	14	42	9	6	5	76
Moved with/to spouse	3	18	7	2	3	33
To stay with relatives	5	7	1	2	1	16
To stay in a cheap place	1	1				2
Urban functions		2	1			3
Housing		4	1			5
To stay alone		2				2
To live in an urban area		1				1
Fled from war				4		4
Change of Place		1				1
Total	23	78	19	14	9	143

Source: sample data.

With respect to the purpose of migration, very few differences can be found on a temporal basis, with employment related mobility and migration upon or within marriage being the most frequent purposes of migration. Although, the purpose of migration captures part of the considerations guiding mobility, the reasons for choosing Rusape specifically are more difficult to fathom. Respondents were therefore asked "why Rusape, and not somewhere else?" and the responses to this question are presented in Table 5.9. This table serves as an illustration of the perceived advantages of Rusape vis à vis other places, both urban and rural, and summarises the informants' perceptions of Rusape. As migrants occasionally mentioned more than one reason for choosing to move to Rusape, the total number of perceptions outnumbers the sample size.

A number of pointers can be made on the basis of the information contained in Table 5.9, which also serve as an introduction to the next section of this thesis which addresses the question of "Why Rusape Specifically?" in more detail.

Table 5.9: Respondents' reasons for moving to Rusape specifically

Why Rusape?	1990s	1980s	1970s	Pre-1970	Total
Had relatives/spouse here	36	8	5	2	51
Close to rural home	23		3	2	28
Close to other area	2		2	1	5
Secured employment/transfer	20	5	3	2	30
Had heard of employment opportunity	2				2
Low living costs	14	3	2		19
Secured accommodation	6	1			7
Spouse found job/wanted to trade	7	2	1	2	12
Easier to get job/engage in trade, than in larger urban areas	11				11
Easier to get job/engage in trade than in smaller urban areas.	3			1	4
Easier to get job/engage in trade than in rural area.	4	1			5
Hospital	1				1
Quality of life	3		1	1	5
Professionally better	1				1
There is a lot of urban land			1		1
Returned after completing short contract	1				1
Total no. of opinions	134	20	18	11	183

Source: sample data.

Firstly, the significance of employment related migration is very apparent. Although migration in both structuralist and neo-classical migration theory tends to be perceived of as primarily employment-related, the feeling that employment or trade could be more easily engaged in Rusape than in other places offers a spatial dimension to this type of migration. Secondly, the importance of low living costs as a consideration guiding mobility, emerges most clearly in the 1990s, as does the role of accommodation and the perceived advantages of trading or working in Rusape. Interestingly enough, such considerations were not influenced primarily by previous urban experience, but were mentioned also by migrants of purely rural background. Thirdly, the importance attached to relatives present in Rusape is also clear, although less specifically characteristic of the 1990s. Of course, the notion that relatives in effect cushion the migrant's encounter with urban reality, with respect to accommodation and financial support during an interim period, is a component of most neo-classical and structuralist migration theory. Meanwhile, this also indicates the continued importance of migration upon or within marriage. Lastly, the desire to reside in an urban area proximate to one's rural home, is also apparent from the informants' replies. Once again, the perceived benefits of living close to a rural home were similar both for previous urbanites and for villagers.

Thus, few differences with respect to motivations for choosing Rusape specifically, exist between migrants of purely rural background, and those who had previously lived in urban areas, be they larger or smaller than Rusape. A

kind of indirect deflection of prospective rural city migrants towards Rusape, seemed to have occurred in a few cases, where respondents with no previous urban experience, claimed to have heard of the difficulties associated with life in the larger urban centres.

5.6 Conclusion

Migration to a small town is not a matter of migration to *any* small town, but to a small town that offers locational as well as structural advantages. The desire to be close to a rural home, while living in an urban area is an obvious component of this kind of migration.

Bearing in mind both the theoretical discussion and received wisdom within migration studies in general, as presented in the introductory chapter, the presented pattern of migration from larger urban areas to smaller towns, is however, rather surprising. This pattern perhaps suggests the rising significance which migrants attach to factors of proximity to rural homes, when prices of petrol or perhaps more importantly food are rising. Likewise, the necessity of remaining in an urban area, albeit a low cost urban area, may be more immediate under conditions of deepening rural poverty.

In the following three chapters (6,7,8) therefore, the considerations guiding the migrant's choice of Rusape more specifically are analysed within the broader conceptual notion of what a small town such as Rusape has to offer in a context of rising living costs, informalized employment and shrinking economic margins. As Warde (1988) has suggested, certain places imply more advantageous provisioning possibilities than others, and in the case of Zimbabwe, as was suggested in Chapter 2, structural conditions at present may provide an understanding of mobility directed towards lower level urban centres. Chapter 6 discusses the role of lower costs of housing and transportation as one advantageous aspect of livelihoods in small towns, while chapter 7 considers the provisioning possibilities in Rusape in terms of food. Lastly, chapter 8 explores the widespread perception among my respondents that employment opportunities and possibilities of self-employment in Rusape are, paradoxically, higher than in many other urban areas.

6 Urban costs of housing and transportation

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will explore the role of lower urban costs of housing and transportation in the migrants' decision to move to, or remain in Rusape. The significance of mobility as a means of avoiding high urban living costs, is hardly unexpected given the rapid escalation of living costs in Zimbabwe in general as noted in much academic work on the social aspects of structural adjustment. Nonetheless, the possibility that such costs are differentiated over space, is generally disregarded in the Zimbabwean migration literature which is all the more surprising given the perceived cost benefits of rural return migration. Potts (2000) for instance dismisses the possibility of *internal* cost differentials among Zimbabwean urban areas as : "...it is so difficult for most households to avoid paying market prices for housing and food" (p.905). A relatively undifferentiated cost structure among urban areas is noted also in the *PASS Report* (1997).

The notion that Rusape confers significantly lower living costs was however, apparent in many of my respondents' comments on their own and other people's movement to the town. Such explanations were also offered as motivations for wishing to remain in town, both by the very poor and the slightly better off. This seems to suggest that there was a widespread feeling among migrants that they were getting more for their money in Rusape than they would elsewhere, in particular in the large urban areas such as Harare and Bulawayo. Often a comparison between Rusape and these areas was made in passing, and sometimes dwelled upon at some length by the respondents, even among those who lacked residential experience of these places. A number of specific economic advantages connected with small town life were described by the respondents in general. Firstly, the relatively low costs, and indeed availability of both rental and home owner accommodation were discussed as an important component of this package of beneficial aspects of life in Rusape. Secondly, the advantages of living in a town where commuting and

associated costs were not necessary were often commented on. In the same vein, the ability to budget one's bus fare to the rural areas by being close to the rural home was also remarked upon. Lastly, the price of food and the ability to eat lunch and breakfast at home were also conceived of as important cost-saving aspects.

Such perceptions, however were not restricted to migrants bound from other (mainly larger) urban areas, but were expressed also by migrants lacking any primary urban experience themselves. The choice of Rusape in these cases was to some extent informed by a view of the town as a low cost alternative when compared with larger urban areas, while comments on migration to Rusape in general were often framed by similar opinions. Although perhaps not the primary motive for moving to Rusape among migrants of purely rural background (who more often emphasised proximity to their rural areas), perceptions of Rusape as a relatively inexpensive urban area also surfaced in interviews with these respondents. A widespread recognition of the low costs associated with life in Rusape is therefore apparent within the sample as a whole, and often focused on the relatively low cost of housing and transportation.

6.2 Housing and migration

The idea that migration to small towns is being undertaken partly as a way of realising certain economic advantages suggests that the possibility of securing housing at a fraction of the price found in major urban areas is an important aspect of migrants' decision making. Although housing is offered as a part of a general explanation of the advantages of low living costs, and the relative ease with which food security and employment can be attained in a small town, it comes across in my interviews as a strongly contributing aspect for personal mobility to Rusape.

The notion of housing as an asset and the idea that access to shelter is as geographically and socio-economically differentiated as any other resource within the urban economy has been discussed with respect to Africa mainly by researchers engaged in gender studies. Larsson (1996) and Datta's (1996a) contributions to a volume on gender research and housing in Africa (Schlyter (ed.) 1996), point to the role of housing as an opportunity or indeed necessity for urban survival and livelihood.

Housing can in this context be perceived of as a secure form of investment in the face of spiralling inflation, as discussed by Bond (1999), Datta (1996b) and Ncube et al. (1997a), and also as a source of income as proposed by Potts with Mutambirwa (1998), and as a location for engaging in income activities not directly related to housing itself as suggested by Sinai (1998). In this sense exclusion from the housing market results in additional expenditure and a loss

of income for the less privileged, while escalating building costs hinder the possibility of making future investments into housing.

With respect to housing policy, as with all other arenas of society, ESAP is producing a situation of heightened socio-economic differentiation, where the majority are in effect excluded from securing their own housing. While such market fragmentation is well documented in the literature, for example Bond's (1998) discussion of *Housing Finance and Uneven Urban Development* (chapter nine in an impressive volume suggestively titled *Uneven Zimbabwe*), the documentation does remain aspatial. In a similar vein, cited statistics on housing market indicators, in most official reports and academic literature concern almost entirely the Harare-Chitungwiza conurbation or the second and third cities of Bulawayo and Gweru (See for example, Grant 1996, Rakodi with Withers 1993, Rakodi and Withers 1995, Rakodi 1995a, Bond 1998, *Zimbabwe Shelter and Urban Indicator Study – Report of Findings*²¹).

The connection between migration and the national urban housing situation is, however, generally disregarded in the literature. In the migration literature as a whole, the neglect of this link is apparent within more recent academic contributions. Despite the well documented workings of the housing market in various urban areas²², and the mass of academic work on migration, few studies exist which concern the importance of low-cost areas in the national housing market in attracting migrants to certain urban areas.

The role of inflated house prices and rentals in actively displacing residents, or passively excluding prospective inhabitants from certain spheres of the housing market and urban areas is also largely ignored in the geographical literature. A fleeting reference to the deregulation of housing markets in Estonia following the fall of communism and the increase in migration to Tallinn is made by Sjöberg and Tammaru (1999), while Arthur (1991) makes an equally brief assertion of the importance of housing policy as a determinant of internal migration in Ghana. Based on data collected in 1980 and 1981, Boyle (1994) presents a statistical study of the counter-urbanisation trend in England and Wales, and also makes a brief connection between high house prices and (non)-migration²³. An important exception in this respect is

²¹ The *Zimbabwe Shelter and Urban Indicator Study Report of Findings*, was published in 1995 by the Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing, Zimbabwe Coordinating Committee on Human Settlement and United States Agency for International Development/Zimbabwe. It will henceforth be referred to as the *Urban Indicator Study Report*.

²² See e.g. Gilbert and Crankshaw (1999) for a comparison between South African and Latin American housing situations, and Rakodi's (1995a, 1995b), voluminous work on housing in both Zimbabwe and elsewhere.

²³ Otherwise, inspiration might be sought among the economists, of whom, for example Cameron and Muellbauer (1999) present the hypothesis that rising house prices in London discourage migration on the basis of an econometric model. Likewise, Becker and Morrison (1997), also from a neo-classical, Todaro-esque angle mention the role of property markets in affecting rural-urban migration in the Sub-Saharan context.

Woube and Sjöberg's (1999) study of urbanisation and housing in Ethiopia between 1975-1990. Although interesting as an illustration of migrants' inventiveness in circumventing influx legislation, their article offers little theoretical guidance on the connection between property markets and the consumption of housing as an incentive for migration.

I wish to suggest instead that access to housing in the structural adjustment era has become very much spatialised, not only *within* urban areas in terms of segregation, but also *among* cities and towns. In this sense, mobility is linked to the availability and relative cost of housing in different urban areas. The constraints to Zimbabwean housing policy, as well as a climate of general socio-economic decline and the privatisation of urban housing provision under ESAP, have created a housing market in many urban areas which puts the acquisition of shelter increasingly beyond the means of the urban poor. In this context, the possibility of avoiding places characterised by prohibitively expensive housing, while aiming to enter others with less pronounced barriers in terms of accommodation, are considerations which can be perceived of as highly relevant to the decision making of migrants.

6.3 The context of housing in Zimbabwe

The socialist-Marxist post-independence government initially took the view that housing was a basic human right. Subsequently, however, the prioritisation of rural development coupled with a decline in the national economic situation has led to a housing policy characterised by financial constraints, over-ambition and continuity rather than change (Patel 1984, 1985, Schlyter 1989, Mutizwa-Mangiza 1992, Rakodi and Withers 1995, Butcher 1993).

In the period immediately following independence, statements issued by the government implied a role for housing policy in redressing the colonial heritage. The independent government inherited a *Five-Year National Development Plan* which it altered and then implemented. By 1982, a new development plan for low-income housing was published (*The National Housing Transitional Development Plan* 1982-85) the basic tenets of which were defined as home ownership, aided self-help, cost recovery, high standard and anti-squatting (Schlyter 1989:40, Auret 1995:16)).

The policy objective of home ownership had its origins, albeit on a modest scale, in the Smith regime and was consolidated by the new government, which extended the scope of the policy to include all Africans living in former municipally owned rental housing. The prices of property were made dependent on tenants' length of residence, such that rent that had been paid during the tenancy was considered as mortgage payments on the house. Officially dubbed the Home Ownership Policy, this involved the selling of 90

percent of all housing units in the former African townships to their sitting tenants on a rent-to-buy basis from the government. The existing housing stock therefore, was sold off without the involvement of building societies (Min. J.L. Nkomo, cited in *Social Change and Development*, May 1999). Only a tenth of all new housing schemes were designed as rental housing, with the remainder being intended for home ownership (Schlyter 1989:42).

In the *First Five-Year National Development Plan*, published in 1986, government widened the scope of its housing policy to also encompass the private sector (and not only international donors, which had been characteristic of the previous plan). With the advent of ESAP, the housing sector was also drawn into the wider structural adjustment ambit, with cost-recovery being the guiding principle (Auret 1995:18). Two housing schemes – The National Housing Fund and the National Housing Guarantee Fund – were established by the Ministry for Local Government and National Housing to provide housing for low paid civil servants. By the end of 1996, however, the funds were owed over Z\$200 million, which it transpired had been diverted to a scheme benefiting “top government officials and influential individuals” (*The Financial Gazette*, November 20, 1997, “Probe Launched on VIP Housing Scam”). As a response to the general drive towards privatisation envisioned by ESAP, and the liquidity problems experienced by building societies, government in 1992-1993 “initiated the private sector housing programme which is co-financed by the Government of Zimbabwe and USAID” (Minister J L Nkomo, cited in *Social Change and Development*, May 1999, p. 3).

Geared towards a market-orientation of low-income housing production, the Private Sector Housing Programme (PSHP), as well as the World Bank Housing Programme, were thought to facilitate the “participation of building societies in low cost housing” (*National Housing Policy for Zimbabwe*, Ministry of Local Government and National Housing 1999:7). While assisting the servicing of stands and the issuing of low-income mortgages, the ultimate aim of the PSHP is the “establishment of an environment in which the private sector will be able to meet the nation’s housing needs, with the government as facilitator” (*PSHP Monitoring and Evaluation System Indicator Update*, Ministry of Local Government and National Housing, and USAID/Zimbabwe 1998:2). The construction of houses by local authorities for sale to prospective owners, which had been part of the USAID’s earlier programmes, was therefore replaced by the servicing of sites (pers. comm., Mr A. Kamete, lecturer, Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe, Uppsala, March 18, 2002).

As the down-market penetration values for the PSHP programme indicate, however, the problem is to a lesser extent one of the production of housing beyond the means of the urban poor, and more a question of a general scarcity of low-income housing. For PSHP mortgaged housing the down-market

penetration value for six urban centres²⁴ was found to be 1.96. This figure was found to be substantially higher for Harare and Bulawayo, which in 1994 had average down-market penetration values of 3.1 (*Urban Indicator Study Report* 1995:70). Yet, as the *Urban Indicator Study Report* concludes:

In summary, there are indications that affordable housing can be and is being built in urban centres in Zimbabwe, but in very low volumes. These low production levels, coupled with rapid urban population growth have resulted in acute shortages of housing which have artificially but dramatically increased the market price of housing (p. 70).

The officially estimated backlog of 2 212 000²⁵ low-income housing units in 2000, compared with an annual production of 18 000 units by both the public and private sectors provides an illustration of the discrepancy between demand and supply in this context (F. Nhema, founder and First Managing Director of Zimbabwe Building Society, interviewed in *Social Change and Development*, May 1999, p. 10). Moreover, as Kamete (2000) illustrates, the problems of affordability among the urban poor are more prevalent today than in the mid-1990s when the *Urban Indicator Study Report* was published.

The majority of home seekers are therefore forced to rely on an increasingly extortionate rental market. On the one hand this is connected with a general withdrawal of the state from the provision of housing, but it is also a result of the introduction of Rent Control Regulations which to some extent have reduced the investment incentives for rental housing. The official policy of home ownership has, meanwhile, been largely unsuccessful in Zimbabwe. Half of the urban low-income population is estimated to be living as tenants (lodgers). Indeed, by 1991, a larger number of residents with relatively higher incomes were living in rental tenure as compared with 1982 (Rakodi and Withers 1995:189). Although government was never officially in favour of lodging (i.e. rental accommodation according to non-contractual arrangements), in practice lodging is indirectly encouraged by the adoption of other policies. The miscalculation of effective demand and affordability of housing is perhaps the most telling example of the unrealistic expectations of household income guiding government housing policy. Referring to Harare, Rakodi (1995a:241) writes

²⁴ defined as the ratio of lowest-priced (unsubsidised) formal dwelling unit produced by the private sector (not less than two percent of annual housing production) and the median annual housing income. Basically, this means that to buy the lowest priced formal housing unit in Harare required three years worth of (median) income.

²⁵ The official definition of housing demand is premised upon owner-occupancy and thus figures of the 'homeless' are based on those who do not have a house to their name. The official figure for urban housing demand was set in 1995 to 600 000 housing units (pers. comm. Mr A. Kamete, Lecturer, Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe, Uppsala, February 6, 2002).

The official calculations were updated in 1991. Surveys for the housing indicators' report showed that the average income in urban high density areas was Z\$400 (Zimbabwe 1991c). Only those earning over Z\$900 per month, it was estimated, could have afforded a standard four room core costing between Z\$18 000 and Z\$20 000. Those earning under Z\$200 could only have afforded the rent for a single room or backyard shack (Z\$50), often at the cost of other essential expenditure. Of the households on the city's waiting list in 1988/9, 9% earned less than Z\$200 and 54% less than Z\$400. Only 12% earned more than Z\$800. Although there are a number of problems with these simple "rule of thumb" estimates of affordability, they do illustrate the mismatch in housing policy in Zimbabwe between the normative standards embodied in the conditions imposed on allottees in "low cost" housing schemes and the resources available to poor households.

The rapidly rising costs of building materials under ESAP, moreover, have removed the acquisition of low cost housing even further from the groups it was intended to provide for. Prices rose by 31 percent in 1990, 37 percent in 1991 and 47 percent in 1992, and in fact outstripped inflation (ibid., p. 237). Such price rises have made low cost housing increasingly attractive to income categories which under normal circumstances would have purchased houses in middle- and higher-income residential areas (Madaka 1995:164). In the context of Harare, Rakodi (1995a: 239) notes the tampering with council housing waiting lists to cater for friends and relatives and those with incomes above the income ceiling for low-income housing.

Moreover, the raising of interest rates in 1991 as a part of ESAP, prevented building societies from issuing home loans to new customers during a period of two years. With respect to Zimbabwe's significant dependence on building society loans in financing housing construction, relative to other developing countries: "this was clearly a huge disadvantage for the urban poor – and directly attributable to ESAP. ESAP has, therefore, actively discouraged one of the most productive (in both economic and welfare terms) activities of Zimbabwe's urban low-income population – their investment in housing" (Potts with Mutambirwa 1998:75). Indeed, in 1998, wholesale mortgaging for low-income households was suspended by building societies in the face of the disproportionate servicing costs for low-income lending (F. Nhema, founder and First Managing Director, Zimbabwe Building Society, interviewed in *Social Change and Development*, May 1999, p. 10).

Attempts to regulate the housing rental market have been largely ineffective, as Grant's (1996) work on the rental market in Gweru suggests.

The Housing and Building (lodger's rent restriction) Regulations of 1980 were intended to regulate the rental market by restricting the rent for a single room to Z\$8 per month. The desperation which surrounds the housing market in the major urban areas, however, makes these regulations difficult to enforce (Patel 1984:190), and the low-income segments of the urban housing market continue to live under socially and economically stressing conditions. Rents rose by 17 percent above the rate of inflation and 125 percent above minimum wage raises between 1982 and 1991 in Rakodi with Withers' (1993) survey of a number of low-income housing areas in Harare (cited in Rakodi 1995a:216), while very few families had rental expenses below the 27.5 percent of income ceiling suggested by government (ibid., p. 217). Demand clearly outstrips supply.

Given the skewed low-income housing markets of large urban areas, the question remains in what ways people adapt to such distortions. My suggestion on the basis of both field work material and secondary data, is that mobility away from such places is very much influenced by the low availability and high expenses associated with housing.

6.4 Housing and migration to Rusape

In terms of the national housing market and its effect on migration, the evidence from my fieldwork points strongly to the role of housing in encouraging movement to Rusape. On the basis of these data, the costs and availability of both serviced stands (that is urban land for private purchase and occupation) and cheap rental accommodation can be considered as very significant aspects of respondents' decision-making in terms of movement to the town and the decision to stay once there. The frequent comparisons made by migrants between house prices and the cost of rental accommodation in major urban areas and those found in Rusape were in many cases informed by firsthand experience of Harare and to a lesser extent Bulawayo, Gweru and Mutare. Likewise, when asked to voice their opinions of Rusape, respondents often dwelled extensively on the low living costs associated with the town in general, and frequently mentioned the low rents and house prices in comparison with major urban areas.

Migrant histories suggest the importance of three key aspects of housing in Rusape, vis à vis their own and others' mobility and immobility. Firstly, the sheer availability of serviced stands for purchase was dwelled upon by respondents. Secondly, the cost of stands and the price of construction materials were referred to, and lastly, the affordability and availability of rental accommodation or accommodation with relatives were important considerations with respect to mobility. Although the possibility of staying with relatives was an important reason for choosing Rusape in *practice*, the

role of the housing market and the market for rental accommodation in attracting migrants was more reflective of the general advantages offered by Rusape in comparison with other places. These themes, moreover, resonate in the respondents' perceptions of movement to Rusape in general, as well as in the comments made on the qualities of the town and the intention to remain there. The notion that residential stands are bought mainly by people wishing to avoid the expenses and social ills of larger urban areas is an important sub theme of such opinions.

Migration for home ownership purposes

Migration intended primarily for the purpose of purchasing property in Rusape, had been undertaken by relatively few migrants, but nonetheless was at the centre of many respondents' explanations of migration to Rusape in general. The focus of respondents who had had as their primary motive to purchase a home was both on the cost of housing, and the availability itself. Respondents describing this perceived tendency among others dwelt exclusively on the price of urban land, rather than the availability of land.

The overheated property markets in major urban areas can be instrumental in propelling prospective home owners to less developed segments of the property market in other smaller urban areas. For this reason, those respondents who refer directly to their choice of Rusape as partly or wholly for the purpose of purchasing a stand or a house, refer also to the impossibility of acquiring a house in larger urban areas. This is perhaps most clearly illustrated by the example of John (Case 6.1), a worker for the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) in his early forties, who poignantly described the advantages of the small town with respect to acquiring a home, which in his case was connected with NRZ regulations. The corporation's policy meant that purchasing a house in larger towns required a marriage certificate, something which John lacked. His housing strategy, covering a number of years, was intimately connected with mobility between a number of urban areas in a quest to purchase a house in a small town and located close to his rural home.

Case 6.1: John

John was born in Bonda in 1962 and grew up in Nyamaropa in Nyanga District with his grandparents who were farming in the communal areas. He completed grade seven in 1976, and after four years left Nyamaropa in 1980 to work in Harare. Life was getting tougher in the communal areas, so he needed a job. John was invited by a relative to work as a gardener in Harare. He was then invited by his uncle and his mother and stepfather to stay with them in Mutare. He arrived in Mutare in February of 1982 and managed to find a job in October of 1982. In the meantime he was

supported by his stepfather. He heard that the NRZ was recruiting so he went there and found a job as a general hand and worked on temporary basis for three months after which his employment was made permanent. John stayed in Mutare for twelve years and then he moved to Gweru. He had actually wanted to move to Rusape or Marondera, but he was told that there were no vacancies and that if he went to Gweru first he would be transferred to Rusape later. His first preference was a small town as he could buy a house in one of these towns through the NRZ. In Mutare and larger cities houses would only be given to married families and he lacked a marriage certificate to prove that he was married, although he was married according to customary law. He stayed in Gweru for six years, and then decided to leave since the city was too far away from his communal area and he moved instead to Headlands which is much closer to Nyanga. After six months in Headlands a vacancy had turned up in Rusape which was his first choice as he was promised a house here and there is direct transport by bus to Nyanga from Rusape. He came to Rusape in February of 2000. He was buying his four-roomed house through a renting-to-buy arrangement with the NRZ although the papers for renting-to-buy had not been processed at the time of the interview. He was going to pay Z\$2000 per month on a rent-to-buy basis, in total a cost of Z\$75000 for his house. He had one lodger who paid Z\$400 per month. His wife was staying in the communal areas with two of their children, and he stayed in Rusape with the other two children who were attending primary school. Apart from his lodger and his two children, no one else was staying with him. John enjoyed staying in Rusape since he felt life was cheaper than in Harare, and because it was also close to his rural home.

Another respondent, Grace, also referred directly to the difficulty of getting a house in Mutare in 1986, and the relative ease with which a house could be purchased in Rusape at the time. In the case of Grace, after the purchase of the house her husband effected a job transfer as a response to their new housing situation, suggesting, that the acquisition of a home was in fact the primary motive for migrating. As with John, the couple's decision to purchase a house in Rusape was also related to the town's proximity to a rural home.

This notion of people from areas outside Rusape moving to town for the purpose of purchasing property was commented on very frequently in the interviews when respondents were asked to discuss the reasons they themselves, and other people, have for moving to Rusape. A comparison of stand²⁶ prices in Harare with those charged by the Rusape Town Council was often added as an explanation. The Director of Housing and Community Services at the Town Council, Mrs Matsanga, also argued that government

²⁶ A stand is a serviced piece of land purchased from the local authority for the building of one's own house. The size of a stand in the high density suburbs has varied over time. The pre-independence standard of 200 sq. m was raised in 1980 to 312.5 sq. m. In 1992 a Government directive reduced the stand size to 150-200 sq. m. In 1997 the standard was restored to 312.5 sq. m (pers. comm, Mr A. Kamete lecturer, Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe, Uppsala, March 18, 2002).

professionals working in the surrounding rural areas, invest in homes in town which they use as weekend residences (pers. comm., Mrs F.B. Matsanga, Director of Housing and Community Services, Vengere, Rusape Town Council, Rusape, November 11, 1999). The purchase of a house in Rusape can be considered a form of saving among relatively well-paid civil servants in the face of an uncertain economic climate. In this way, the displacement of low-income groups by high- and middle-income residents within the low-income housing market (occasionally as a source of rentals) suggested by Kamete (2000:255) in the context of Harare and Bulawayo, is occurring also in Rusape.

In most respondents' views, however, movement for this reason occurs from other urban areas rather than from rural areas. One respondent, Sarudzai, commented that: " People are coming here since the town lacks expenses. People come from the big cities to buy houses here. The grounds are still cheaper here than in Harare. A stand in Harare costs between Z\$70 000 and Z\$75 000, while the building materials are also more expensive there." According to Auret (1995: 46), however, who investigated the national housing situation for the Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice, construction costs do indeed vary among urban areas, but not to a great degree. The cost of urban land therefore, is more likely to be decisive in housing investments.



Photo 6.1: Building in Vengere

An analysis of the housing records of Rusape, which provide data on places of origin (i.e. the place of one's rural home), as well as years of ownership transfer, presents a picture of a relatively stable owner population, however. From a comparison of purchases in the G-section of Vengere, built from 1964 onwards, with those in the VE-, NE- and NHF-sections, constructed during the early 1980s and early and mid-1990's respectively, it is obvious that home owners from Makoni District have accounted for roughly 40 percent of all

house purchases during those years when large numbers of units have been transferred (i.e. 1983, 1984, 1991, 1993 and 1994). The percentage of home owners from other Manicaland districts and districts outside Manicaland constitute around 30 percent respectively, of purchases during these years (Table 6.1). Unfortunately, records were unavailable for the newest built section, the ZBS section, completed between 1998 and 2000 and comprising almost 300 housing units. This makes it harder to establish whether the perceived domination of the property market by “outside” buyers is a recent occurrence. Meanwhile, the records say nothing of the place of residence at the time of purchase, and the perception among migrants that outsiders are deliberately targeting Rusape as a source of underpriced stands and housing, is hard to either refute or confirm on the basis of these records.

Table 6.1: Home purchases in percent according to area of origin of buyer, by year.

Year	Makoni (percent)	Manicaland (percent)	Outside Manicaland (percent)	Number of units
1980	25	50	25	4
1981	60	20	20	5
1982	-	100	-	1
1983	45	29	26	138
1984	45	24	31	130
1985	-	33	67	6
1986	38	31	31	51
1987	32	38	30	47
1988	22	44	34	18
1989	50	8	42	12
1990	33	22	45	9
1991	46	26	28	119
1992	42	31	27	59
1993	45	35	20	142
1994	44	31	25	141
1995	40	25	35	80
1996	36	40	24	42
1997	51	23	26	31
1998	65	30	5	20
1999	50	50	-	10

Source: Rusape Town Council housing records.

Rental accommodation and migration

When asked to discuss reasons for moving to Rusape, migrants in numerous instances referred to being informed by friends or relatives of the low rents to be found in town. The archetypal migrant in such cases was a young man who had left his rural home in a communal area close to Rusape, for Harare in search of greener pastures, and who had, as it were, been disillusioned by the high living costs and difficulties of finding employment and accommodation

in the capital. For this reason, many migrants with firsthand experience compare the cost of living in Rusape to other urban areas, mainly Harare. There was a widespread perception among migrants in this situation, that they were getting more for their money's worth in Rusape, where the rent for a room was cited as roughly half of that in Harare.

As Tendai (Case 6.2), a young well-educated motor mechanic suggested, the existence of lower living costs in general, and low rentals in particular, was an aspect considered even by the relatively well-educated and well paid, who did in fact have options. The respondent's story was interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, the importance of fringe benefits, which are not affected by rising prices are brought to bear by his comments. His comments also indicate the role of high costs in propelling migrants from Harare towards urban areas that offer prospects of employment, cheaper rental accommodation, and lower transportation costs.

Of interest to the geographer in his explanation is also the reference to "places where life is a little easier". Although it is hard to separate the role of rent from other perceived expenses of larger urban areas, given the disproportionately expensive market for rental accommodation, the possibility of securing free accommodation that is not subjected to the vagaries of the market is an obvious asset. The deliberate search for fringe benefits which are not affected by changes in prices is in this context hardly surprising.

Case 6.2: Tendai

Tendai was born in Chiredzi in 1972, and initially grew up on a sugar plantation in Hippo Valley where his father was working as a truck driver. He did his primary schooling in Chiduku communal area outside Rusape where he stayed with his mother who moved seasonally between Chiredzi and Chiduku. After completing grade 7 he returned to Chiredzi to attend secondary school on another plantation, Mkwasine estate, where his father was by this time working. He completed his O'levels in 1991 and then moved to Chiredzi town to study motor mechanics during 1992 and 1993. After college he got a job with Mkwasine Estate where he worked as a mechanic between 1993 and 1997. He left for Harare in 1997 in search of better opportunities. During his employment at Mkwasine he went for upgrading courses in Harare for about 2 months per year, and while he was there he started looking around for better opportunities. While he was upgrading in 1997, he worked for a garage in Highlands (a low density suburb of Harare) that was operating a 24-hour service. This allowed him to work for the garage after college finished at five o'clock in the afternoon. He worked there during his upgrading courses and was subsequently offered a full time job with this company. After a year and a half he felt that life in Harare was too expensive and got in touch with the garages here and found a job at one of the petrol stations in town. He inquired on the basis of rumours. In Rusape he was paying about Z\$700 to rent two rooms at the time of the interview, while he had been paying Z\$450 for one room in Harare a year earlier (1999). Transportation was

very expensive and he paid for lunch and breakfast at work. In Rusape he could just walk to town. He also chose Rusape because it was close to his rural home, but he could have chosen any town (Masvingo, Mutare) if the job had been good. In Rusape he was being paid more than in Harare although he would not specify the amount. Tendai argued that as long as you have some training, mechanics are in demand and he was already sending his CV to garages and estates all over the country. Life was getting increasingly hard, he suggested, so he was looking for places where life would be a little easier. Estates and mines offer better wages and also a number of fringe benefits; free accommodation, free transport to work, subsidised water and electricity and education allowances. These fringe benefits are becoming increasingly valuable in the context of today's situation. The competition for jobs in these places is stiff since life is hard. He came to Rusape in 1999 and had been in town for a year when I interviewed him, but he regarded Rusape as a ladder towards a job in one of these more attractive places. Although Rusape is closer to his rural home (and hence he could save money on transport when going there) Tendai felt it was not worth staying in Rusape in the long run. He was confident that very soon he would find a job in one of these places. He maintained that people come to Rusape from larger urban areas since small towns are cheaper. Most of his work mates here had moved from Harare, and some of his former work mates at the garage in Harare now wanted to join him here since they pay better wages here. Wages in general are higher at garages in Rusape than in Harare where he argued that wages could be kept low since there are so many people looking for jobs. He concluded that: "People coming to Harare are just attracted by the name and the fast life, but the expenses associated with transport, especially the need to board more than one commuter to get to work, and accommodation kill you at the end of the day."

Interestingly enough, even migrants lacking previous experience of the economic hardships of larger urban areas, are well aware of the costs and limited availability of rental tenure in such places. A very common explanation for other people's movement to Rusape, also relates to the relatively low cost of living in general, and the low cost and ample availability of rental accommodation in particular. This view also informs many respondents' desire to remain in Rusape, as they frequently compared the ease of finding rooms and the relative cheapness of rented accommodation in Rusape, with conditions in major urban areas. When respondents were asked to comment on who was moving to Rusape and why, even people perceived to be coming from rural areas were thought to be choosing Rusape, as opposed to other urban areas, since accommodation is thought to be easily and cheaply secured. Thus, there appears to be a widespread view that housing in large urban areas is not only difficult to find, but also prohibitively expensive.

The views expressed by the respondents to the effect that the housing market in Rusape is comparatively underdeveloped and easily accessible when compared with other urban areas is apparent also in secondary sources on residential property markets in major urban areas.

6.5 Housing in other urban areas

Housing policies and waiting lists

Both the availability and cost of urban land, and the saturation of the market for rented accommodation are considerable constraints to the private property markets in other urban areas. The access to housing, can in this context, be perceived to be highly prone to differentiation across urban spaces.

The availability of stands is an obvious problem in the main urban areas, and given the low rate of public construction of housing, what are officially waiting lists for *housing*, are, in practice, waiting lists for the purchase of *stands*. The extent to which the local authority provides assistance to prospective home owners, either in terms of actual construction, or through providing mortgages, varies a great deal among the urban areas.

The waiting list in mid-1997 for housing in Harare was reported to contain in excess of 120 000 households (*The Financial Gazette*, August 15, 1997, “Dream of Housing for all by 2000 Crumbles”), and another 45 000 households were on the waiting-list for housing in Bulawayo (*The Financial Gazette*, October 9, 1997, “Housing Crisis Worsens in Cash-Strapped Bulawayo”). In 1994, Chitungwiza had a waiting list comprising 40 500 households (Auret 1995:40). By comparison, Rusape in November of 1999, had a waiting list for serviced stands comprising of roughly 1200 households (pers. comm., Mrs F.B. Matsanga, Director of Housing and Community Services, Vengere, Rusape Town Council, Rusape, November 11, 1999). The waiting lists for a number of urban areas are presented in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: waiting lists and total populations.

City/Town	No. on waiting list	Total Population	Ratio between waiting list and population (percent)
Harare	92 251	1 335 076	7
Bulawayo	24 133	630 936	4
Chitungwiza	40 486	300 000	13
Mutare (1995)	14 140	131 808	11
Gweru	9 000	124 735	7
Masvingo	6 618	51 746	13
Kadoma	14 198	67 267	21

Compiled from Auret (1995), based on 1994 figures.

The housing policies of local authorities vary significantly among the urban areas, from active involvement to minimal participation, according to Auret’s (1995) review of Zimbabwean urban shelter policy and practice. Attempts by the Harare City Council were made in the early 1990s to assist in the

construction of low-income housing through a number of projects throughout the city. These were also being assisted by foreign donors and the Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing, although such involvement was hampered by general financial constraints and critical staff shortages (Auret 1995:37). A similar set-up exists in Bulawayo, which is the subject of a plethora of housing programmes, and remains one of the few urban areas which still provides a certain measure of social housing (*State of the Cities Report 2000*²⁷). In Masvingo, construction has been divided between the Ministry and the owners themselves (Auret 1995, pp. 35-37). Kamete (2000), however, notes that an emphasis on cost-recovery under ESAP means that the principles of providing high density housing to low-income groups have been abandoned and replaced instead by market-led provision of shelter in a number of urban areas. A similar point is made in the *State of the Cities Report* from 2000, which, on the one hand, notes the involvement of the World Bank and USAID in providing mortgage financing at sub-market interest rates, but also the effects on social housing of a government policy strongly in favour of home ownership. As the report suggests:

At the same time, the decline in social housing has limited the provision of accommodation. The elderly also have difficulties in getting mortgages because of the loan repayment period, which is usually 25 years. Women, whose majority are in the informal sector also have difficulties in accessing mortgage finance because of mortgage lending institutions such as building societies in Zimbabwe are not willing to take the risk of lending funds to people whose incomes are not consistent (p. 2).

The non-involvement policy of Rusape, which in Auret's discussion from 1995 represented the other extreme, where virtually no assistance is given to would be home owners, is perhaps less extreme under the present policy climate. Stands are serviced, and therefore in practice, building becomes the prerogative of the owner. This in itself sets the income requirements for prospective purchasers above the income of most urbanites. The speed with which a house has to be constructed on the site, moreover, means that evictions of tenants are common, as they find construction increasingly placed beyond their means as a result of inflation (Auret 1995:45). The relationship

²⁷ The *State of the Cities Report for Zimbabwe 1993-1998*, has been compiled by the Institute of Development Studies, The Department of Natural Resources, The Ministry of Local Government, SARDC-IMERCSA and the Central Statistics Office in conjunction with ICLEI and UNHCS, and covers surveys of a number of aspects of urban life in Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Mutare and Chegutu. The information in the report has been supplied by the local authority in each city. Because of its many contributors, the report will henceforth be referred to as the *State of the Cities Report*.

between housing demand and the size of urban areas is not necessarily straightforward. The municipalities of Chinhoyi, Bindura and Chegutu, have experienced relatively large housing shortages in the 1980s. Auret (1995) attributes the shortage of housing in these areas to a lack of local authority finance (p. 26).

In the case of Rusape, the Town Council's stance is one of non-involvement. Stands are serviced for purchase and building is left to the buyer. Until recently, owners have paid 25 percent of the stand price in cash and the remainder in instalments on the basis of a 14.25 percent interest rate²⁸. The sale of the land itself, covered the servicing costs of the stand. As such, the RTC views itself as a facilitator rather than a provider of housing. Similarly, the RTC does not assist in securing finance for the actual construction costs of houses once the stand has been purchased. The Housing Director suggested that the waiting list was seen as a guideline towards people's interest in purchasing a stand, as the economic downturn was making it difficult to adhere to the list (pers. comm., Mrs F.B. Matsanga, Director of Housing and Community Services, Vengere, Rusape Town Council, Rusape, November 11, 1999).

Availability and price of urban land

The differentiation of stand prices within urban areas can be gleaned from the PSHP programme's Performance Monitoring Report from June 2000. As Table 6.3 indicates, the actual price of a low-income serviced stand does not vary to a great extent among urban areas in general. And, as the case of Nyanga (a settlement at a lower level of the urban hierarchy than Rusape) shows, the relationship between highly priced council stands and the extent of housing demand is not straightforward. As a means of comparison with the prices in the table 6.3, it can be mentioned that the Rusape Town Council charged Z\$7250 per high density stand in September 2000 (pers. comm. Mrs F.B. Matsanga, Director of Housing and Community Services, Vengere, Rusape Town Council, Rusape, September 1, 2000).

²⁸ This was based on the World Bank's subsidised loans towards the servicing of stands. Recent political turmoil has however meant that Zimbabwe has fallen out of favour with the Bank and after 2000, the subsidy has been withdrawn, meaning that market prices are now the rule in all urban areas (pers. comm., Mr A. Kamete, lecturer, Department of Rural and Urban Planning, University of Zimbabwe, Uppsala, March 18, 2002).

Table 6.3: Price of stands completed 1999-July 2000

Urban area	Price in Z\$
Bulawayo	13-27 556
Chitungwiza	32 630
Harare	24 300
Mutare	26 307
Nyanga	34 000

Source: compiled from GoZ and USAID, Private Sector Housing Programme, Performance Monitoring Report, Quarter Ending June 30, 2000, July 2000, Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Government of Zimbabwe.

In view of the privatisation aims of the programme, however, private developers are increasingly being encouraged to replace local government in the provision of services to urban residents. As Bond (1998) puts it:

The effect of all of this was that while the housing crisis intensified, central government (and the Bank) became increasingly capable of avoiding any visible responsibility. The problems of urban management were localized, privatized, dislocated as a competitive process between cities, and yet simultaneously bureaucratized in a new (municipal) form, such that government could offer no effective solution even if the political will had existed (in contrast to the land issue, where pronouncements of imminent widespread redistribution accompanied the intensification of the rural crisis) (p. 293).

By definition, the privatisation of the servicing of stands means that private developers are increasingly vying for shares of the property market. In this context, the inflated demand for stands enabled privately serviced stands in Harare's newest high density suburb, Snake Park, to be sold at Z\$140 000 per stand in July 2000 (*The Financial Gazette*, July 20, 2000: "Snake Park Stands Price Up"). The inroads made by private developers into the low-income housing market therefore mean that the acquisition of shelter by the low-income urban masses is made increasingly problematic.

The private property market

The price of urban low-income housing units sold by individuals on the private property market, is more difficult to find recent references to. The *Urban Indicator Study Report* (1995), cites statistics from 1992 on house price

to income ratio²⁹, and reports that Harare has a value of 9.8 compared to 4.7 for Bulawayo and around 1 for Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole (p. 70). The profits upon sale of a median priced house in Harare were found to be 40 percent, as compared with 21 percent for Mutare (ibid.). The house price to income ratio in the later *State of the Cities Report* from 2000 suggests slightly lower figures than the *Urban Indicator Study Report* based on data from 1992. Indeed, the *State of the Cities Report* suggests a 1993 figure of 1.35 and 2.78 for Chegutu and Gweru respectively. By 1998, the Gweru figure was thought to have fallen to 2.67, while it had risen to 3.37 for Chegutu (p. 3). In this context, the enormous discrepancy between Harare and other urban areas noted in the *Urban Indicator Study Report* in terms of price to income ratio is perhaps of most interest.

In terms of actual house prices on the open market, the press offers the only recent data on such developments. An article in the *Financial Gazette* from July 2000 refers to the sale of a privately built four-roomed house in the new high density suburb of Snake Park for Z\$475 000 (*The Financial Gazette*, July 20, 2000: “Snake Park Stands Price Up”). In the same year, a house sold by the National Railways of Zimbabwe to an employee in Rusape, was sold at Z\$75 000Z, while a four-roomed house bought by one respondent in the older G-section fetched Z\$105 000. In view of such price differences, migration to Rusape for purposes of acquiring a home, is likely to be related at least in part to relatively inexpensive private property.

The market for rental accommodation

Nonetheless, even in Rusape, tenant-owned housing is beyond the means of a large section of the towns’ residents. These are therefore restricted to rental tenure, as suggested by the 1992 census in which 42 percent of the population were found to be lodgers (CSO1994a:95). *The Rusape Master Plan* from 1996, suggests that more than half of the town’s population are lodgers (Rusape Town Council 1996).

Grant’s (1996) work on Gweru is perhaps the most comprehensive study of the *entire* rental market as it includes not only lodgings, but also City Council property, housing tied to Government or company employment, and formal private housing provided through estate agents. As Grant (1996) suggests, however, employer-tied and formal private housing is mostly found in the low and medium density residential areas of Gweru. In Vengere, as a high density suburb, tied housing is therefore rare, as is illustrated by Table 6.4. The relative importance of privately owned housing (and housing in the process of being privately purchased through rent-to-buy arrangements) is also very

²⁹ that is the ratio of the median free-market price of a dwelling unit and the median annual household income

apparent. Thus, it is likely that the polarisation between vulnerability and privilege in terms of housing which Grant (1996) notes, will contribute to a steadily increasing proportion of lodgers.

Table 6.4: Type of ownership of high density housing in Rusape

RTC rental property	Rent-to-buy arrangements with RTC	Rent-to-buy other	Employer owned housing	Privately owned housing	Total
303	403	394	87	982	2169

Source: RTC housing records

Thus, most respondents' references to housing contrasted the lodger's situation in Rusape relative to other urban areas. Frequent comparisons made by respondents between the rental housing markets in Rusape and Harare and other large urban areas, with respect to both price and quality of housing, have obvious links to references made to the housing problem in larger urban centres in the media and the literature.

At the end of July 2000, the state mouthpiece *The Herald*, reported that 78 percent of Harare's residents were lodging their housing, something which has clear implications for the standards of housing. As demand increases, rents increase and illegal backyard shacks (*tangwenas*) are built for rental purposes (Rakodi and Withers 1995:191). In their 1991 survey of 173 lodgers in Harare and 216 lodgers in Gweru, Rakodi and Withers (1995) reported that 48 percent of the Harare sample and 62 percent of the Gweru respondents were dissatisfied with their housing conditions. Major causes for complaint were crowded living conditions, the low quality of accommodation, lack of electricity and having to live in incomplete structures. The Mbare hostels, one of the oldest low-income residential areas in Harare, were originally built for 5 000 people, but were at the end of 1997 estimated to be housing more than ten times that number (*The Financial Gazette*, December 11, 1997, "Project to Refurbish Mbare Hostels Ready to Take off").

In Gweru, a lack of accommodation was found to be a possible reason for keeping families divided (Rakodi and Withers 1995:195). Similar cases are reported by Sithole-Fundire (1995) from Dombo Tombo township in Marondera, where the lack of accommodation resulted in what she terms "fragmented families" (1995:121). Although reasons for household fragmentation are related not only to the constrained nature of the housing market, but are very much part of wider livelihood conditions, a lack of accommodation is an important aspect of the separation of family members, as suggested also by Grant (1996) in the context of the rental market in Gweru. Lodging meanwhile produces other kinds of stress as well. The lack of space, especially for women who spend more time in the home, was distressing to the households interviewed by Sithole-Fundire (1995). Restricted gardening space

also negatively affected households' access to vegetables. The lack of indoor storage space meant that fruit and vegetable traders were unable to store goods that had been either ordered for sale or left over from the day's stock.

Regardless of gender, all lodgers felt that lodging in itself affected household expenditure negatively, through the erratic raising of electricity and water rates as well as rent itself, all of which were determined by the landlord/lady (Sithole-Fundire 1995, Schlyter 1989). As Potts with Mutambirwa (1998:67) comment:

In the context of ESAP, rents are a double-edged sword because, for the landlord/ladies, most of whom will probably be living on the premises with their lodgers, they can be increased in line with ESAP induced inflation (unlike wages) and are therefore a hedge against falling living standards.

Again, a reference to the *Urban Indicator Study Report* (1995) can be used to illustrate the disproportionate rise of accommodation expenses in Harare. The Harare rent to income ratio was in 1995 found to be 0.44, which means the median renting household spends 44 percent of its income on rent. This compares with 0.14 for the country as a whole in 1992 (p. 71). In figures calculated by the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe, it is estimated that Z\$2150 per month is needed for rent, for a low-income household in urban areas (where calculations are based on surveys undertaken in Gweru, Harare, Bulawayo, Masvingo and Mutare, unrealistically, though, based on rent for a three-roomed house) (Consumer Council of Zimbabwe 2000). By means of comparison, when asked about the level of their rent, most respondents stated that they were paying around Z\$300 (excluding water and electricity) for one room in Rusape.

6.6 Local transportation costs

The frequent mention of transportation as one of the major expenses associated with life in the metropolitan areas also explained many migrants' preference for small town living. Given the both massive and erratic price increases of fuel, it is hardly surprising that this aspect of urban life in larger towns and cities was the cause of much frustration. Meanwhile, the relatively large expenditure on transport in household budgets in these urban areas also explains the importance most migrants attached to the ability to commute by foot rather than public transport. In figures from the Consumer Council of Zimbabwe calculated on the basis of surveys in Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru, Masvingo and Mutare, undertaken in mid-August 2000, transport was found to account for Z\$1350 worth of expenses in a monthly budget for an urban

family covering roughly Z\$10 500 (Consumer Council of Zimbabwe 2000). This relative importance of transportation costs is also reflected in Potts with Mutambirwa's (1998:67) survey of recent migrants to Harare, which identified transportation costs as a very important type of price problem. Such evidence should also be placed in the context of an economy which until the late 1990s was characterised by an extremely liberal policy on fuel imports based on the "American model of low-priced petrol imports" (Bryceson and Mbara 2001:3). Therefore, the fuel shortages and the rising prices of fuel which have been occurring since the turn of the millennium have not only been unexpected, but have also had severe effects on urban transportation and mobility in general, which has until recently been very motor dependent (ibid.).

Moreover, the dependence on public transport is not only associated with costs, but also with time loss. In the *Urban Indicator Study Report* quoted above, 47 percent of Harare's workers were found to be using buses to transport themselves to work, while 23 percent used private cars, and 18 percent relied on emergency taxis or private taxis. Those bicycling or walking to work were found to be a clear minority at 5 and 6 percent respectively. An average of 56 minutes was spent daily commuting to and from work (pp. 46-47). The cost of urban transportation, as commented on by Auret (1995:84), albeit on the basis of a very small sample of ten bus commuters, was found to represent 22-50 percent of the salaries of her interviewees. Similar figures are reported by Macharia (1997:7), who contends that the costs associated with public transportation can approach as much as half of urban incomes. Bryceson and Mbara (2001:17) record a rise in average commuter costs in Harare from 11 percent of disposable income in 1996 to 16 percent in 2001 and suggest that the increasing density of townships close to the central business district in Harare are connected with rising bus fares.

The fact that any journey within Rusape, be it to work or for other purposes, could be undertaken by foot was an advantage that was often mentioned in the interviews. In a situation where the enormous shortages of fuel, characteristic of Zimbabwe since early 2000, have left large sections of the fleet of public vehicles grounded, such benefits of small town life are even more apparent.

Zimbabwean transportation policy

Transportation in the context of the deregulation efforts connected with ESAP represents a particularly sensitive sector of the economy, as fuel increments have often given way to sizeable knock-on effects, despite legislation to the contrary. As the *Zimbabwe Standard* (February 13, 2000) reports:

The competition from Zupco (the government owned monopoly, the Zimbabwe United Passenger Company abolished in the late 1980s– my comment) has been marginalised and commuter omnibus operators have formed a loose cartel that is literally taking passengers for a ride. Not only has the service become shoddy and erratic, but commuters are subjected to numerous arbitrary price increases under the guise of offsetting equally erratic fuel price increases – three in the past three months. Commuter omnibus operators have now been passing the fuel price increases to the commuter almost on a dollar for dollar basis (“Commuters Taken For a Ride”, *Zimbabwe Standard*).

For this reason, government has chosen to regulate urban transport, which nonetheless remains a problem in large urban areas mainly as a result of the colonial urban structure which has created long distances between high density suburbs and central business districts. In Harare, the CBD is the focus of most journeys, being the destination for over 50 percent of all commuter traffic, while over 60 percent of Greater Harare’s population resides in high density housing areas, in some cases located as far as 30 kms from the city centre (Hoyle and Knowles 1998:62). The colonial legacy of disproportionate commuter distances is at the root of such patterns and heavy transportation dependence (Macharia 1997:7). Njoh (1997) notes a similar problematic for Cameroon, connected with the British colonial urban planning tradition of racially segregated residential areas separated by buffer zones.

In 1980, central government replaced the municipalities in regulating public transport, and became its only regulator. The government’s monopoly of urban transport was, moreover, abandoned by deregulating the market and allowing operators other than the government owned Zimbabwe United Passenger Company to enter the market. Unwilling to subsidise public transport, the government in an attempt to fill the void created by Zupco’s relative withdrawal from the urban market, legalised informal operators in 1982. The fare structure among formal sector operators was however, regulated by government leading to decapitalization and falling market shares of formal transportation, while the unregulated informal sector provided in its stead an accident prone and erratic service (Auret 1995:82).

From 1988 onwards, the government has partially regulated the entire urban transport sector, while participating directly in the stage bus service and encouraging the operation of commuter minibuses on shorter routes. Since 1991, fare increments have been permitted to increase in relation to costs (ibid.). In 1999, the Urban Councils (Commuter Transport Services) (Fares) Regulations, once again regulated the fares of urban transport operators

according to the fares in Tables 6.5 and 6.6, although fares were again allowed to be adjusted according to increases in the fuel price.

Table 6.5: Maximum fares, conventional omnibuses

Distance in Km	Until 31/7-1999 (Z\$)	1/8 to 31/10- 1999 (Z\$)	1/11-1999 to 31/1 2000 (Z\$)	1/2-2000 onwards (Z\$)
0 to 5	3.00	4.50	5.00	5.50
5.1 to 10	4.50	6.50	7.00	7.50
10.1 to 15	5.50	7.20	8.00	8.50
15.1 to 20	6.00	8.00	9.00	10.00
20.1 to 25	6.50	8.50	9.50	10.50
25.1 to 30	7.00	9.00	10.00	11.00
30.1 to 35	7.30	9.50	10.50	11.50
35.1 to 40	7.50	10.00	11.00	12.00
40.1 to 45	8.00	13.50	15.00	17.00

Source: S.I. 176 of 1999, *Urban Councils (Commuter Transport Services) (Fares) Regulations, 1999*

Table 6.6: Maximum fares, minibuses

Distance in Km	Until 31/7-1999 (Z\$)	1/8-31/10-1999 (Z\$)	1/11-1999 to 31/1-2000 (Z\$)	1/2-2000 onwards (Z\$)
0 to 5	5.00	6.00	7.00	8.00
5.1 to 10	7.00	9.50	10.50	11.50
10.1 to 15	8.00	10.00	11.00	12.00
15.1 to 20	9.00	11.00	12.00	13.00

Source: S.I. 176 of 1999, *Urban Councils (Commuter Transport Services) (Fares) Regulations, 1999*.

Despite such regulation of urban public transport, and the risk of a Z\$1000 fine if contravened, operators in the wake of both ESAP and the fuel crisis, regularly evade the existing fares' structure and often use the fuel shortage to raise fares more than warranted. In a couple of surveys of fares, the Ministry of Local Government and National Housing concludes that fares have been increased disproportionately. A total of 33 routes were analysed in the first survey undertaken in July 2000, and with a focus on Harare. Nonetheless, fifteen routes were also selected from other urban areas, namely, Bulawayo, Gweru, Chinhoyi, Bindura, Mutare, Masvingo, Marondera and Gwanda. Although the survey concludes that price wars have kept the fares on minibuses reasonably low, the shortest routes (those less than 4 km) and the longest (more than 20 km) incur the highest overcharging (Ministry of Local Government and National Housing, 2000a). Two weeks after the survey, however, a 25 percent increase in fuel prices prompted a rise in transportation fares. On September 1, 2000, Government once again raised the fuel price, on this occasion by 41 percent and 54 percent for petrol and diesel respectively. In a memorandum from the Ministry, it is argued that the fare rises that have followed the increase in fuel prices have been excessive. A second survey

(presented in Table 6.7) carried out in Harare in September 2000 illustrates the rapid fare increases.

Table 6.7: Actual fares, September 2000, various types of vehicles

Route from city centre	Before 25/7-2000 (Z\$)	After 25/7-2000 (Z\$)	After 1/9-2000 (Z\$)	Total increase since 25/7 (Z\$)
Budiriro (17.8 km)	14.00	16.00	20.00	6.00
Chitungwiza (+23 km)	18.00	22.00	28.00	10.00
Zengeza (23 km)	18.00	20.00	25.00	7.00
Mbare (6 km)	10.00	12.00	15.00	5.00
Warren Park (8 km)	12.00	15.00	20.00	8.00
Tafara (22.3 km)	15.00	19.00	24.00	9.00
Kamfinsa (9 km)	13.00	15.00	20.00	7.00
Mandara (14.2 km)	14.00	16.00	23.00	9.00
Sunningdale (6 km)	10.00	12.00	15.00	5.00
Norton (45 km)	35.00	40.00	50.00	15.00

Source: Memorandum (unpublished), *Urban Public Transport Fares July/September 2000*, R. Ziracha, Ministry of Local Government and National Housing, (2000b).

Other fare increases perceived by users as unjustified are reported by the media from a number of urban areas, often with violent protest as a result. In Mutare, the decision to raise commuter fares according to *The Manica Post* sparked:

...an unusual show of defiance, commuters in various parts of the city last week reacted angrily to the recently effected increases in commuter omnibus fares and staged widespread demonstrations, some of them highly emotional, forcing some operators to reduce the fares in certain areas. Following an increase in fuel prices by about \$5 for diesel and petrol, commuter operators increased fares from \$15 to \$20 for Dangamvura residents and from \$11 to \$15 for Chikanga residents. First to reject the new fares were Dangamvura residents who boycotted boarding the commuter omnibuses. Consequently, some operators reduced their fares and by Tuesday this week, some of the operators were charging \$15 and others \$17. There were also unconfirmed reports of a fare war along the route, with some operators reportedly charging as little as \$10. Not to be outdone, some Chikanga residents took to the roads on Saturday and Sunday, blocking some roads and brandishing placards denouncing the hikes. The residents stopped commuter omnibuses and instructed the crew to charge reasonable fares (August 10, 2000, "Commuters Boycott Latest Fare Hikes").

Excessive fare increases are not the only way the sector responds to price hikes and shortages of fuel, and reports of passenger mistreatment by minibus operators are rife in the media. With the increasing demand for commuter services that the fuel shortages have created, the sector operates according to its own rules and sets the prices it desires. A reportedly common practice is to abandon passengers halfway on the pretext of a lack of fuel, while raising prices at night when no other means of transport can be found (*High Density Anchor*, August 2000, "Passengers Stranded as "Kombi" Drivers Cut Routes"). The fuel shortage also creates problems not related to fares, as the amount of commuter traffic has decreased:

The diesel shortage has forced many transport operators to ground some of their buses. A Chitungwiza resident, Honest Kamambo, said he had braved the chilly morning weather to walk from his home to Makoni shopping centre, 10 km away, to get transport to Harare. Said Kamambo: "I start work at 8 am but I have to be at the bus stop as early as 4 am, and I still get to work late"...Long, winding queues are now a common sight in the suburbs during peak hours. Touts at pick-up points are reportedly demanding kickbacks from desperate commuters, while commuter omnibus operators were said to be raising their fares, especially during the rush hour (*The Daily News*, July 21, 2000, "Diesel Woes: Commuters Cry Foul").

Under such conditions, it is therefore not only an *economic* advantage to live in an urban area which does not require the use of public transport. Indeed, both the shortage and the cost of transportation were stressed by many of the respondents as an explanation both for their migration to Rusape, and also for their intention to remain there. One of the respondents, Sarudzai, specifically mentioned choosing Rusape because here he had no need of transportation, and contrasted this situation with both Harare and Bulawayo where he had stayed previously. The ability to travel by foot to work, is suggested as one of the major reasons for Rusape's relative cheapness. As Sarudzai's case suggests, however, wishing to avoid transportation costs is not something new. Indeed, he had moved to Rusape in 1981 on the basis of such considerations and had earlier moved from Bulawayo for the same reason. What was found to be particularly costly by one respondent was the need to board more than one commuter vehicle to complete the journey, and hence pay twice for transportation. Likewise, the often long working days associated with commuting (which in Auret's study, 1995:82, meant getting up at 3:30 a m and returning home at 9:00 p m) long distances, argued a few respondents,

meant additional costs during the working day in terms of food purchased in town, rather than cooked at home.

The increasingly obvious need for budgeting costs with respect to transportation was most frequently commented on by migrants who had first hand residential experience from larger urban areas where transport had been a necessity. Again, such comments were made in view of a larger picture of both different kinds of expenditure as well as social considerations. In some cases, Rusape was primarily a refuge from hardship in other places, but nonetheless presented obvious advantages. One respondent, Joyce, stressed the connection between trade and transport as a distinguishing feature of the advantages offered by Rusape. She argued that one could avoid commuting (and hence carrying the cost of transportation) when purchasing wholesale goods at the bus terminus in Rusape, which were later used for retailing.

The connection between trade and transportation is a clear illustration of the specific advantages presented by the small size of Rusape, while the ability to access urban services is significantly facilitated through the location of the Town Council Clinic, the library, the schools and the public telephone inside Vengere residential area.

6.7 Conclusion

The structural changes that have been occurring since the early 1990s as a result of global liberalisation trends, have had repercussions also at the local and national levels in African countries in general. In this chapter part of the structural logic of migration to small towns in Zimbabwe has been explored. The *size* of Rusape is relevant in this context, as the low cost of urban property, and urban housing in general, was often connected in the testimonies of my respondents, with the relatively low demand exercised by its small, albeit growing, population. The lack of need of transportation, likewise meant that costs associated with larger urban areas could be avoided. Nonetheless, the rapid exploitation of the low-cost advantages of places like Rusape poses important and potentially profound questions of social and economic equity. The displacement of marginalised urban populations from places as a result of gentrification processes *within* urban areas, is a well known phenomenon, primarily in Western countries (see Hall 1988, for instance). Likewise, segregation within urban areas according to income is apparent in most urban areas globally. Less obvious, but equally grave in terms of their consequences, are perhaps the cost differentials found between urban areas. The ability to resist inflationary tendencies and maintain urban security is generally larger in places characterised by lower living costs. Nonetheless, with time, the “raiding” of low cost places, like the “raiding” of low-income housing by middle income residents, suggested by many commentators in the context of

larger urban areas, produces displacement effects through raising the income requirements for accessing such places. The extent to which exclusion can be resisted, is however, not only connected with costs of living, but more generally with the possibilities for provisioning found in places subjected to exclusionary pressures. One example of such provisioning is related to food security, where the advantageous possibilities of attaining food security may be decisive in desisting inflationary pressures in general. Less indicative of the advantages which the *size* of Rusape offers, but more so of its *location* was the notion that food security could more easily be attained in Rusape than in other urban areas. This argument is explored in the following chapter.

7 Food security in Rusape

7.1 Introduction

Structural adjustment as well as rural transformation have had far-reaching effects on the livelihoods of both rural and urban populations. To this effect, the improvements in health, education, nutrition and other social indicators that took place as a result of post-independence expenditure on social reforms are being eroded under structural adjustment (Bond 1999:2). Such tendencies have been noticeable also with respect to changes in rural and urban diets (e.g. Bijlmakers, Bassett and Sanders 1996).

A number of trends related to food security have been observed in the wake of structural adjustment, as has a general increase in both rural and urban poverty. As Drakakis-Smith, Bowyer-Bower and Tevera (1995:186) point out, although it is difficult to isolate the impact of ESAP on social indicators, from “other factors, such as drought and a general ailing economy, nevertheless, sufficient indicators enable one to draw preliminary conclusions about the likely effects of Zimbabwe’s structural adjustment programme upon the population.”

Indeed, evidence of the deleterious effects of ESAP on the livelihoods of the Zimbabwean population is frequently cited in the literature. In a survey of roughly 600 rural and urban households undertaken by Bijlmakers, Bassett and Sanders (1996) in 1993, the large majority of respondents (roughly three quarters) reported that they excluded a number of food items that they had previously included in their diets, as a result of increasing food prices. The most regularly named items were bread, rice, meat and cooking oil. In a follow up survey in 1994, general food shortages were mentioned by 23 percent of the urban households and by 8 percent of the rural respondents (p. 40). Such tendencies were confirmed by a survey of informal traders in Harare carried out in two phases in 1992 and 1993 respectively. The number of respondents who ate two meals per day (as opposed to three) increased between the two phases from 48 percent to 52 percent. Foodstuffs that had been shunned by the

majority of respondents in phase one, were increasingly eaten as useful substitutes for other more expensive food items (Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo 1995:161). Wasting, or excessive thinness was reported among the respondents in Bijlmakers, Bassett and Sanders' (1995) survey, a condition which was suggested as being linked to a "failure to cope with adverse socio-economic conditions" (p. 72).

Under such conditions, access even to basic foodstuffs is differentiated according to social and economic status. Likewise, food security has obvious geographical implications, not the least in rural areas where physical endowments with respect to agricultural potential suggest different levels of food security. Urban food security, initially perceived in the 1970s and 1980s as a question of "feeding the cities" by securing an aggregate food supply large enough to feed urban populations, has been replaced by a realisation of the complexities of access to food, as suggested by the discussion on entitlements by Sen (1981) and the vulnerability discourse (Gertel 1994). Thus there is a growing interest in the political economy of urban food access, although there is still a tendency in the empirical food security literature to assume that urban food security depends primarily, on purchased food. Maxwell (1999) for example, argues that food security in urban areas is connected with "the ability to secure sufficient income" (p. 1941). Although urban agriculture and rural self-provisioning are also perceived as important, by Binns and Lynch (1998) for instance, food security is rarely documented at the individual level. Whereas urban agriculture and income-related food security are often discussed in relation to one another, the access to food remittances among urban households, noted by researchers working on issues of rural-urban interaction, such as Tostensen (2000, 2001), and Potts (2000, 1997), are rarely added onto the general description of urban food security.

A recourse to the history of food provisioning in African cities is useful in this context, partly because of the striking similarities between many African countries under structural adjustment, and the conditions described by Guyer (1987a) for post-war, economically depressed African colonies. As Guyer writes:

In 1950, Kenyan wage labourers in Nairobi were devoting seventy-two per cent of their total expenses to food (Kenya 1951:12); in Accra in 1953, the proportion was fifty-three per cent (Gold Coast 1957:11); in a Durban shanty town in 1955 it was 55.3 per cent (Maasdorp and Humphreys 1975:37). If the gainfully employed, many of whom were not supporting their families from these wages, were living at such levels, then a serious question was raised as to how the rest were managing (pp. 38-39).

The answer to this query can be found a few pages later in a concluding passage centred on the difficulty of determining food security in urban areas, and encompasses the whole gamut of sources of urban food:

Parallel markets, unauthorised sales across international borders, small-scale production and experimentation, self-provisioning in the urban and peri-urban areas, legal and illegal entrepreneurship and hunting and gathering in the urban jungle are the local processes which support the food market and at the same time undermine any possibility of complete control over it (Guyer 1987a: 45).

The complexity involved in considering all channels of food provisioning is to some extent captured in Bryceson's (1987) account of food supply in colonial Dar es Salaam, which carefully weighs the importance of self provisioning inside and outside the city, against commercially procured food. Mosley (1987), in a similar vein, notes the historical reliance upon rurally self-produced maize for Harare's population in the early decades of the twentieth century.

Nonetheless, as Guyer (1987b) argues: "All careful urban income studies note contributions in kind from the rural areas, although any sense of their fluctuating value over time remains impressionistic" (p. 231). Thus, the difficulties of assessing the relative importance of different sources of food to urban households, are appreciable. Given, the labour reserve history of many countries in the South in general, and in Africa in particular, as well as the recent tendency among former city migrants to return to rural homes, the literature on urban food security occasionally exhibits a surprising neglect of foodstuffs remitted from the rural areas (see Atkinson 1995, for instance). Unfortunately, most accounts of rural food remittances, such as Findley's (1997), concern rural-urban interactions in general, and therefore include aspects of urban food security only as a part of wider rural-urban linkages. Potts (1997) makes a very brief connection between these spheres of food access, but concentrates the scope of her paper on viewing them in isolation rather than in combination.

On the basis of my field work material, I have attempted to analyse food provisioning in Rusape, with the goal of shedding some light on the provisioning advantages offered by Rusape for the *individual*. I will link the various sources of maize, which as a staple is used as a general proxy for food among respondents, to illustrate the beneficial aspects of Rusape in this respect.

A conceptual link between the growth of small towns and advantageous food provisioning possibilities has been offered by a handful of researchers. Potts (1997:472) makes a brief assertion that the accessibility of land around

smaller towns in Ivory Coast is deflecting migration from Abidjan, down the urban hierarchy. Tacoli (1998) points to the possibility of engaging in urban agriculture as an important reason for migration to small towns in general. Bryceson's (1993) work on food provisioning in a number of urban areas in Tanzania, also suggests that the access to non-market food sources is higher in lower level centres than in the primate city of Dar es Salaam. Peil (1995) briefly notes retirement migration from larger urban areas in Zimbabwe to Mutare (still by Zimbabwean standards a city), as prompted by the desire to engage in urban agriculture on the outskirts of the city. These studies, however, do not detail the advantages of food provisioning for the individual's livelihood in lower level urban centres.

Bearing the comments made by my respondents in mind, it is obvious that food security has geographical implications also *between* different urban areas, a point which has also been stressed by Bryceson (1993). The small town in this context, again offers a number of advantages over other (mainly larger) urban areas, advantages which in some cases are intimately connected with the hold the individual and the household has within the larger agricultural region surrounding the town, both with respect to land for agricultural production, but also in terms of access to food flows from rural relatives. Likewise, the possibility of engaging in urban agriculture in Rusape itself is relevant to attaining a degree of food security.

7.2 Urban agriculture

In the literature, the rising incidence of urban agriculture is connected with the hardships associated with Structural Adjustment in African countries in general (Rogerson (1997), and for South Africa specifically Rogerson (2000)). As Mbiba (1995) puts it in the Zimbabwean context:

One can however safely conclude that the growth of numbers entering this sector is correlated with the incidence of the 1991-92 drought and the harsh economic climate in the country related to the IMF/World Bank sponsored economic reform programme generally known as Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) whose implementation coincided with increased unemployment in the country and general decrease in the purchasing power of residents (p. 37).

Essentially, urban agriculture represents one of many coping mechanisms and has been engaged in by households in many African countries since colonial times (Rogerson 1997:355). In this vein, Bryceson (1987:189) notes the

connection between economic hardship and urban agriculture, and the latter's rising incidence in Dar es Salaam since the 1950s (with a slump in the 1960s, possibly a result of "the more prosperous economic environment"). Thus, the expansion of urban agriculture can be seen as symptomatic of the hardships facing many urban inhabitants in Africa today.

Structural adjustment is producing a situation not only of urban hardship, connected with the informalization of the labour market, but also an informalization of the food market, where the ability to circumvent market based food transactions implies substantial savings. As Sanyal (1987:198) argues, this possibility: "reduces their vulnerability to the fluctuations of fortune that currently beset the economies of developing countries" (cited in Rogerson 1997:358). The possibility of reducing the reliance upon market channels for food provisioning, which in turn means detaching the food security of oneself and one's dependants from the highly inflationary food prices is an obvious advantage of urban agriculture reflected upon also by my respondents.

7.3 Urban agriculture in Zimbabwe

In the post-independence era the official policy on urban agriculture has gone from educating agriculturists via actively destroying crops grown on municipal land, to a tacit acceptance of the phenomenon (Rakodi 1995a:172). Prior to the 1992 drought, urban cultivation was mainly undertaken on residential plots. Even within the more affluent middle income areas, Drakakis-Smith and Kivell (1990) found that urban agriculture was widespread. The harsh stance on the part of urban authorities, in this sense made urban agriculture the prerogative of home owners and in effect excluded tenants from an important source of vegetables.

The 1992 drought was instrumental in changing the attitudes of local government towards a more tolerant stance towards urban agriculture and the phenomenon increased rapidly (Matshalaga 1996:68). Although an expansion of informal off-plot cultivation has been occurring in Harare since the mid-1970s, the extension of agricultural land in the city has increased especially rapidly since the early 1990s (Rogerson 1997:357). One survey of urban agriculture in Harare found that the area under cultivation in residential areas had more than doubled between 1990 and 1994 (Masoka 1995, cited by Matshalaga 1996:68). The nutritional importance of urban agriculture meanwhile can hardly be overemphasised, and Rakodi's (1994) work from Gweru shows that by 1993, "for many of the poorer households, on-plot gardens were the only source of vegetables. A few were able to grow maize on plots provided by the city council. Those who cannot grow food in the city are mostly tenants, especially in the areas of smaller plots, who made up 64

percent of low-income households in 1991” (p. 661). In this sense, the access to urban land and urban agricultural production can also be perceived of as a stratifying mechanism.

Mbiba (1995), in his study of urban agriculture in Zimbabwe, notes that on the basis of surveys in the 1992/1993 cropping season, 20 percent of residents in Harare’s high density areas were engaged in off-plot cultivation, that is cultivation on urban land, other than their own residential plots (p. 46). This figure, had, however more than doubled to 42 percent, when similar surveys were carried out in the 1993/94 season (ibid., p. 61).

Again, however, access to cultivation is stratified according to income and other socio-economic assets with the result that urban agriculture hardly is the survival mechanism of the poorest of the poor envisaged in some social science research. In Mbiba’s study of 97 off-plot cultivators in a number of low density areas in Harare, roughly 60 percent of off-plot cultivators were female, with half of these engaging in urban agriculture on a full-time basis. Meanwhile, 12 percent of the interviewees were found to be male contract workers employed by well to do women (p. 39). Access to *rural* land was, however, limited to 31 percent of his respondents, with many urban agriculturists being of non-Zimbabwean origin (ibid., p. 41).

The links between migration and urban agriculture have been made, albeit in a vague manner in some of the urban agriculture literature, but this often concerns the role of rural-urban migrants in transforming urban space, rather than the role of urban land in attracting migrants as such (Binns and Lynch 1998:779, Mbiba 1995).

One respondent, Joy (Case 7.1), mentioned her choice of Rusape as partially based on the availability of rural land on the fringes of the town, but also on the relative cheapness of Rusape compared with Harare.

Case 7.1: Joy

Joy was born in Mutare in 1942 and stayed there until 1963 when her father who was working in Mutare retired and the family had to leave the city. She moved with her parents to her rural home area in Chiduku communal area outside Rusape. The escalation of warfare in the area caused Joy and her husband to leave Chiduku in 1975 when they moved to Rusape. Rusape was chosen as the town was perceived as less expensive than Harare, but also because there is a relative abundance of land to cultivate around the town.

Despite the limited role of urban land as a motivation in itself for migration to Rusape, the town provides benefits to many respondents in terms of accessing urban and peri-urban land for agricultural production. Of the migrants who

were asked to comment on the issue of urban land access³⁰ (altogether 120 respondents), 31 were engaged in urban off-plot agriculture³¹, and an additional three respondents had been doing so, but had had their land reclaimed by the Town Council during the past few years. The feminine nature of urban agriculture commented on by Mbiba (1995) is reflected by the fact that 21 of these respondents were women. This tendency is moreover reflective of a general African pattern as suggested by Binns and Lynch (1998) and Rogerson (1997). As May and Rogerson (1995) argue this is “a finding which does reinforce a suggestive link between urban agriculture, poverty and the problems of particularly female-headed households to survive in the [South African] city” (p. 173).

Moreover, the notion that urban agriculture can be connected with attempts to cushion the effects of rising food prices as a result of ESAP is also apparent, as most of the respondents had gained access to “their” land during the past five years. A few migrants had, however, been engaged in cultivation on urban land since the early 1970s. In most cases respondents had simply occupied the land, but in some cases, especially for those migrants who had been using their land since the 1980s, the RTC had actively “resettled” them from river banks to other Council land in response to the 30 m rule of the Natural Resources Act, which forbids cultivation closer than 30 m to any water course (Drakakis-Smith, Bowyer-Bower and Tevera 1995:189), or “invited” them to cultivate fallow land. Other migrants had received their land from relatives or friends, or indeed “inherited”³² the land from parents or other family members.

Unlike Binns and Lynch’s (1998) study from Dar es Salaam, where: “high-income groups appear to be benefiting from existing institutional structures, for example in negotiating access to land, which is difficult for those without education, capital and influential contacts” (p. 789) there seemed to be little conflict over the land in Rusape, both among users and between the Council and the occupants. This relatively lenient stance on the part of the RTC, contrasts with the situation in Harare, where as described by Drakakis-Smith, Bowyer-Bower and Tevera (1995:191) “the threat of strong reaction from the authorities still hangs over any illegal cultivation”. The Town Secretary in Rusape even mentioned delaying urban development to accommodate the planting season (pers. comm., Mr O. Muzawazi, Town Secretary, Rusape Town Council, August 7, 2000). Respondents reported that the Council gives seven days of notice before reclaiming the land. Since three interviewees had actually had their land reclaimed, and another respondent claimed that there

³⁰ in some cases it became quite obvious during the course of the interview that the respondent was unlikely to have any urban land, such cases have, however not been included in these figures, since the migrants were not directly asked to comment themselves.

³¹ That is cultivation was carried out on Town Council land, within the town boundaries.

³² These respondents had not inherited land in any legal sense, but had taken over land when a relative had died.

was no longer any land available for cultivation in town, conflicts relating to land access seem to be a clear possibility in the future, however. The rapid rate of urbanisation therefore challenges the role of urban agriculture in meeting the food requirements of urban populations.

May and Rogerson (1995:170) report similar tendencies from Durban, where local authorities are increasingly destroying crops to enable property development to cater for an expansion in the demand for housing. Auret (1995) comments on the conflicts between urban property development and urban agriculture in Harare, where housing was in fact forced to take the back seat to cultivation, as the “Councillors refused to take action out of fear of losing votes” (*The Herald*, cited in Auret 1995:39). This connection between housing demand and urban agriculture has a more subtle implication for urban food security as well. Since on-plot cultivation is highly dependent on house ownership, the ability to purchase a house (in turn regulated both by income, and the availability of stands and housing), confers the advantage of growing vegetables for own consumption, and sometimes for sale. In general, on-plot agriculture among my respondents was therefore restricted to home owners who grew fruit or vegetables, mostly what was referred to as “rape” (*kovo*) in their gardens. Given the situation on the housing market in other urban areas, this is yet another aspect of the beneficial provisioning situation in Rusape.



Photo 7.1: Urban cultivator in Rusape

Whichever tenor the RTC policy on urban agriculture assumes, however, what was clear at the time of the interviews, was the instrumental role of urban agriculture in partially meeting the food requirements of my respondents. In terms of food security, urban production was vital to some households who managed to meet their entire food requirements in terms of maize through urban agriculture. Seven respondents claimed that the harvest lasted them for an entire year, while two actually produced maize commercially, albeit on a small-scale, with one respondent selling for Z\$2 500 and another for Z\$3 600 annually. In most cases, however, harvests lasted for 4-6 months, and had to be supplemented by other means. The great variety of urban agriculturists in

terms of socio-economic status is discussed with respect to Kano, Nigeria and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania by Binns and Lynch (1998), and seems to suggest a large difference between “wealthy households and businessmen” who view “fruit trees as a form of investment”(p.784) and poorer households who engage in urban agriculture on subsistence basis. Similar evidence is cited by Rogerson (1997) for Nigeria, Mozambique and South Africa.

For those individuals or households in Rusape who have great difficulty in meeting both their financial and their food needs, urban agriculture was, however, a survival mechanism enabling at least an urban existence for the poor. The gender aspects in this context are very obvious as most of these individuals tended to be single, often elderly females, heading households with many dependants in some cases a result of the HIV/Aids pandemic). The story of one respondent, born in 1939 and widowed since last year, provides an illustration of the crucial role of urban agriculture in at least partially meeting the food requirements of such households (Case 7.2). In this case, a meagre widow’s pension, erratic and very limited earnings from a daughter who lives with her, as well as a small income from a lodger are the only sources of cash in a household of seven people. A piece of land “given”³³ to the family by her late husband’s former employer, a large parastatal, serves as a vital source of maize during five months of the year, necessitating the purchase of the staple during the remaining seven months. Similar situations have been noted by Stren (1991) for Kenya, where a majority of female urban cultivators reported that they would starve or experience great suffering barring their engagement in urban agriculture (cited in Rogerson 1997:359).

Case 7.2: Ethel

Ethel’s husband died last year (1999) and since then she receives a monthly pension of Z\$500 from his former employer. She stays in a house which she is buying on rent-to-buy basis from this employer together with her five orphaned grandchildren and an unmarried daughter. Of her thirteen children who had reached adulthood, seven had subsequently died. Two of her children were working, and her three daughters were married, but Ethel did not receive any support from her children or from any other relatives. No one in her household was working, although her daughter had, until recently, had a small sewing business which had a turnover of Z\$500 per month. Ethel was, however, managing to send her five grandchildren to primary school, where she paid Z\$100 per pupil and term. The rent had recently been raised from Z\$650 per month to Z\$1500 and since then she had been failing to pay the rent. They had one lodger who paid Z\$350 per month. To supplement their income, Ethel’s grandchildren traded vegetables during school holidays. She did, however, have a piece of land in Rusape. It was less than an acre in size and she had

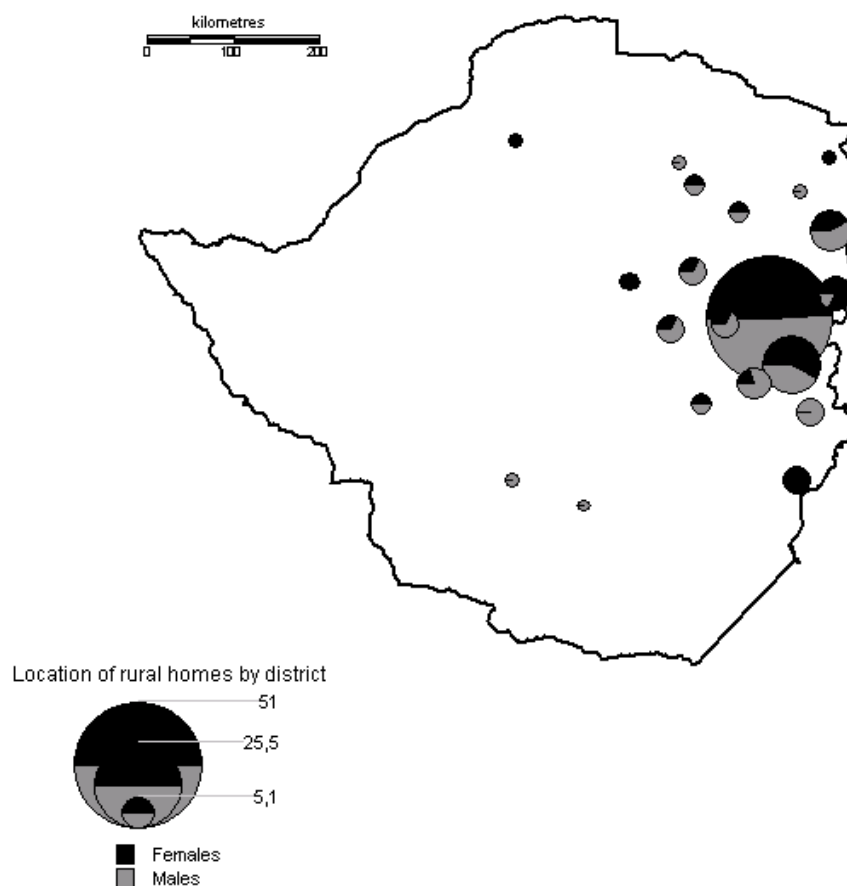
³³ This does not imply any legal rights to such land, as the land belongs to the parastatal which had employed her late husband.

had the land since 1960 when she came to town with her husband. They were “given” the land by her husband’s former employer. This is “secure” land and it will not be withdrawn. The harvest lasted them from May to September, and she only cultivated for the family’s own consumption. As she lacked a rural home, this was the only land she had access to and she bought the remainder of the household’s food.

Off-plot cultivators were, however in the minority among my respondents. The explanation for this is that many respondents and their households simply did not need to engage in urban agriculture and the reason for this in turn can be found in the major locational advantage of Rusape vis à vis urban food security, namely the proximity to rural homes.

7.4 Access to rural land and food

A number of migrants in fact explained their move to Rusape as guided, at least partially, by the desire to be close to home, both for social and cultural reasons, but also to enable the collection of food from the rural areas. In the case of Farai, the primary purpose of migration was employment, but the reason that Rusape specifically was appealing had to do with a job that was offered as well as the ability to access the benefits of proximity to the rural areas in terms of food. He collected all the food he needed from his rural home in Makoni District, and supplemented this with only sugar, cooking oil and detergents. Other migrants also noted the advantages of collecting food from the rural areas. This of course requires not only the access to rural land in itself or at least rural relatives willing to provide food, but also a rural home that is reasonably close to Rusape. As suggested by Map 7.1 the overwhelming majority of respondents had rural homes located in Makoni district, and many of these in the Chiduku communal area close to Rusape. A large section of the remaining respondents, moreover had rural homes situated in districts bordering Makoni District.



Map 7.1: Location of respondents' rural homes in Zimbabwe

At the apex of rural livelihoods are naturally the questions of land ownership and policy and agrarian policies in general. As suggested in Chapter 2, the unequal agrarian relations which characterise access to land in Zimbabwe's rural areas continue to haunt much of the political and economic debate in the country, while the steadily growing population in the communal areas is becoming progressively more land constrained.

Just as land shortages lead to income diversification in the rural areas, and a blurring of the rural and urban, ESAP and its effects in terms of lower wages, rising prices, unemployment or informalized employment, arguably increases the reliance of urban households upon the rural sphere of production. In this context access to rural land and/or food is highly relevant as a means of cushioning the impact of ESAP, both financially and in terms of increasing self-subsistence (Makoni and Kujinga 2000:58).

Direct access to land is however, not self-evident, largely as a result of the growing land scarcity in the rural areas. Rakodi (1995a:168) on the basis of a

survey undertaken in Harare in 1991, found that 39 percent of low-income households had land rights in the rural areas, with most of these households cultivating the land they had access to themselves. Potts and Mutambirwa (1990) writing of *male headed* households whom they interviewed in Harare in 1985 and 1988, found a similar degree of land ownership among recent migrants to the city. A number of family mobility patterns between rural and urban areas were identified which served to enable the participation of migrants' wives in rural agriculture. Kanji and Jazdowska (1995:143) confirm the role of women in maintaining agricultural production (and hence retaining communal land rights) in the rural areas.

In some of my interviews the issue of land ownership was not raised, largely as a result of the tense political situation, which meant that the subject of land access in some conversations appeared to be off limits. Table 7.1 therefore summarises the land access situation in rural areas among those informants with whom the land issue was raised.

Table 7.1: Land access among respondents

Type of land access	Females	Males	Total
No rural home, no land	12	3	15
No land, but rural home	37	30	67
Land used by respondent/spouse	17	20	37
Land belonging to respondent/spouse*	3	7	10
N/A	4	10	14
Total	73	70	143

Source: sample data. * That is land that is being used by someone else, but which the respondent claims belongs to him or her.

In the case of my respondents, access to land was less common than reported in the literature, possibly as a result of gendered land rights, where women customarily access land through their husbands or sons. In the communal areas, land access is regulated by the Communal Lands Act which means that “de jure control over communal land vests in the males of the family for all times” (Ncube et al. 1997b:87).³⁴ Unmarried women therefore are reliant upon the magnanimity of their male kin with respect to land access. As communal land is allocated upon marriage, the marital status of respondents is an important explanation for lacking land access, although the two are not straightforwardly connected as suggested by Table 7.2. Another explanation may lie in ethnic background, where respondents of Mozambican or Malawian descent lack land rights in the communal areas.

³⁴ Although technically permits for cultivation in the resettlement areas may be issued to women with dependants, in practice “87 per cent of permit holders are men (Ncube et al 1997b:88).”

Table 7.2: Marital status of respondents

Marital status	Females	Males	Total
Single, divorced, widowed	31	20	51
Married	42	50	92
Total	73	70	143

Source: sample data.

The majority of the respondents were without land, even though they in most cases had what they considered to be a rural home. An explanation for lacking land access may therefore be sought in the general land shortages characteristic of the communal lands, and the high population densities found in the communal areas outside Rusape (as suggested by Jansen and Olthof 1993, for instance). The importance of land as a financial safety net and a source of food, was in some instances stressed by respondents, while the lack of it was on occasion commented on with a slightly resigned air. In other cases the felt desire for land was accompanied by the expressed aspiration that some of large-scale commercial farmland around Rusape which was being occupied by war veterans would befall the respondent and his or her family. As suggested by Table 7.1, the gender aspects of access not only to land itself, but also to a rural home were obvious, as the great majority of respondents who lacked a rural home were women.

Moreover, although access to land in itself was highly stratified, this differentiation was even more apparent with respect to size and quality of the land (as suggested by Tables 7.3 and 7.4). Likewise, the degree to which it was used to meet not only food requirements, but also to engage in commercial agriculture varied greatly.

Table 7.3: Type of land used by respondent or belonging to respondent.

Type of land	Females	Males	Total
Communal Area land	18	23	41
Resettlement Area land	1	3	4
SSCF		1	1
Unspecified	1		1
Total	20	27	47

Source: sample data

At one extreme of my sample was a respondent who had access to a landholding of fifty hectares and a significant herd of cattle, and at the other end were plots of less than an acre not being farmed because of a shortage of capital. This tendency towards polarisation is suggested also by data on Africa in general to be part of an ongoing concentration of assets in both rural and urban areas under structural adjustment (see Bryceson 1995).

Table 7.4: Size of rural landholding among respondents with access to rural land, or land belonging to respondent.

Size of landholding	Females	Males	Total
>1 acre	2	2	4
1-1.9 acres	4		4
2-2.9 acres	3	1	4
3-3.9 acres		6	6
4-4.9 acres	4	2	6
5-5.9 acres			
6-6.9 acres			
7-7.9 acres	1		1
8-8.9 acres	1	1	2
9-9.9 acres			
10-10.9 acres	1		1
11-11.9 acres			
12-12.9 acres		4	4
13-13.9 acres			
14-14.9 acres			
15-15.9 acres	1	1	2
20-29.9 acres	1	1	2
> 120 acres		1	1
"a small portion"	1	3	4
"a big portion"	1	1	2
Size unknown		4	4
Total	20	27	47

Source: sample data.

In some cases, land was being used as a family enterprise, encompassing substantial land holdings and investments. Agricultural property in such cases was a business venture rather than a means of survival, although also a source of food even for the relatively wealthy. In some cases, the management of such family ventures is used to support other relatives, although in general large estates are very much the exception, and land is used mainly for subsistence purposes. Out of the 37 respondents who reported having access to land, 24 claimed to meet their entire maize requirements from this land, suggesting the importance of rural land to urban food security. One respondent in fact survived almost entirely on farming in the rural areas, but explained that she preferred living in Rusape as life in the rural areas is much more laborious than in town. This contrasts with Smith and Tevera's (1997) work from Harare, where "there was a relatively limited flow of food from rural to urban areas" (p.27). This suggests that rural self-provisioning, and rural food remittances, in smaller urban areas like Rusape may be important aspects of food security not found in larger urban centres.

The notion that women uphold male land rights in the rural areas, as suggested by Kanji and Jazdowska (1995), is to some extent confirmed by the respondents. A few male migrants had wives residing in the rural areas, and a number of female migrants regularly travelled to the rural areas on a seasonal basis to cultivate the family plot.

As suggested by Table 7.1, however, most migrants although having what they conceive of as a rural home, do not have any land of their own. The importance of food remittances from rural homes, is in this context, perhaps an even more significant source of food security than access to rural land. Nonetheless, although food was flowing predominantly from rural areas to Rusape under normal conditions, in the event of a drought food will be likely to be remitted in the opposite direction. Moreover, certain foodstuffs, such as cooking oil and sugar which were cheaper in Rusape than in the rural areas were remitted regularly to rural kin as noted by Smith and Tevera (1997) also in the context of Harare.

In addition to those respondents who cultivated their own food in the rural areas, 39 migrants (19 women, and 21 men) received food from their rural kinfolk. Again, however, the amounts varied from entire food requirements to occasional buckets of maize. With respect to the most vulnerable respondents, the access to rural food was vital to survival in town as the case of Tatenda (Case 7.3) suggests. Surviving on a small income from trading bananas and oranges, and occasional support from a boyfriend, Tatenda, although among the poor in monetary terms, nonetheless was able to meet all her maize requirements by collecting food from her rural area in Chiduku communal lands.

Case 7.3: Tatenda

Tatenda arrived in Rusape a few months before I interviewed her but had not managed to find what she described as a “job”. Instead she had been selling bananas and oranges outside Tesco’s, a grocery store in town, since the week before the interview. Before this, a friend of hers who was working had been supporting her. Now she was trying to support herself, although her profit from trading was only Z\$10 daily. Her friends were providing her with clothes and her boyfriend was paying her landlord Z\$350 per month for her room. She collected all the maize she needed from her rural area in Chiduku communal lands, and in this way was able to meet all her needs of the staple. She bought the rest of her food.

Those respondents who were not receiving food from the rural areas, in most cases lacked a rural home, lacked capital to farm an existing piece of land, or had a rural home which was located too far away. In this context, therefore, the location of Rusape in relation to rural homes and relatives is a significant determinant of food security. The regional tendency in mobility patterns towards Rusape noted in Chapter 5, may therefore be explained partially by the advantages of engaging in rural agriculture or receiving food from rural relatives.

In contrast to those migrants who did not have access to rurally produced food, a few migrants were sufficiently well off to be able to afford buying their food in town, or secured enough food through urban agriculture and were

therefore content to leave their land to be used by relatives as a means of supporting rural kin.

To sketch a more complete map of the respondents' general food security, it is useful to combine both urban and rural food sources. Of course, in practice, access to food is highly intertwined with access to money, and I will at this stage only make a preliminary distinction between those who fail to meet their maize needs in kind, (rather than cash towards food purchases) and those who are successful in attaining maize security either through own production or remittances in kind. This kind of food security is the subject of Table 7.5³⁵, where the purpose is to illustrate to what extent food security can be met outside market parameters³⁶. In some cases, the "well off" do not have to worry, and can quite easily be singled out as "food secure", but in most cases, as the table suggests, food security can be attained without necessarily purchasing food.

Table 7.5 : Food security (the number of months food security can be met) according to sources of maize in kind.

Food security according to sources of maize	Females	Males	Total
All maize for the entire year – rural* sources only	12	25	37
All maize for the entire year – urban sources only	7	2	9
All maize for the entire year– urban and rural sources combined	1	2	3
Maize covering needs for six months or more – rural sources only	3	2	5
Maize covering needs for six months or more – urban sources only	5	-	5
Maize covering needs for six months or more – rural and urban sources combined	3	-	3
Maize covering needs for less than six months – rural sources only	5	9	14
Maize covering needs for less than six months – urban sources only	11	4	15
Maize covering needs for less than six months – rural and urban sources combined	1	2	3
Buys all maize	15	8	23
N/A	10	16	26
Total	73	70	143

*Source: sample data. *in this context a rural source of food is either food remittances from the rural areas, or rural own production, while urban sources of food are own urban food production.*

On the whole, the situation in Rusape contrasts starkly with the evidence from a monitoring survey by Mwanza (1999), of an unspecified Zimbabwean urban area, where 89 percent of urban households relied on purchased mealie-meal.

³⁵ Again, the issue of food security was not raised with all the respondents. Especially in interviews with wealthier respondents the topic was sensitive.

³⁶ This, however does not include the extent to which respondents were able to engage in cultivation without purchasing agricultural inputs such as fertilisers and seed. In this sense, cultivation to some extent is always subject to market parameters.

As Table 7.5 suggests, 49 out of 117 respondents were able to meet their entire maize needs through self-provisioning in town, through remittances of food from the rural areas or through their own rural production.

Food security is, however a gendered issue, and the question of buying one's food in this context holds very different meanings for men and women. The contrast between men sufficiently wealthy not to have to worry about the cost involved in buying their food and women finding it difficult to purchase their food is striking as the stories of two such respondents suggest. For Kudzai, a secondary school teacher who's wife is also a teacher, although rising costs of living have eroded the possibility of saving money, food security is obviously not a problem, although the family buys all the food they consume.

In contrast, as the case of Chipso suggests, the less well-established, within both the urban and rural spheres of the economy are particularly vulnerable with respect to urban food security. This divorced woman who was in her mid thirties, was failing to pay her rent to the RTC for her hostel accommodation, and had recently had the report cards of two of her five children withheld over the non-payment of school fees. Meanwhile, the lack of a rural home and access to only 0.5 acres of urban land, meant that the respondent was forced to buy most of her food. In this case, vulnerability is also related to being the provider of a large number of dependants, while also lacking a stable source of income. The precarious food situation, although obviously related to the inability to access food from the rural areas, is also connected with lacking funds to invest in urban agriculture as the respondent suggests.

7.5 Actual food prices

Ironically, indicators of income and price related food security which remain the pre-occupation of many analysts on food security issues, were the hardest to come by in the case of Rusape. Many respondents, however, commented on the cheap price of food, especially vegetables and food produced around Rusape, such as maize, tomatoes, beans and groundnuts. This is of course hard to verify, but what is perhaps most interesting in this respect, is not absolute food prices, but food prices relative to other urban areas, as my focus concerns the perceived advantages of Rusape vis à vis other cities and towns.

Maxwell (1999), citing evidence from Ghana, observes that "in general, the minimum wage purchased the least amount of food in Accra of any of the cities in Ghana for which they present data" (p. 1945). This finding is superficially similar to the contention of several of my respondents that food prices in Harare were higher than in Rusape.

Part of the explanation for this can be found in the lack of alternatives in the capital city, which are in turn related to colonial planning, as well as the

long distances within Harare. The domination of supermarkets within retailing is a product of Zimbabwe's recent colonial history, argue Drakakis-Smith, Bowyer-Bower and Tevera (1995):

The planned expansion of most of the suburbs in Harare (Salisbury) occurred between 1950 and 1980 when supermarkets became established as the principal retail outlets for food in Britain. The transposition of British values through the colonial education system meant that even low-income suburbs felt underprivileged if they were deprived of a supermarket in their shopping centre. Spatially and commercially focused food retailing became the norm. With the rapid expansion of the low-income suburbs after independence, however, this type of retailing became problematic for the growing numbers of urban poor. In the self-help housing district of Glen View, for example, until recently one shopping centre (with one supermarket and butchery) served over 100,000 people (p. 187).

Meanwhile, informal food retailing has been strictly regulated by the local authorities, and consists mainly of tuck shops (kiosks), small stores and hawkers (ibid.). Such tuck shops (see photo 7.2) proliferate also all over Vengere, and informal trading is widespread, licensed and tolerated by the authorities, all over town.



Photo 7.2: A tuck shop in Vengere

Whereas the supermarkets in general offer better prices than do the tuck shops, and the stores in the business centre in Vengere (which includes a couple of general stores, as well as a butchery), many people use the tuck shops to purchase items such as milk and sugar, which are used on an everyday basis. In general though, the short walking distances to town, mean that the relatively

lower prices of the supermarkets can be accessed, an alternative not necessarily available to residents of larger urban areas.



Photo 7.3: Vengere shopping centre

Respondents on occasion mentioned the lower prices of fruits and vegetables hawked by vendors on the streets of Vengere and in the bus terminus. This was thought to be related to their cultivation in surrounding rural areas.

7.6 Conclusion

Food security in Rusape was advantageous relative to other urban areas in a number of respects. The comparative ease with which urban land can be accessed for agricultural purposes is one such advantage. Moreover, commuting between one's rural area and Rusape enables cultivation outside the town's boundaries, an option not necessarily available to migrants in larger cities whose rural homes are likely to be located too far from the city to allow for this kind of production. Relying on rural sources of food remittances also requires this kind of locational advantage. The lower price of retailed food in Rusape was also perceived to be related to the proximity of surrounding communal areas.

Nonetheless, as with urban housing accessibility, access to both urban and rural sources of food is becoming increasingly stratified. The rapid growth of the town likewise produces similar tendencies of displacement, in the sense that urban land is now difficult to attain, and the RTC's sale of urban land for construction purposes may exclude present urban cultivators from this source of food.

In this way, those displaced by the constraints of the urban housing market in larger urban areas, mainly Harare, to the less exploited niche of this market are potentially excluding the town's present residents from urban cultivation.

As Massey (1993) suggests, mobility may affect the lives of the already weak, and weaken their precarious situation even further. Thus provisioning may be affected by mobility in a positive manner among those who can draw benefits from low-cost places such as Rusape, neutrally for those who can use Rusape to arrest a decline in living standards experienced elsewhere, and negatively by those who have little choice but to remain in areas subjected to the influx of *relatively* well-situated people. Such tendencies are perhaps especially apparent in terms of employment prospects, both formal and informal. This is the subject of the next chapter.

8 Employment opportunities in, and migration to Rusape

8.1 Introduction

As suggested above, Zimbabwe is to some extent unique when compared with many other African countries in terms of the predominant role formal employment until recently played with respect to earning a living. Rakodi (1995a:106) for instance, argues that as much as 80-90 percent of the urban labour force was formally employed in the mid-1990s. As widespread retrenchments have followed the implementation of ESAP, informalization of employment has been an apparent outcome of adjustment. Nonetheless, as Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo (1995) argue: “Of course, not only retrenchees but almost all those entering the urban labour market for the first time are now likely entrants to the informal sector” (p. 135), and the informalization of employment is a widely acknowledged effect of structural adjustment.

ESAP has undoubtedly had enormous effects on the labour market. Massive retrenchments, with a loss of 50 000 permanent jobs by 1995, and the undermining of labour rights have resulted from structural adjustment policies (Sachikonye 1997:120). Between 1991 and 1996, the total number of employment opportunities created was a quarter of the number of jobs that were lost, while the entrance of 250 000 to 300 000 school-leavers annually onto the labour market has obvious implications for unemployment rates (Mwanza 1999:8). Formal unemployment was in March 2002 estimated to stand at above 60 percent. Although formal unemployment rates say little about actual employment, trends in such figures are nonetheless a relative indicator of employment prospects.

In view of rapidly escalating inflation and expanding unemployment, the importance that many migrants attach to employment is hardly surprising. More surprising is the near total neglect of employment-related small town migration in the literature as well as in official policy documents and in the

media. Rural-urban employment related migration to Harare and larger urban areas is implicitly assumed to be the norm. The work of Potts (1995) and Potts with Mutambirwa (1998), are important exceptions as they highlight movement in the opposite direction, i.e. migration from urban to rural areas propelled by mass retrenchments. Nonetheless, little mention, if any, is to be found in the literature suggesting the tendency to move frequently *between* urban areas upon the loss of employment, something that today as a result of much informalized working conditions appears to be a highly relevant reality for many employees.

8.2 Employment and migration to Rusape

In much of the theoretical literature on mobility labour migration dominates the discussion, and migration for employment purposes receives much attention in the literature in general, both in a global and a local context. With respect to internal migration, labour migration in Africa is often perceived to be of the rural-to-urban nature, undertaken primarily to engage in urban employment intended to support or establish one's *rural* household and home. This image of the (male) migrant is especially apparent within neo-liberal models of migration, as propounded by Lewis (1954, 1955), Todaro (1969, 1971), and Harris and Todaro (1970). The structuralist perspective also conjures up this notion of an impoverished, land-hungry, male rural-urban migrant, despite countless studies suggesting a number of different kinds of migrant selectivity (e.g. as suggested by Mabogunje (1986) in the context of Africa, and Jones (1990) in a comprehensive review of migrant selectivity in the context of developed countries).

In the context of Zimbabwe, much of the literature implicitly assumes that migration takes place primarily for employment purposes. Whereas this may indeed be the case with respect to migrants of working age (both male and female), much dependent migration of women, children and the elderly is ignored. Likewise, the issue of where people move more specifically, i.e. which rural or urban area, is also neglected, despite the fact that 50 000 retrenchees more than likely need to find alternative sources of income (some of them possibly in other places) upon unemployment. In her comparison of two surveys carried out in 1988 and 1994, Potts (2000) concludes that by 1994 only half as many migrants felt that "their future lay in Harare. [and that] This is surely a clear indication of feelings of increased insecurity about urban life, employment and earning prospects among in-migrants" (p. 898). Such tendencies are reflected also in my interviews, where the insecurity of urban employment, especially in Harare, is described as having been the source of much anxiety.

As was suggested earlier, migration to Rusape was undertaken primarily to secure employment or to trade. Such employment had either been arranged prior to migration or else the migrant aspired to find employment once in town. In many cases the difficult labour market in Harare was compared with the perceived ease with which employment could be found in Rusape. Grant (1995, 1996) briefly comments on this tendency towards downward movement in the urban hierarchy in a couple of articles on the housing market in Gweru, where some of her respondents (mainly professionals) had moved to Gweru after failing to find work in Harare or Bulawayo. Similar tendencies are noted by Enciso and Guerrero (1995) for members of the educated middle class in Mexico, who were moving from the larger cities in Northern Mexico where “the possibilities for economic development and survival were becoming increasingly limited” (p. 971) to smaller cities in Chiapas.

Employment is a loosely defined term in this context, given the high degree of informalization of labour noted above. In the case of my respondents, employment experiences, job security, wage payments and working conditions were highly diverse. Despite such differences, however, many migrants perceived that the chances of securing “employment” (here used as equivalent to earning an income) were high in Rusape, compared to many other places. Yet, most respondents, and especially male respondents, aspired to finding a formal sector job, a situation which given the recent informalization of a largely formalised (male) workforce is hardly surprising.

Many migrants in my study viewed their chances of finding a means of earning an income to be higher in Rusape than in other places, predominantly the larger cities. The importance of securing employment, of whichever kind, is a prominent leitmotif in many migrant life histories, and for this reason the account of one’s migration history is intimately intertwined with one’s employment history. A basic synthesis of all migrant life histories evokes the image of a pin-ball (the migrant) moving, often rapidly, between different places and employers. As suggested earlier, Massey’s (1995) juxtapositioning of capital mobility and geographical solidarity of labour, may be hard to apply in the context of Africa, where labour’s choices may be more constrained than in the industrialised countries. Hence, the pin-ball. The informalization and perhaps more importantly the casualisation of formal employment in the wake of ESAP, provides little job security while short-term contracts are the order of the day. This deregulation of labour rights and employment conditions and their implications for migration patterns is brought to bear in the testimonies of my respondents. In this sense, the ability to exercise geographical solidarity may in fact be a question of economic status and access to wider household resources which limit the individual’s dependence on his or her own income.

More importantly, however, certain urban areas were felt to be less exposed to the vagaries of the labour market and Rusape was regarded as one of these places. Again, comparisons are often made between Rusape and

Harare or Bulawayo when relating difficulties in finding employment in the two cities. The significance of place-bound factors as a decisive aspect of provisioning possibilities, as suggested by Warde (1988), was therefore in the minds of my respondents highly relevant to decisions they had made in the past with respect to their mobility. Paradoxically enough, the large size, and the industrial profile of the two cities is thought to attract a disproportionate amount of people seeking to find employment, resulting not only in unemployment or underemployment for the unfortunate, but also in lower wages for those able to find a job. Many migrants related such experiences from Harare especially. With respect to informal business and marketing of certain products, especially second-hand clothes, similar accounts of market saturation were related, resulting in more competition and lower earnings.

Formal employment

With respect to formal employment, the role of migration for employment purposes had obvious gender dimensions, as migrants expressing their desperation over an inability to find employment in the larger urban centres were predominantly male. This relates to the gender structure of the Zimbabwean nuclear family where the male breadwinner ideology is still very much the rule, as well as gender differences in education, which to some extent leave young (uneducated) women with informal employment as a more obvious option. In this context the typical migrant illustrating the “pin-ball” analogy described above, is a fairly young man with his roots in a rural area outside Rusape, who after completing his O’levels has left his home in search of what is often described as greener pastures in Harare or another large city, often with some sort of temporary employment secured beforehand. When such employment has expired, the migrant is on occasion offered another short-term contract in another urban area. Inevitably, however, employment ceases and the migrant, perhaps somewhat disillusioned, returns to his rural home. After some months of agricultural work, he decides to give it another go, but this time steers clear of the “high cost, low likelihood of employment” option of Harare, and considers instead the possibility of Rusape, often a consideration which is prompted by promises of employment.

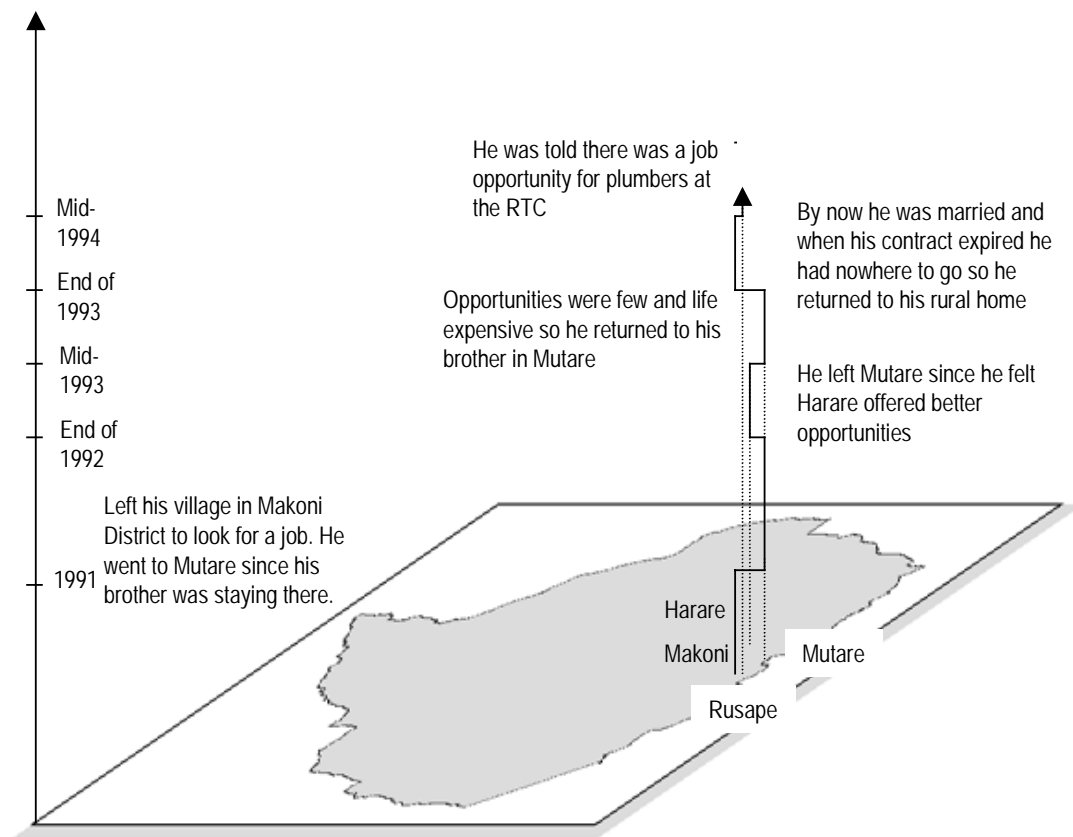
Many examples of such migration/employment histories can be found in the accounts of my respondents, and the pin-ball analogy is well-suited to illustration by Hägerstrand’s (1974) time-geographical approach, the use of which has been suggested in connection with migration studies by Malmberg (1997) among others. The advantage of Hägerstrand’s method is the possibility of combining the aspects of time and space, aspects which are also apparent in mobility patterns. I believe this model, and its emphasis on depicting the constraints and possibilities surrounding an individual’s actions

over both time and space, can add an illustrative and clarifying aspect to the accounts of my respondents. This form of translating individual action into simplified diagrams, does however, run the risk of neglecting wider social phenomena, but nonetheless provides an interesting spatial aspect, as well as the added advantage of constructing a chronology of events, difficult to discern in individual testimonies.

In the graphical rendition of the time-geographical approach, the spatial is compressed to a horizontal plane, or even an axis, while time runs along the vertical axis. Here, this approach will be used as an illustrative method, rather than a conceptual tool, and as such the wider philosophical and epistemological underpinnings of time-geography will not be explored (see Hägerstrand 1974, Hägerstrand and Lenntorp 1974 for a further explanation of time-geography).

The experiences of James (Fig. 8.1), provide an example of the extent to which migration in these cases is connected with employment prospects. James who was born in 1966 left his village in 1991 for Mutare to stay with his brother while looking for a job, before the results from his O'level examinations were out. Having learnt that he had passed he decided to further his prospects by leaving what he described as a well paid job in Mutare for an uncertain future in Harare, where the chances of finding a better job were thought to be greater. In spite of his expectations, however, the employment opportunities were in fact worse in Harare, and the job he eventually found paid less than his previous employment. After five months of employment, high living costs and the inadequate salary he was receiving made him decide to return to his brother in Mutare, where he subsequently secured a temporary job. In the meantime he married and he could therefore no longer stay with his brother. When his contract expired he "had no money, and nowhere to go and a wife to look after". He therefore returned to his rural home to, in his words, "have a rest and think about what to do next". After being tipped off about a job in Rusape, he came to town in 1994 and was employed as a plumber at the RTC. He was still working there at the time of the interview.

Fig. 8.1: James' employment history



The figure is not to scale, and covers James' mobility mainly after leaving his place of birth. He left his communal area home in Makoni District at the age of twenty-five. The dotted lines are used to indicate the location of places in the respondent's migration history on the map of Zimbabwe.

As James' story implies, however, he is one of the more privileged in the sense that he has finally secured a stable and relatively well-paid job. James' encounters with casual and temporary employment have been relatively few when compared to many other migrants who had subsisted on temporary and casual employment often found after many months of unemployment.

An analysis of (predominantly male) migrants' employment histories reveals the short-term nature of employment contracts evident in the life history of James related above. The process of informalization of formal enterprise in Zimbabwe is thus less connected with subcontracting and home-working than suggested by Rogerson (2000) in the South African context. Contracting formal economic activity, and an uncertain political climate, has instead resulted in a casualisation, or what is termed the "informalization of formal enterprise", where employees are hired on temporary contracts or piece-rate basis. As Rogerson (1997) suggests: "The security, if not the stability, of regular wage employment has declined and as a result the distinctions between employment conditions in the formal and informal

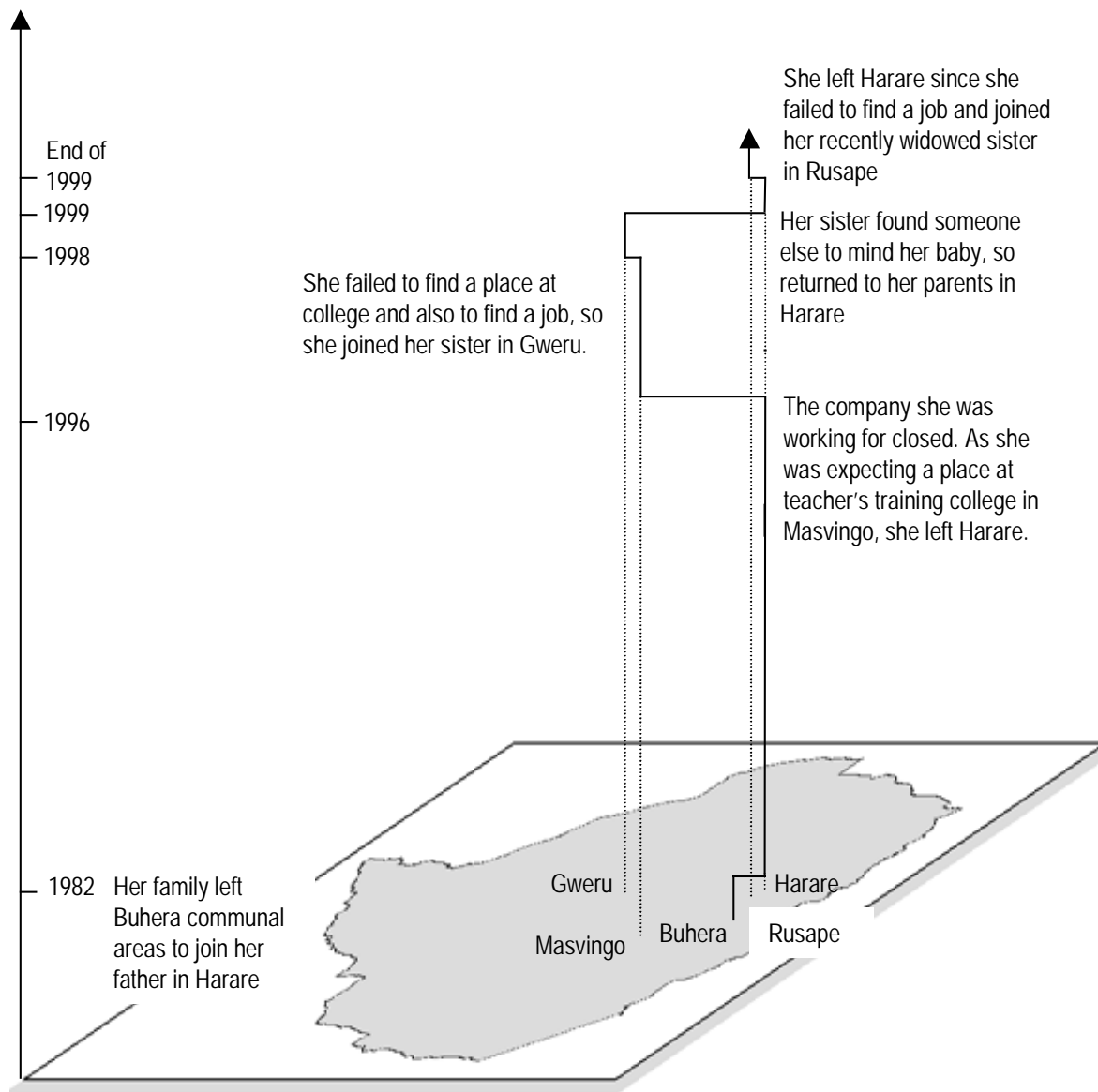
economies of cities have become progressively blurred” (p.346). What Castells (1999) terms the “individualisation of labour” was the dominant reality for most of my respondents, also among those employed by the public sector, such as the Rusape Town Council. This tendency has also been noted for the Zimbabwean labour market in general, where employees, such as miners interviewed by Makoni and Kujinga (2000) work on short-term contracts, with all the insecurity that this type of work implies.

Thus the advantages of a permanent job in the formal sector are very significant in terms of the fringe benefits which they offer in terms of long-term stability and pensions for instance. Although earnings may be substantially higher in the higher income echelons of the informal sector, respondents stressed their desire to find a permanent job within the formal sector as this would provide a more reliable long-term income. In this sense, the formal sector competes through the benefits that it provides, rather than by the wages it offers. Similar tendencies among the urban poor have been noted by Roberts (1989) in the context of Guadalajara, where workers were attracted to the formal sector by “offering welfare benefits and stability of employment” (p. 52). The formal sector, was however, perceived to be a closed option in Harare, and even more limited were the possibilities of finding a permanent job in Harare.

Accounts of the difficulties of finding employment in Harare, are not, however, restricted to the less well-educated, or the economically less well-situated nor are they limited to the narratives of male respondents. Tabeth’s (Fig. 8.2) account of the employment situation in Harare is a case in point. Tabeth gave the impression of being relatively affluent, she was very well-dressed and spoke perfect English. This impression was gradually confirmed by her life history, which revealed her access to both education and family members within formal and well-paid employment. The daughter of a small-scale businessman within the construction industry, Tabeth had lived most of her life in Harare. Having completed her O’levels in 1993, she easily found a job as a stock-controller and an accountant at one of Zimbabwe’s largest textile companies. The company was closed in 1996. As she was expecting a place at Teacher’s Training College, she joined her sister in Masvingo where she was hoping to study. She failed to secure a place at college, however, and after two years of applying for jobs in Masvingo, decided instead to join another sister who was studying in Gweru, to look after her baby. In 1998, after a year, she returned to Harare but failed to find a job there as well. Since early 1999, she had been staying with yet another sister in Rusape who had recently been widowed, and who had asked her to come to assist and console her. Her sister works as a manager at a formal sector enterprise, and Tabeth had recently learnt that she had secured a place at an evangelical college. She maintained that she would have preferred to stay in Harare, but that “nowadays it is very difficult to get a job in Harare, employment works on

nepotism basis” and that “At the end of the day you feel discouraged, ending up saying there are no jobs.” Such accounts are by no means specific to Harare, or even Zimbabwe, as Bryceson (1987) suggests on the basis of data from Dar es Salaam, where “urban job opportunities were monopolised by educated extended family units” (p. 171).

Fig. 8.2: Tabeth’s employment history



The figure is not to scale and covers Tabeth’s migration history mainly after she left her rural home in Buhera District at the age of six in 1982.

To some extent, the difficulties of securing employment in Harare and also in Bulawayo, can be surmised from the *State of the Cities Report* (2000) referred to above. Although caution is necessary when dealing with employment and unemployment estimates, the Report suggests that “unemployment rates for Harare and Bulawayo are outstandingly high”, and estimated (non-formal)

unemployment at 17 percent for both cities, compared with a national average of 9 percent (p. 13). In the city-profile for Bulawayo in the same report, formal unemployment is recorded as 55 percent. The *Inter-Censal Demographic Survey* from the CSO (1998b), puts the national average unemployment rate at 7 percent, with Harare and Bulawayo Provinces having the highest unemployment rates of 16 and 19 percent respectively. The inter-census survey uses the same definition of employment as the earlier census of 1992, where “Persons in the categories of paid employees, employers, unpaid family workers and own account workers were regarded as employed during the reference period (CSO1998b:98)”. Small differences in employment rates were recorded between the various urban areas in 1992, with most towns and cities registering unemployment rates of around 20-25 percent (CSO 1993a, CSO 1993b, CSO 1993c, CSO 1993d, CSO 1994a, CSO 1994b, CSO 1994c, CSO 1994d, CSO 1994e). Employment therefore has in fact risen, and may be connected to the increasing necessity for female household members to work. The census data does not differentiate unemployment rates by sex.

The difficulties associated with finding (formal) employment in Harare were not the only negative aspects of the labour market in larger urban areas commented on by my respondents. Indeed, the low level of wages (especially relative to the expenses associated with living in Harare) and the often haphazard method of payment were frequently noted. The seemingly inverted logic of unemployment being connected with larger urban areas, a concern expressed by many respondents, in this context has a very straightforward reflection on urban wage levels, which can, argued many migrants, be suppressed by virtue of the large number of unemployed.

Informal employment³⁷

Problems of finding employment in larger urban areas within the informal sector are gendered, as is much of the extremely poorly paid and very laborious work as a house girl or working in one of many of the small tuck shops which have mushroomed all over Zimbabwe’s urban areas. Many of the female respondents exhibited a similar migration “career” to the typical male migrant described above, with the difference that the employment found was not in the least formalised, and the wage was a fraction of that of their male counterparts. Trading or self-employment within the informal sector, likewise was gendered along income-lines.

This is in keeping with Castells and Portes (1989) assertion that the prerequisite for the entrance of marginalised elements onto the labour market is their clustering within the informal sector. In the case of African labour

³⁷ Here I have distinguished between employees in the informal sector and the self-employed within the same sector.

markets in general, as noted by Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo (1995) above, the informal sector itself is stratified according to gender, with women entering activities which require little investment while producing low returns. Rogerson (2000), in the context of the South African informal sector, distinguishes between “survivalist informal enterprise” and “micro/or growth enterprises”, where the former “require little capital investment and virtually no skills training and offer little opportunity for expansion into viable businesses” (p. 673).

For young, single women, employment as a house girl, or in a tuck shop offers accommodation, food and a small wage and as such provides at least a modicum of urban subsistence. Simultaneously, however, such employment is largely at the mercy of the employer, and the life histories are replete with examples of respondents leaving their employers after disagreements, mistreatment or simply because of low pay. The barriers to entry in terms of such occupations are for obvious reasons essentially non-existent and many respondents claimed that employment as a house girl could easily be found in Rusape. This tendency towards domestic work, and the transfer among women of their traditionally reproductive roles onto the market, is also reflected in general Southern African evidence as suggested by Rogerson (1997, 2000). The possibility of leaving such jobs comes either with marriage, or through relatives who can provide alternative sources of subsistence.

A very typical example of such an employment “career” is provided by Evelyn’s life history. Evelyn was born in 1975 and left her communal area outside Bulawayo for the city in 1996 as she had been invited to work as a house girl. After three months she had an argument with her employer and went instead to stay with her brothers who were also living in Bulawayo. After a month one of her brothers found her a job as a cashier at a grinding mill, a job which she lost after half a year when her employer could no longer afford to pay for her transport to work. She then engaged in piece-rate laundry work in the high density suburbs for three months. She was then invited to Rusape by an uncle. Her uncle found her a job at Foodlink, a formal sector company in the industrial area, where she worked on a piece-rate basis for a couple of years until she was married and her husband asked her to leave her job.

Self-employment within the informal sector

The self-employed, like other informal employees, encompass those with varying degrees of solvency, capital-intensity and income. Ranging from highly paid artisans, to petty traders and prostitutes, a consensus nonetheless appeared to exist among members of these highly diverse categories of self-employed and among respondents on the whole, that Rusape offered better prospects for survival for the poor and wealth for the better off than many

other places. In many cases, it was obvious that migrants had moved as much *from* the saturated informal markets in Harare or Bulawayo, as *to* the relatively unexploited market in Rusape.

The saturation of informal sector activities such as carpentry, shoe repairs and vending, as a result of retrenchments within the formal sector is noted by Auret (1995:97) for Harare, who suggests a link between ESAP and dramatic declines in the competitiveness of such businesses. Smith and Tevera (1997:29) likewise, suggest that falling prices of vegetables were connected with the large number of small-scale traders in Harare. Based on the evidence of commentators such as Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo (1995, 2000) as well as the recollections of my respondents, what Rogerson (2000) terms a supply-push appears to be fuelling the growth of the informal sector in Harare in particular, where “much growth is a product of individuals searching out informal activities to sustain themselves rather than a consequence of the need for new enterprises to fill observed market demands” (p. 676). A general process of downgrading also *within* the informal sector is occurring in Zimbabwe in general, as the depth and scope of urban poverty increases. Peter-Berries (1993), for example, notes a structural change within the informal sector, away from manufacturing to trading (cited in Rogerson 1997).

The deliberate search for less competitive markets for certain products is thus unsurprising and apparent in a few of the narratives. Fanuel (Case 8.1) for example, provided an account of the debilitating competition that had faced the carpentry business he ran with his brother in Harare. Rusape was thought to offer “no competition”, something which seemed advantageous both to him and his brother, but which proved to be illusory, as the respondent’s story suggests.

Case 8.1: Fanuel

Fanuel left Harare because the competition for his business was tough. He and his brother decided to look for an area where there was less competition for their carpentry business. The business used to be a joint venture with some people they knew from technical college who had a solar panel business. They had decided to diversify by sponsoring him and his brother with Z\$45 000. They chose to move to Rusape since there is less competition than in Harare. The business, however, was not doing very well and Fanuel attributed this to the economic problems facing people in general such as funerals and inflation, which meant that customers would default on their payments. The market was felt to be too small since there are no industries and a relatively small population in Rusape. The dwindling prospects for the business had been noted by their sponsors who had come and collected some of the tools that they bought for them, disappointed by the low profits. Fanuel and his brother work on a per order basis, and the income varies. In poor months they have a turnover of Z\$6000 and in a good month around Z\$10 000, but they have to buy the

timber they use from this amount. Fanuel estimated the profit per month to be around Z\$5000-6000. They were renting a shop at Z\$1000 per month and had no employees.

The problem of customers deferring payment is often noted by the self-employed as a constraint on the ability to produce goods for sale. The market in Rusape is therefore not without its problems even for relatively well-off and highly skilled artisans.

The notion that Rusape offers less competition for small-scale businessmen, and perhaps for traders especially, has received some attention even in the national media. An editorial from 1998 (June 11) in the Zanu-Pf newspaper, *The Herald*, entitled “The Street Traders Take Over – Rusape’s Vendor “Army” Could be Holding Back Investors”, noted that the town centre was flooded with vendors to the detriment of shop-owners in town. Rusape was described as “being a natural transit point for travellers in and around Manicaland province, [and] is the centre of much activity and a good place for traders to do business” (p.11). Not only do the large number of vendors present the Town Council with a problem as they systematically default on their payments to the Council, but perhaps more interestingly, local vendors complain that they are being displaced from their assigned trading area (the Council run flea market) by vendors coming from Mutare. As one anonymous vendor states in the article: “The problem is that at the flea market there are people coming from Mutare and we end up not being able to sell anything the whole day, having paid \$6 to the council. This forces us to come here because if we don’t our families will starve” (ibid.).

Indeed, a few respondents reported having moved to Rusape specifically for the purpose of vending either second-hand clothes or vegetables. Again, however, a market that Esau (Case 8.2) described as having been vibrant in 1995 when he had relocated to Rusape from Mutare to trade, had by the late 1990s become virtually saturated.

Case 8.2: Esau

Esau traded tomatoes in Mutare from 1989 to 1994 and was doing well as a trader and his business grew over the years. He bought the tomatoes from a farm outside Mutare and retailed them in town. In 1995, however, he decided to leave Mutare as the market was becoming increasingly saturated with vegetable traders. He had noted that the competition was becoming stiffer already in 1993. He decided to move to Rusape as there were few people engaged in his trade here, and it was also the closest town to his rural home area. He did not know anyone who stayed in Rusape when he moved here in 1995. He had been trading tomatoes and other vegetables in the bus terminus together with his wife ever since they arrived in town. They travelled to Marondera and to nearby villages to buy the vegetables which they then retailed in Rusape. At first it had been a good business, but at the time of the interview Esau felt that there was a lot of competition from other traders, a tendency which he had noted

as early as 1998. Esau and his wife were not engaged in any other income-earning activities in town, and were making a combined profit of Z\$1500 per month.

Significantly, however, none of the female respondents reported moving to Rusape or to other places specifically to trade, largely because most of them were at the time of migration married, and thus were moving to or with their husband. In this sense, for the majority of my female respondents who were engaged primarily in trading, their earnings were largely a supplement to their husbands' incomes. Since their migration, however, women who had been widowed or were separated from their erstwhile spouses, were very dependent on such survivalist enterprises, which in Rogerson's (2000) words, were characterised by "poverty and the desperate need to survive" (p. 673).

Evidence of increasing market saturation also within Rusape, can be compared with Pottier's (1988) account of a small town (Mbala) in Zambia, where small-scale trading, as in other Zambian towns, is "fast being transformed into a system closed to new migrants" (p. 34). Thus, the situation in Zambia may be a harbinger of a similar development in Rusape. As Rogerson (1997) argues, "In many cases a flood of new entrants into the informal economy can engender a situation of "overtrading" and a consequent decline in incomes earned and working conditions in such activities" (p.350). Under such circumstances, it is little wonder that established traders attempt to exclude newcomers.

During my fieldwork, however, Rusape was essentially perceived as relatively open to incoming traders. Interestingly enough, the inverted logic which many respondents used to explain their inability to find work in Harare, is also used to describe the perceived benefits of Rusape, where the small size of the town's population is thought to imply less competition and hence a larger market.

In the context of trading, Rusape offers another distinct advantage that has more to do with the town's location rather than its size. Trading in the rural areas with second-hand clothes, school uniforms, and foodstuffs can be quite lucrative. Using the discrepancy between urban prices, and the relatively higher prices charged in large-scale commercial farm shops and communal area villages in this way is a commercial niche for mobile traders. The ability to access the markets on surrounding commercial farms, where the opportunities for shopping are restricted (Makoni and Kujinga 2000:25) and occasionally in communal area villages produces a profitable niche for ambulating traders. A couple of female respondents mentioned engaging in barter trade with paraffin bought in town and then exchanged for maize in the communal areas which was later resold in Rusape. On another occasion second-hand clothes were exchanged for maize which was used to feed one respondent's family. Thus, as argued in the conceptual introduction, the small town offers an arena for straddling the rural and the urban, and exploiting the interface between the two.

A less strategic aspect of Rusape's advantages, which nonetheless reflects the contingency of places and the palimpsests (layers) of human relations over time as suggested by Harvey (1982, 2000), and the effects of such layering in also influencing the present, is presented by the historically important sex trade in the labour market profile of the town. According to the RTC's Housing Director, and a number of key informants, prostitution had a historically important role in Rusape (Focus group discussion, Rusape, December 16, 1999). The so called *tangwenas* (or informal) constructions, found in the present medium density BC section of Vengere were thought to have housed mostly prostitutes. Most women living there came from Chief Tangwena's area in the Nyanga area and other surrounding rural areas. The houses were destroyed in 1977, and were by then very old and run down. Some women were then moved to the former tobacco grading sheds in the B section and others were moved to Tsanzaguru Growth Point (Lundby 1998:50).

One respondent who had moved to Rusape as early as 1952 was asked to comment on why people moved to town in those days:

In 1952, some people came here to look for employment. Other people came from bigger towns and communal areas to engage in prostitution. Rusape had a reputation as a centre for the sex trade. People came from the communal areas, since there were more people staying here. The people who came from the bigger towns heard a rumour that the money was better here in the sex trade. People came here to work as prostitutes and when they had made enough money they would go back to the bigger towns. The sex trade market was good here.

This notion that Rusape was and still is to some extent a centre for commercial sex workers was commented on by the Vengere Clinic's sister-in-charge, Sister C Hofisi, who estimated the total number of commercial sex workers to stand at around a hundred, while sexually transmitted diseases was one of the major medical problems encountered by the clinic (pers. comm., Mrs C. Hofisi, Sister-in-Charge, Vengere Clinic, Rusape Town Council, Rusape, July 19, 2000). In a review from the organisation Family Health International, the extremely high HIV-rates (67 percent positive among ante-natal patients in 1995) in Rusape were thought to be linked to its location on the Harare-Mutare highway (FHI 2000, www.fhi.org/publications).

One respondent very indignantly commented on the prevalence of prostitution in the town: "Most people are coming from the bigger towns to Rusape to trade here since there is a lot of competition in the bigger towns. Some women come here to engage in prostitution. They come from the

communal areas. Rusape has a nation-wide reputation for prostitution.” She compared this with the situation in Harare, and argued that “Harare has less prostitution than Rusape”, despite its size and also claimed that prostitution is more widespread in Rusape than in Mutare.

This of course begs the question of what exactly prostitution is. Much media attention in Zimbabwe is devoted to exposing the increase in prostitution, which is thought to have expanded rapidly as a result of the socio-economic hardships facing many women. FACT (The Family Aids Trust) and official channels likewise concentrate on poster campaigns for example suggesting the perils of attracting “sugar daddies” in the wake of the HIV/Aids pandemic. Thus, the most common type of prostitution in Rusape, is probably what Collins and Rau (2000:21) term “survival sex” where a woman exchanges sex for gifts in money or in kind with multiple partners on occasional basis. One respondent when asked how she survives stated that she has boyfriends who pay for different things, something which provides an example of the heightened dependence upon men which the subordinate role of women in Zimbabwean society is producing under the spectre of ESAP.

8.3 Conclusion

The small town offers different opportunities and prospects for different migrants at different times in their migrant careers. Whereas the advantages of Rusape, like any other small town, as a low cost haven of investment, and its beneficial aspects of food security and employment are perhaps nothing novel, such characteristics of small town life are assets in the structural adjustment reality of Zimbabwe today. While the ability to reap such advantages varies from migrant to migrant, a consensus on the merits of Rusape vis à vis other, mainly larger urban areas emerges in the interviews, among widely differing categories of migrants. Thus, certain places offer advantages of provisioning for some people, while providing lucrative investment opportunities for others. The ability to access places like Rusape, thus varies considerably among migrants. This differential ease of access to places, both rural and urban, is conditioned by a number of aspects, related to both social and economic assets found within different places, but also within the wider framework of kin relations.

In this vein, rural areas although perceived in the first instance as places of refuge, were not felt to be desirable for permanent residential purposes among many respondents. Instead rural homes were regarded in large measure as exit options, and an urban existence was deemed more desirable among the majority of my respondents who were intent on harnessing the often temporary, differential advantages of different urban places. The extent to

which this kind of spatial negotiation was possible among my respondents is the subject of the next chapter.

9 Negotiating the settlement hierarchy

9.1 Introduction

Chapters 6,7 and 8 have detailed how migrants access places, in this case a small town, within the economic landscape where provisioning possibilities are more easily available relative to other areas. In this chapter I turn to the ways in which migrants use their mobility and their social and economic resources to negotiate the economic landscape *from* the small town through the engagement in a multitude of linkages across space.

In the context of the informalization of urban labour markets, and the contraction of rural earning opportunities, it has been suggested that linkages between the rural and the urban serve to harness the benefits of engaging in both these spheres of production. The access to other places and people, implies a measure of security not available to those constrained to one place, be it urban or rural. The ability to exit and enter places, is therefore an obvious asset under conditions of economic instability.

As suggested by the theoretical introduction in Chapter 1, the nuclear household is often perceived of as the main decision making vehicle in terms of migration, while migration in general is thought to occur as a deliberate method of labour dispersal. Yet, as argued in Chapter 2, the household may be subjected to numerous challenges under structural adjustment, and it is questionable whether the view of the household as a conscious and strategic decision making unit is operational within contemporary Zimbabwean reality. Nonetheless, the household may be conceived of as the most immediate structure within which the economic landscape is negotiated. The mobility of the individual may, however, be connected to a much more loosely defined and fluid, but spatially intertwined web of social and economic relations, or what I have called the wider household system.

For this reason the access to relatives in different places is an important source of social stratification, especially in a context where linkages to household members in general are becoming difficult to maintain. The ability

to maintain, or indeed strengthen, one's linkages with household members meanwhile outside the co-resident household varied a great deal. For this reason, the option of negotiating space as a means of seeking greener pastures, or of avoiding the hardship found in certain places, is becoming gradually closed to people when the ability to nurture links with rural and urban relatives declines. In this way negotiating the economic landscape becomes connected with the ability to circumvent social and economic difficulties through the reliance upon extended family members.

9.2 Migration and household livelihood systems

ESAP and the Aids pandemic mean that households are increasingly forced to "downsize" their sphere of support to include primarily co-resident household members, at the expense of more distant relatives. The co-resident, urban household for this reason was in many cases more relevant to the decision making of the interviewed migrants than the wider extended family. Of course, the composition of this household varies greatly as well, and in some cases includes simply a mother and child, or a grandmother and a number of grandchildren. A secondary effect of restricting support to co-resident household members is also a decline in the ability to spread economic risks over a large network of relatives, thus making the individual household much more vulnerable to hardship.

This kind of downsizing is also reported by Ncube et al. (1997a) who argue that many of their respondents despite cultural norms dictating the opposite, were being neglected by their sons especially. Likewise, in the case of Dakar, Fall (1998:140) notes the declining role of support towards family members outside the nuclear household among younger men (aged between 25 and 34), when compared with elder men (aged between 45 and 59), and suggests that the brunt of the economic crisis is born by the elderly. The greater role of the nuclear, rather than the extended family as a decision making component, thus appears to be connected on the one hand to economic crisis and on the other to an expanding culture of individualism, as suggested by for example Castells (1999) in the context of the informational society. Cultural aspects are stressed also by Smit (1998) on the basis of research undertaken in Durban, where "In the 1980s and 1990s, it seems that the trend for migrants to maintain strong rural links is not as pronounced as it used to be" (p. 84). Bank and Qambata (1999), also in the context of South Africa, make the point that young rural migrants to East London in the 1980s and early 1990s increasingly sought to distance themselves from the rural, in a counter-culture centred on the: "rejection of older notions of kinship obligation and responsibility" (p. 67).

In the case of my respondents, however the inability to support members of the wider household system was very much connected with present socio-

economic conditions (as suggested also in the theoretical discussion) which are challenging the ability of the extended family to function as a unit of decision making. Many respondents expressed a desire, but also an inability, to expand their remittances to relatives in both Rusape and other places. Lomnitz' (1977) observation on social networks as the only resources available to marginals, is challenged to some extent by such structural changes, and I would argue that the social resources available to the urban poor, like any other resources are shrinking. Devereux (1999) and Lourenco-Lindell (2002) have also suggested the inability among the poor to maintain transfers under generally deteriorating economic conditions.

Financial obligations among my respondents were often the source of guilt, as they had been discontinued, or frustration, as they were undermining the urban quality of life, among certain respondents. Likewise, many migrants remarked on the discontinuation of support for relatives, because of a lack of money, or noted that they should be paying school fees for younger siblings, for instance, but were not. Thus, respondents' accounts included many examples of practical challenges to household support systems.

The source of this kind of contraction of formerly widespread provisioning networks, is related *both* to the Aids pandemic, and also to general economic hardship in the wake of liberalisation and the informalization of the production and reproduction of labour.

Aids

Figures on Aids-infection rates are hard to come by, but a recent report on the state of Zimbabwean cities, puts the HIV-prevalence rate in the provincial capital Mutare at 25 percent of the cities' population (*State of the Cities Report* 2000: 5), with a five percent decrease in the national economic growth rate being attributed to the pandemic. UNAIDS/WHO (2000) countrywide data from 1997, awards Vengere Clinic the dubious honour of heading the list of infection rates among pregnant women, as suggested by Table 9.1.

Table 9.1: HIV infection rates (percent) among pregnant women

Type of area	Name of area	Infection rate
Major urban areas		
	Bulawayo	24.0
	Chitungwiza (1)	31.3
	Chitungwiza (2)	33.3
	Harare	28.0
Outside major urban areas		
	Beitbridge (Beitbridge) hospital)	46.0
	Bindura (Bindura hospital)	29.3
	Binga district (Binga hospital)	9.2
	Buhera (Manicaland Province)	50.8
	Chiredzi (Masvingo Province)	25.0
	Chivhu (Mashonaland East Province)	31.4
	Gutu (Gutu Mission)	25.0
	Gwanda district (Gwanda Hospital)	48.0
	Gweru (Midlands Province 1)	30.7
	Gweru (Midlands Province 2)	24.0
	Gweru (Midlands Province 3)	19.2
	Hwange (Hwange Hospital)	18.8
	KweKwe (Midlands Province)	7.0
	Mandava (Midlands Province)	44.0
	Manicaland Province (Makoni)	29.3
	Manicaland Province (Vengere Clinic)	53.3
	Mashoko (Mashoko Mission)	30.0
	Mashonaland Central Province (Chitsungo)	37.3
	Mashonaland Central Province (Karanda Hospital)	23.9
	Mashonaland Central Province (Mary Mount Hospital)	34.9
	Mashonaland Central Province (St. Alberts Hospital)	23.0
	Matabeleland North Province (Chinotimbe)	42.6
	Matabeleland North Province (Karirangwe)	7.0
	Matabeleland South Province (Antelope Hospital)	28.0
	Mberengwa (Mneme & Musume Mission Hospital)	30.0
	Mutare (Manicaland Province 1)	37.7
	Mutare (Manicaland Province 2)	36.7
	Mutoko district (Mutoko Hospital)	19.1
	Seke North	32.0
	St Mary	34.0
	Zvimba/Kadoma (Mashonaland West Province)	24.3

Source: UNAIDS/WHO(2000): *Epidemiological Fact Sheet, Zimbabwe*.

The effects of Aids on households and individuals are enormous given the literal decimation of the workforce nationally as suggested by the *State of the Cities Report* (2000). In Rusape, Aids was indeed omnipresent, not only in the narratives of my respondents, but also as a component of everyday life in Vengere, where people could be seen wasting away in the final stages of the disease. Many respondents referred to their children and sons- and daughters-in-law, who were in the process of dying in their homes, and my realisation of

the impact of Aids on society and households became firmly grounded during my field work.

Caring for orphaned children often befalls women in the event of the death of male relatives. The expansion of household size, through the Aids pandemic, was especially apparent among elderly respondents, who were often the primary caretakers of (orphaned) grandchildren, sometimes with the assistance from other children, but just as often without. Thus, in a very apparent sense, Aids is producing a significant strain on already scarce resources, a situation which is to some extent amplified by deepening rural poverty and urban insecurity.

Structural adjustment, informalization of labour markets and the household

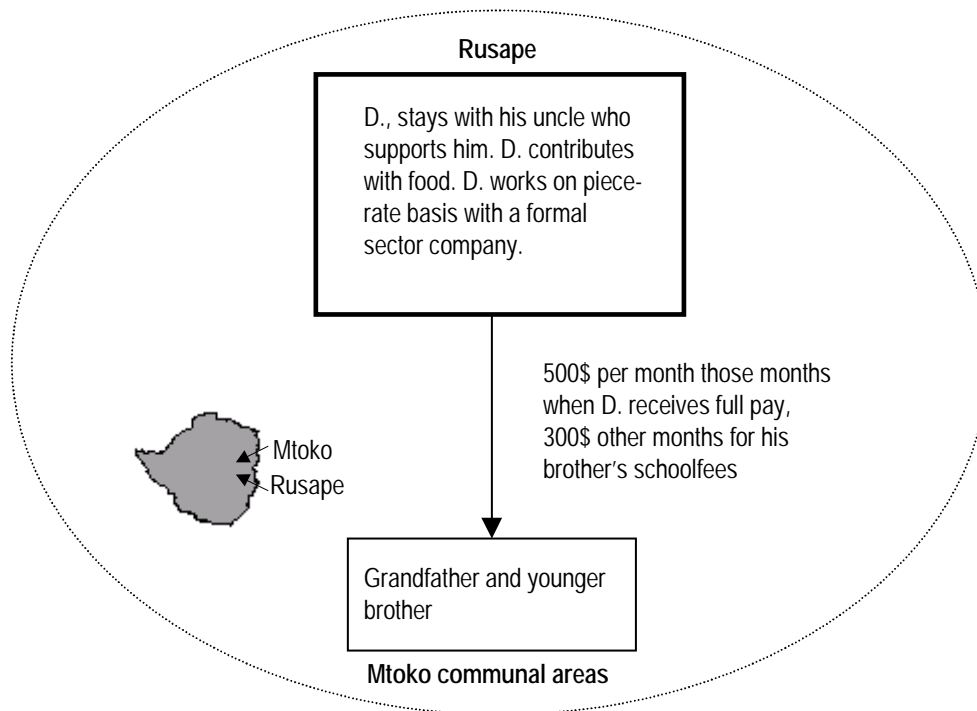
The inability to support a family on one wage in the face of escalating inflation and the difficulties of finding stable, formalised employment affect household support systems negatively. The experiences of the informalization of the labour market, and the broader characteristics of this process, were explored in Chapter 8. Here the focus will instead be on the connection between this process as a consequence of structural adjustment and the functioning of the household. The informalization of formal employment under ESAP, primarily through the state-sanctioned circumvention of labour laws aimed at facilitating “hiring and firing” is having profound effects on the security of urban employment.

The precarious situation of both informal sector workers and employees in general that is described in the literature was reflected also in the testimonies of my respondents, who frequently commented on their inability to support household members because of rising prices, falling wages and insecure employment conditions. In this context, the perception among female respondents that they needed to supplement their husbands’ incomes was apparent among those who had begun engaging in informal sector trade when their husbands were laid off, or as a way of assisting their husbands. Irene, a mother of two who is married to a security guard, describes succinctly why she needed to start trading: “to get money for food, and rent, and electricity”.

In addition to curtailing urban incomes, support systems over space were also affected by the vicissitudes of the labour market and the generally rising cost of living in urban areas. Douglas described how his employment situation regulated the amount of support he was able to extend to other family members. He had been working for a (formal sector) company in the industrial area for three months on a casual basis, which provided him with Z\$1800 per month if he worked for the entire month. The month before the interview, however, the company had required his services only part time, and he

managed to earn only Z\$800. His employment may, moreover cease at the company's discretion. He is supported by an uncle, but still contributes to the household by buying food. He sends his grandfather and his younger brother, who stay in the communal areas of Mutoko, Z\$500 per month, when he receives full pay, but still contributes Z\$300 monthly for his brother's school fees when he does not. In this sense, urban insecurity is transferred also to the rural areas.

Fig. 9.1: Douglas' support network



The bold rectangle delineates the respondent's household. Flows of cash, labour, and goods are detailed through the arrows connecting the urban household with households (represented by a fine rectangle) which are part of the wider household system. Of course this details only the relation between the respondent and other households, whereas these households in turn may also be part of other household systems. In this case the respondent's network encompasses only Rusape and a communal area. The wider household system is indicated by the ellipse.

With respect to mobility, the implications of informalized and casualised employment are contradictory. For while the household needs to diversify sources of income (often over space) as a result of this process, the dispersal of household members over space requires that jobs can actually be secured. Given high urban unemployment levels, steadily shrinking (formal) employment opportunities and rising urban living costs, the household may in some instances benefit from family members staying put rather than risking the welfare of the household by gambling on an urban existence which runs the risk of reaping few benefits. In the context of rising unemployment, the

necessity of splitting the household among numerous urban areas is also a source of expenses that may not in the long run be advantageous either to the household or the individual. As de Haan (1997) notes, "...migration is simply too risky and expensive an action not to be informed by prospects of finding a higher income" (p. 491).

On occasion, what appeared to be a division of labour over space *did* occur among my respondents, however, but the focus of such strategies was the co-resident, often nuclear, household rather than the wider household system, and for this reason, involved the separation of spouses between the rural and the urban, or between two urban areas.

The influence of the household in fashioning the mobility of its members varied a great deal, as did the set-up of the household involved in making decisions related to migration. In some cases only the immediate nuclear family (co-resident or not) functioned as the decision-making unit, and in other instances decisions were shaped by members of the extended, wider household system. On yet other occasions, the individual in effect decided over his or her mobility and in some cases also over the mobility of other co-resident household members. Thus Bruce and Dwyer's (1988:8) description of the household as an "uneasy aggregate of individual survival strategies" (cited in Chant 1997:6) appeared to be an appropriate characterisation of its role in directing the life courses of its members.

The individual, the household and migration

Indeed, the relevance of the household to decision-making with respect to mobility varied significantly between respondents, depending on the marital status and gender of the respondent.

Most common was a pattern where migrants, either upon completion of schooling or after a shorter spell in the rural areas, felt that they needed either to fend for themselves, or to support their parents, and therefore left for an urban area (in most cases Harare or Bulawayo). The kind of explanation voiced by Florence for leaving the rural homestead as a young, single migrant was common among respondents, and connected with the perceived benefits of wage employment: *she wanted to support herself as her parents could not afford to buy clothes for her and she wanted to attain a higher standard of living*. Obviously, such migration might be prompted by an expectation of support among parents or other kin, rather than commanded by household members. Nonetheless, the wish to exercise autonomy and to improve one's financial status was apparent especially when respondents related their desires to leave the parental home. In the case of women in general, as Tabet (1991) suggests, independence most often is a form of gendered escape from the control of parents, siblings or spouses. As she writes on the basis of interviews

in Niamey, Niger: “Life as a “free woman” is in fact almost by definition linked to migration, or at least some form of leaving home” (p. 8).

Thus, motivations for leaving home were often framed by a general desire to support oneself and/or one’s parents rather than as part of a deliberate division of labour over space. Individuality was in some instances stressed by respondents, especially young, single migrants, such as David, who left Marondera as he *wanted a change in his life*. Migration at this stage in life, was most often expressed in terms of the individual, and not directly influenced by family members.

In some cases, however, the leverage exercised by members of both the co-resident and the wider household over the mobility of the respondents was lucidly illustrated. Fanuel, a respondent in his mid-twenties, related how he visited his elder brother in Harare to have his decision to leave for a job in Beitbridge sanctioned, only to be denied such permission on the grounds that the town was too far away. Told instead to take up employment in Masvingo, arranged by his sister-in-law’s cousin, Fanuel’s further mobility was evidently directed by his brother rather than by himself. Such descriptions were, however, very much an exception, and mobility shaped in this way appeared not the result of an intentional division of labour on the part of the household, but rather the outcome of the decision making of other individuals. Migration for this reason was not undertaken primarily to forward the economic interests of the household.

Mobility, although in the case of single respondents framed by the individual’s rather than the household’s strategic decisions, was however, very much connected with the *location* of friends and relatives. The single migrant in many cases rotated between relatives in both rural and urban areas, sometimes upon invitation, but just as often without. Linkages are necessary for “survival”, and the access to wider household support systems very much determine one’s ability to migrate and where one migrates to. The role of the wider household as a dispersed system of support was apparent. Therefore, the household system, despite suggestions of its waning role in Zimbabwean society is highly important as a structure within which the individual can exit and enter places. The maintenance of the wider household structure through action by the individual serves to keep access to this system available to the individual in both rural and urban areas. The maintenance of rural and urban links is therefore an essential component of the survival of both the individual and wider household systems. As Ncube et al. (1997a) argue: “The family may have been transformed, it may be constantly mutating and it may be under strain and stress as a result of its economic precariousness or that of its members, but it is still out there, resiliently performing many of its traditional functions [...] and assuming new ones under difficult circumstances” (p. 21).

In the context of my fieldwork data, the heightened importance of the nuclear (not necessarily co-resident) household as a locus of decision making

in terms of mobility was often connected with life cycle changes. Male respondents often related their desire for stability and the need for a reliable income with marriage and the birth of children especially. The sheer size of a household, and the general shortage of urban housing in Zimbabwe, also means that married respondents found it more difficult to move together between relatives in different urban areas. Marriage also introduces gendered aspects of migration which have been less obvious with respect to young, single migrants of both sexes. Within the nuclear family, decision making in general is gendered. In some cases, female respondents stated that they were “sent” to their husband’s rural home to assist their parents-in-law with farming. In other cases, movement to Rusape had been commanded by a husband who wished to live with his wife.

The changes in life-cycle also mean that migration decisions are indeed framed within the context of the nuclear (regardless of residence) family. Migration decisions in these cases involve supporting the nuclear family in the first instance. On occasion what appeared to be a division of labour over space within the nuclear family occurred to enhance the productive and reproductive capacity of the family unit.

The household as a support system

Traditionally, a perception of male migrants moving to town and leaving wives and children behind in the rural areas dominates the view of labour division over space as a means of harnessing the advantages of both the rural and the urban. This has been suggested, for example, by the household survival systems school (as inspired by the new household economics approach), whereby the dispersal of family members from the rural to the urban is thought to diversify income, as proposed by Evans and Pirzada (1995). While such cases existed among my respondents, they were very much in the minority. The picture turned out to be infinitely more complex, and the role and size of the household included in such decision making varies greatly.

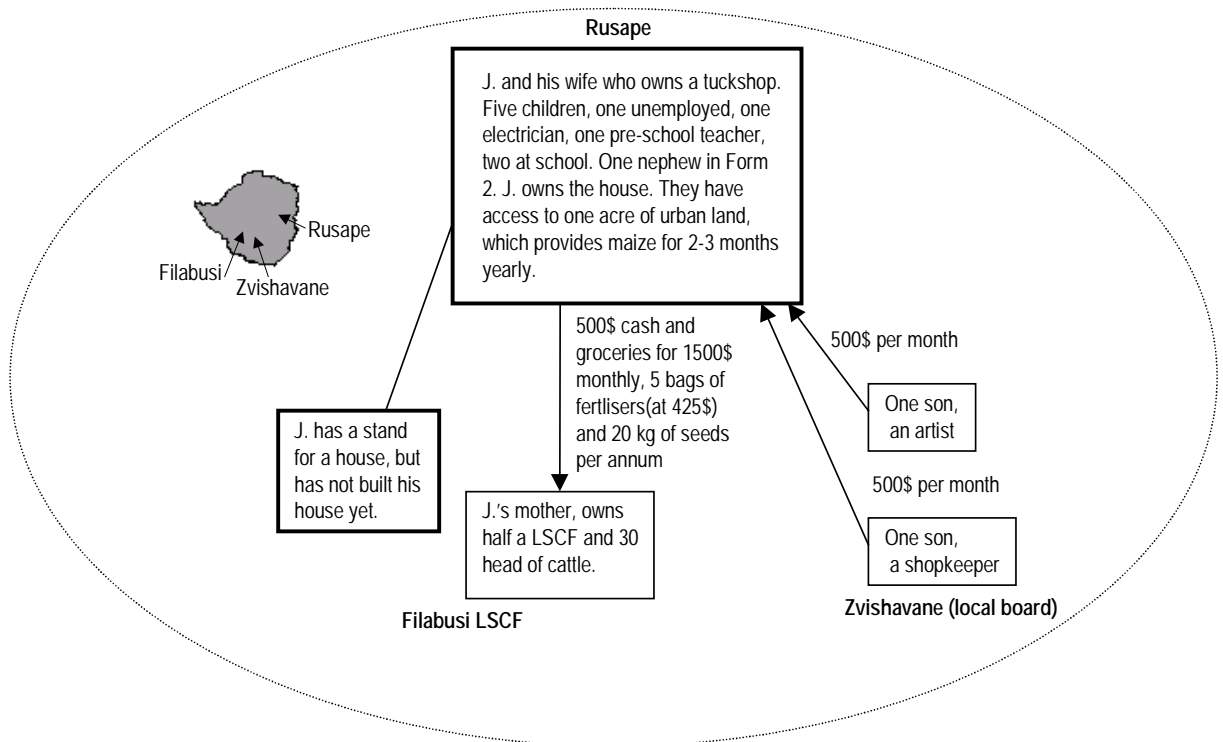
The advantages which mobility by individual members proffers on the household as a whole, lie in the straddling of the rural and the urban or in the ability to utilise child care functions presented by extended family members. Rather than being composed of a number of individuals widely dispersed over space, as suggested by Findley (1997), the household in such cases was split over the rural and the urban, with remittances occurring in both directions. Often parts of the nuclear family resided in town (i.e. as a co-resident household) and the parental generation and occasionally one or two of their grandchildren in the rural area. In this way the nuclear household was divided, with children residing elsewhere as parts of another co-resident rural household.

The reason for dividing the household in this manner is both economic (land shortages in the rural areas, and the need for employment to supplement rural earnings) as well as social (the need for “freedom” as expressed by respondents). Again, however, although economically as much as socially motivated, such division over space is not necessarily an intentional strategy. Childcare for example, in many cases is for both economic and social reasons facilitated by keeping children in the rural areas, while the wish to access urban schools means that nephews and nieces often reside with relatives in towns or cities. The situation approaches that described by Ncube et al. (1997a) who, in their discussion of the concept of repository families, argue that the phenomenon of placing children in the care of relatives is widespread in Zimbabwe today.

Similarly, the support of (elderly) parents is surrounded by cultural mores as much as by economic considerations. An expectation of financial assistance from adult and employed children in a few cases underlay the receipt of remittances from children in other urban areas, rather than actual need. This is also suggested by Geschiere and Gugler (1998) who argue that “parental connections” often uphold links with the rural areas, links which are partially upheld through “strong normative elements” (p. 311). Joshua (Fig. 9.2), a house-owner in his early sixties, for example, despite being permanently employed with the Town Council and running a business described by himself as “very successful”, regularly received money from two of his adult children. The Z\$500 remitted monthly by each child, in this case must be quite insignificant compared with his earnings as a whole, especially considering his ability to save Z\$2000 monthly. Joshua, as well as a number of other respondents, suggested that relative affluence did not necessarily exclude remittances from children. For this reason, securing parental welfare was not explicitly connected with enhancing the household’s economic parameters, but just as much an implicit cultural expectation.

To the extent that evidence of household strategies *did* surface in the recollections of my respondents, these centred more on the needs of the co-resident household. The wider, spatially dispersed household in these cases served as a supportive backdrop to such labour division, especially with respect to childcare, and remittances of food from the rural areas. An “inner core” with respect to labour division thus seemed to exist. An initial dispersal over space was occasionally replaced by a reunion of family members, and very few residential constellations were permanent.

Fig. 9.2: Joshua's support network



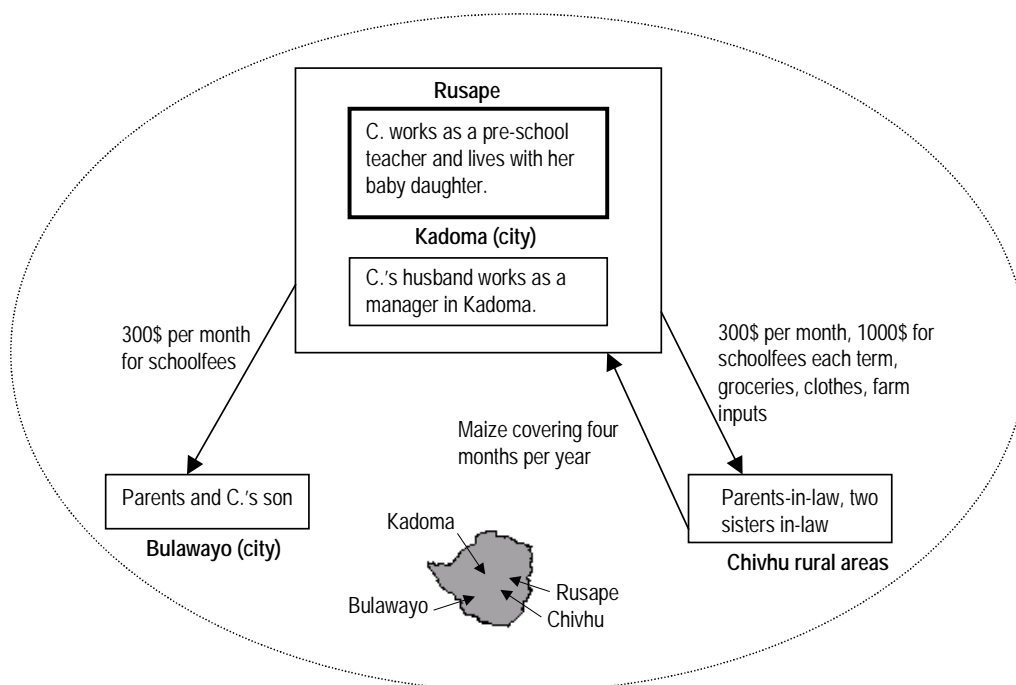
The bold rectangles delineate the respondent's household, in this case a household with assets in both Rusape and Filabusi. The fine rectangles are other households. Here the respondent has two sons in Zvishavane, an urban area found at the level below Rusape in the urban hierarchy, while his mother is residing in a large-scale commercial farming area. Flows of cash, labour, and goods are detailed through the arrows connecting the urban household with households which are part of the wider household system. The wider household system is indicated by the ellipse.

The experience of Roselyn, is illustrative in some respects. A respondent in her late thirties, Roselyn moved to Rusape in 1983 after having spent two years with her husband in his rural home outside Mutare, where they were living with his parents. After this time, rural hardship and a sister in Rusape who could provide accommodation prompted her to move to town. Initially she came on her own as she and her husband could not afford for them both to stay in town. After Roselyn had secured a job and accommodation, her husband joined her in town. Today they support her parents-in-law through remittances of money as well as fertilisers and seeds. They are also supporting her mother, and an orphaned niece who lives with them in Rusape.

This fairly traditional division of labour over space is perhaps most poignantly illustrated by households where the husband resides with one or two children in town, while his wife lives in the rural areas. This configuration conforms with the theoretical suggestion of a recourse to the rural as a way of partially shifting the reproduction of labour to the rural sector, as propounded mainly by structuralist approaches to migration, such as Wolpe's (1972),

which view this division of labour as a means of capitalist exploitation. Yet, such household systems although common among the respondents were by no means the rule. As the figure of Cecilia's (Fig. 9.3) family network suggests linkages between household members may cover different urban areas as well as rural areas. Cecilia, a pre-school teacher in her early thirties, exists within a household which is spread among three urban areas, and an extended family which has links with a rural area as well. The advantages of splitting the household in this case was connected with the respondent having secured employment in Rusape, while her husband was temporarily employed in Kadoma. The need for childcare and schooling for her elder child prompted the respondent to place her son with her parents in Bulawayo.

Fig. 9.3: Cecilia's family's division of household members and resources over space



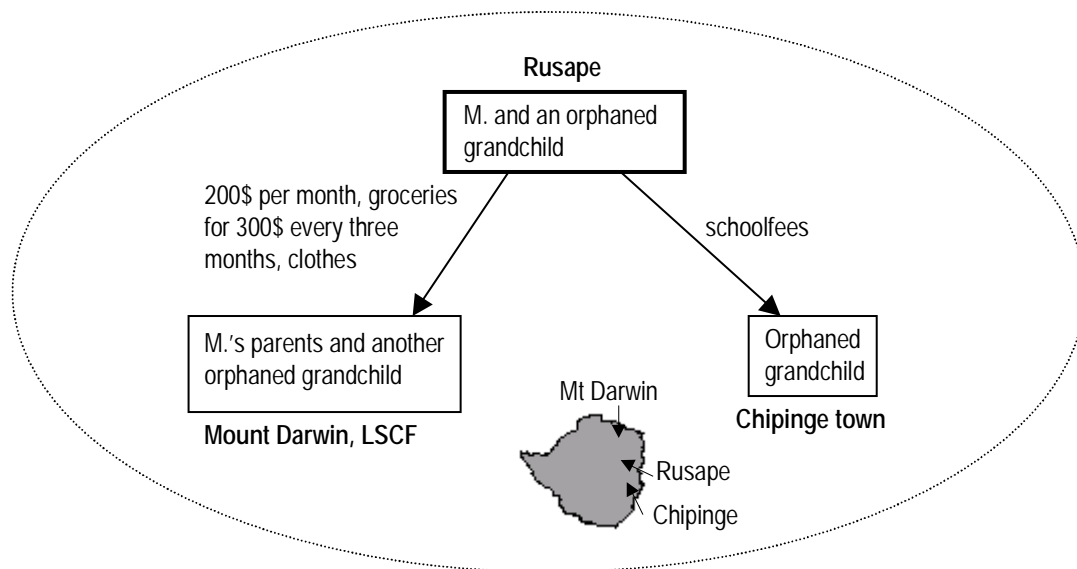
The bold rectangle delineates the respondent's urban household. In this case, the rectangle around Cecilia's household in Rusape and her husband's household in Kadoma is added to signify that Cecilia and her husband are part of the same household, although they are residing in different urban areas. Kadoma, like Bulawayo, as cities, are found two levels above Rusape in the settlement hierarchy. Flows of cash, labour, and goods are detailed through the arrows connecting the urban household with households (indicated by fine rectangles) which are part of the wider household system. The wider household system is indicated by the ellipse.

While spatial income diversification can be a profitable way of maximising income for the household, it may also imply additional costs as suggested by Elsie, a nurse at Rusape General Hospital, who aimed to effect a transfer to Harare where her husband is staying, as a way of cutting costs, to avoid the

expenses of maintaining two urban homes. Thus, the constraints on urban livelihoods affect the ability to divide the household over space.

Likewise, the support of orphaned grandchildren (in no small measure connected with Aids) produces complex livelihood systems, where the issue of “who provides for who” becomes increasingly obscure. Although hardly connected with the division of labour over space, the necessity to spread the support system over space is to some extent reinforced by the need to support an increasing number of dependants. Maria (Fig. 9.4), a lady of Mozambican origin (who lacks a rural home in Zimbabwe), lost her only daughter, who in turn left four orphaned children. One grandchild is today married and stays in Harare, but does not support her grandmother. Maria stays in Rusape with one of her grandchildren, while one grandchild stays in Chipinge where she is attending school, and the youngest grandchild stays with Maria’s parents on a large-scale commercial farm in Mt. Darwin. While Maria to some extent supports her parents, they are responsible for raising her grandchild.

Fig. 9.4: Maria’s support network



The bold rectangle delineates the respondent's urban household. Flows of cash, labour, and goods are detailed through the arrows connecting the urban household with households which are part of the wider household system (indicated by fine rectangles). The wider household system is indicated by the ellipse.

The impression that remittances are often circulated from one member of the household system to another, arose quite frequently in the interviews, reaffirming the notion that support of kin is very much a cultural as well as an economic consideration. Often individuals – although technically part of a larger co-resident household – have specifically individual financial obligations towards members of the wider household network residing elsewhere. Katherine, for instance, despite the fact that she is supported by

someone else, also has obligations to pay school fees for younger siblings in the rural areas. This supports the idea of the household as a “superstructure” and a well-measured system of support rather than a locus for labour division – a system which seems to be guided more by ad hoc measures to counter (urban) insecurities, and a fluidity conditioned by who happens to be employed at the moment.

The individual, although acting with reference to the household, thus in terms of decision making is relatively free with respect to his or her mobility. In some cases the individual’s mobility may in fact be connected with a will to abandon the household. Migration decisions, especially those of young, single migrants, come across less as calculated on grounds of the common good and more as reasonably individualistic. The wider household network in turn appears more as a spatially dispersed system of support, rather than a mechanism for labour division over space.

Linkages to places *are*, however, very much related to the presence of friends and relatives, and for this reason, the ability to circulate between different places is very much connected with the access to support systems. In respondents’ narratives of past mobility, migration has followed *relatives* rather than remittances, which suggests that remittances are paid as a form of contribution to a spatialised social security system operating among kin, rather than a deliberate way of keeping certain places open. Remittances for this reason are often highly individualised financial obligations, directed at specific family members. Access to places rather depends on having well-paid, formally employed relatives which are not necessarily part of a household system in which remittances are circulated.

In the literature the emphasis is often strictly placed on the existence of urban-rural linkages as a way of straddling and counteracting urban uncertainty. As much as this aspect of diversification deserves attention, other types of linkages need to be considered as well. During the course of my interviews it became clear that not only do the types and direction of links warrant consideration, but also the strength and practicability of these connections need to be addressed.

9.3 Negotiating the settlement hierarchy

Rural linkages and urban livelihoods

There is some debate in the literature as to the possibility of maintaining rural-urban links in the face of declining real income. While some authors point to the need of consolidating these links in the face of economic insecurity, others

argue that such linkages can be ill-afforded during times of economic hardship. The idea that declining real incomes could stratify access to rural links as much as access to other resources in society does not seem farfetched in this context, however.

Links to rural areas serve both economic and cultural purposes. Ncube et al. (1997a) found that:

The insecurity of urban employment was often cited as the main factor which dictated that families keep a rural home as well as an urban one. Others who could afford to relocate their entire families to the urban areas where they worked felt strong traditional attachments to their rural homes and believed that their urban residence was always temporary so as to earn a living to adequately support their families. They considered that upon retirement they would go back home to live permanently with their wives. Urban life was seen as not only insecure but also as traditionally temporary suggesting that Africans have been somewhat ideologically reticent to cut their rural roots. Even in entirely urbanized families there was the invariable link with the rural areas where parents, grandparents or uncles and aunts remained (p. 164).

This suggests that the decision to sever one's linkages with the rural areas is an involuntary one, brought about largely by economic hardship. Schlyter (1990:188) for example concludes that female household heads are forced to choose between urban or rural residence and therefore are excluded from straddling the two as a survival mechanism. In this sense, the maintenance of a safety net in the rural areas is an asset the access to which is becoming stratified by the ability to maintain and develop relations with rural relatives. Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo (1995:190), note the frustration of their respondents with respect to providing financially for members of the extended family, with women's support of elderly parents especially being a bone of contention between spouses. Declining numbers of visits to rural areas, were in the same study found to be linked to tighter financial constraints for 84 percent of the respondents. Weakening rural ties are suggested by Ocholla-Ayayo (1997:71) with respect to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. In Tanzania, such links are thought to be weakened because of the informalization of production itself, where the growth of the informal sector has attracted migrant investments into urban businesses rather than rural links (Mbonile 1993, cited in Gould 1995:187). The deregulation of labour rights is also acting to affect the ability to maintain rural links in more subtle ways as well, as noted by Makoni and Kujinga (2000) who report the inability of mine workers to

nurture their linkages in the rural areas as related to long working hours, on occasion extended also over public holidays and leaving little time for visits to rural areas.

Ferguson (1999), on the basis of extensive fieldwork on the Zambian Copperbelt, however, connects the rapid decline of the mining economy to an increasing reliance upon rural links despite an earlier inability to nurture them:

I was struck by the prominence of rural options in people's thinking, and by the extent to which the desperate conditions of the urban economy were leading even the apparently most "permanently urbanized" people to contemplate what were often humiliating and dangerous rural retreats that would have been unthinkable several years before. Rural connections and rural kin were not a matter of sentimental attachment; increasingly, they were resources upon which bare survival might depend (p. 40).

Rural links, to the extent that they are maintained, are nurtured in a number of ways. Rakodi (1995a:168), found that 39 percent of low-income households surveyed in Harare had land rights in the rural areas. A similar degree of land access is noted by Potts and Mutambirwa (1990) on the basis of a survey of *male* headed households in Harare carried out in 1985 and 1988. Potts (2000:905) notes land rights among 55 percent of male-headed households and 18 percent of female-headed household in a more recent survey in Harare from 1994. The participation of migrants' wives in rural agriculture produced a variety of mobility patterns between rural and urban areas in Potts and Mutambirwa's (1990) survey. Kanji and Jazdowska (1995:143) confirm the importance of female cultivators in maintaining communal land rights in the rural areas.

Such links are perhaps of a more directly productive nature than those engaged in by the majority of urban residents. Three quarters of low-income households surveyed by Rakodi (1995a:170) sent remittances to kin in the rural areas. Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo (1995:191) found that "Although considerable support is given to relatives in the rural home by women in informal urban trade, few reported receiving any form of assistance in return, either in cash or in kind." Muzvidziwa (1997:108), on the basis of in-depth interviews with 58 female heads of household, suggests that deliberate investments in rural kin is a way of maintaining a double-rootedness, engaged in by 68 percent of these household heads. These respondents were intent on eventually returning to the home village, if not sooner then at least upon old age, to avoid the expenses of urban life. Such return migration upon retirement is noted also by Sachikonye (1993), and also widely in the literature on Africa in general (see for instance, Adepaju and Mbugua 1997).

Kanji and Jazdowska (1995:142), writing of the gendered effects of ESAP, on the basis of research in Harare in 1991 and 1992, conclude that women used links with rural areas as a device to counter the uncertainties of the urban job market. The inability to maintain rural links, or even links with relatives in general, has obvious implications for vulnerability in the context of a society that relies excessively on the role of the family in providing basic social welfare for the individual. Such support becomes a fundamental component of both urban and rural survival in times of economic hardship, given the void in public social welfare systems.

In the relation between rural and urban spheres of production, reproduction and consumption, the small town is often perceived in the literature as a preserver of rural links, where larger urban areas are to some extent regarded as debilitating to such connections. The small town is in this context thought to represent the arena for a balancing act, an interface between the rural and the urban as suggested by Giraut (1997:36). Ocholla-Ayayo (1997) for instance argues that in a general climate of “socio-economic autonomy from the rural way of life”, “the increasing number of people moving to live and work in small and secondary towns throughout Africa implies a merging of the urban ways of life with the traditional systems, inasmuch as these minor urban centres will be required to interface with agriculture to provide all forms of support which may be required” (p. 70).

Nonetheless, the degree to which rural links are retained varies enormously, as suggested by Smit (1998) for Durban. Bearing this evidence from the literature in mind, it is hardly surprising that my field work data also exhibited large degrees of variation with respect to maintaining, nurturing or severing rural ties.

The maintenance of rural linkages

Rural linkages are maintained in a number of ways, perhaps most importantly through rural land ownership and participation in rural agriculture. This of course, implies that the respondent does indeed have a rural home or a *musha*. The access to rural linkages, and the ability to harness an income from that rural area, varies not only with the type and size of land, but also with the capital available for the purchase of agricultural inputs. Likewise, the ability of rural relatives to support returning migrants is also of obvious significance with respect to exit options. In this way, the *type* of rural access needs to be considered for a more thorough analysis of exit options.

Reproducing the table discussed in chapter 7 (presented again as Table 9.2), fifteen respondents were found to be entirely without a rural home, while an additional 67 informants although having a rural home did not have any rural land. Those with both a rural home and access to rural land were

therefore in the minority, and for this reason the maintenance of rural links through land ownership is a less significant method of nurturing the relationship with the rural home than, for example, remittances to rural relatives and the payment of inputs for rural agriculture. While rural land was often commented on as a desirable asset among those lacking the access to such land, it is therefore not the sole source of rural linkages.

Table 9.2: Land access among respondents

Type of land access	Females	Males	Total
No rural home, no land	12	3	15
No land, but rural home	37	30	67
Land used by respondent/spouse	17	20	37
Land belonging to respondent/spouse*	3	7	10
N/A	4	10	14
Total	73	70	143

Source: sample data. * This is land which the respondents claim access to but which is being used by other relatives.

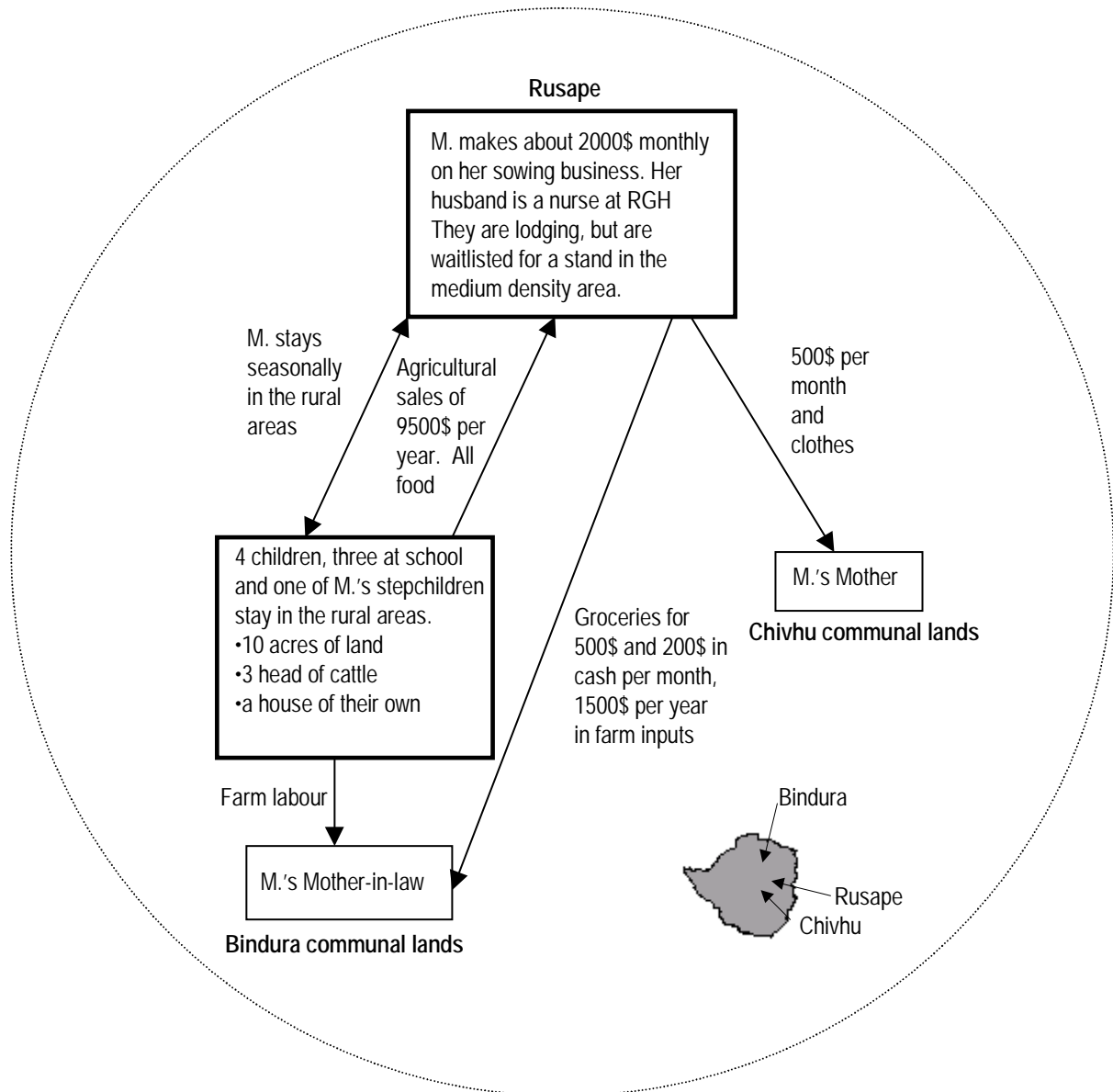
While it must be stressed that rural networks often had support of relatives as their primary purpose, a secondary effect is to keep certain places open in the event of urban hardship. Although many (mainly male) migrants had cultural expectations to fulfil in relation to the support of rural members of the extended family, such support also enables withdrawal to the rural home upon for example unemployment, as suggested by Makoni and Kujinga (2000:54). This role of the rural home is also stressed by Ferguson (1999) and Potts (1997), while the significance of land tenure, and land ownership to the possibilities of rural return migration is noted by for instance Andrae (1992) with respect to the Nigerian towns of Kano and Kaduna.

The strength of rural linkages and the extent to which the urban migrant could in fact be said to be engaged in activities which straddle both spheres of production and reproduction varied to a very large degree among my respondents, however, and was not only dependent upon rural land ownership, but also upon a number of other factors. The most strongly embedded respondents within the rural sphere of production and reproduction were those migrants who had members of their immediate, nuclear family in the rural areas, some land of their own, a house and at times cattle, and who also supported co-resident members of the extended family.

In this context Margaret (Fig. 9.5) represents a migrant who has consciously sought to increase her viability in both these economic spheres, albeit perhaps as much for cultural as for economic reasons. Having lived in Rusape since 1993, Margaret, a former teacher at a Rusape Technical College, resigned after two years of employment because of the low salary, and decided instead to develop the family's land in Bindura. Today she stays there on a

seasonal basis and has turned their rural home into a viable small-scale business, while she also runs a sewing business in Rusape.

Fig. 9.5: Margaret's system of links and assets



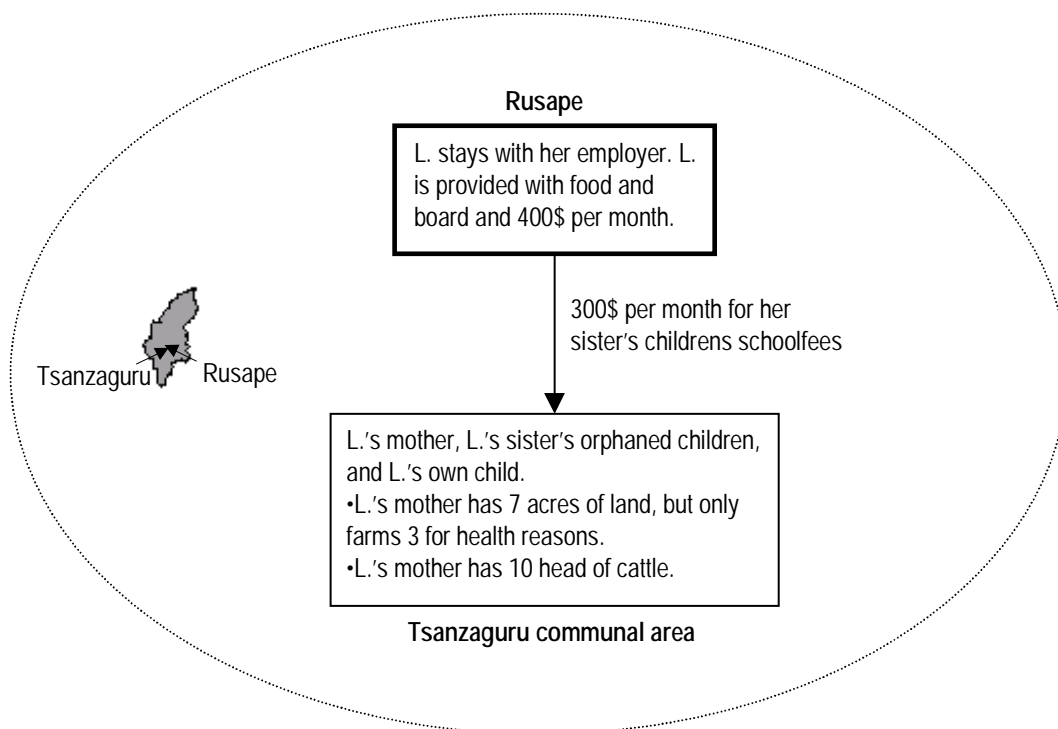
The bold rectangles delineate the respondent's household. In this case household assets, and the nuclear household itself are divided between Bindura communal lands and Rusape. A house girl looks after Margaret's children when Margaret herself is not staying in the rural areas. Flows of cash, labour, and goods are detailed through the arrows connecting the urban household with households which are part of the wider household system (indicated by fine rectangles). The wider household system is indicated by the ellipse. RGH is an abbreviation for Rusape General Hospital.

While this kind of seasonal migration on the part of both female migrants and male migrants' wives was relatively common, support of rural members of the extended family, most commonly parents or grandparents, was the most frequently mentioned way of maintaining and consolidating rural links. Even the most (economically) vulnerable migrants remitted at least small amounts of money, suggesting both the strong cultural aspects of urban remittances, but also the sheer dependency upon such transactions on the part of rural relatives.

Lucy's (Fig. 9.6) situation evidences this dependence upon urban remittances, while it also hints at how house girls especially are virtually "locked" into employment to be able to continue their support of rural household members. Lucy was a single mother in her early twenties who left Tsanzaguru, a rural area about 30 kms from Rusape, in January of 2000. She had stayed with her mother for two years on their homestead, helping her to farm, while looking for a job as a nurse aid in Tsanzaguru. As she failed to find a job, she decided to leave, since life was "getting tougher" and she wanted to support herself. After a month in Rusape, during which she stayed with her maternal aunt, her aunt found her a job as a house girl. Out of the Z\$400 she makes each month, she sends her mother Z\$300 to help support her child, her mother, and her deceased sister's two orphaned children. Her mother, although she owns a relatively large plot of 7 acres, was only able to cultivate three of these because of a heart complaint. Lucy's story does not relate whether her mother receives remittances from other family members. Nonetheless, it illustrates the predicament of house girls who remit most of their income to rural family members, and also the problems associated with supporting orphaned grandchildren.

Remittances to relatives in general and to the members of the extended family residing in the rural areas, have a very obvious role in most migrants' accounts. In the literature, rural linkages and school fees especially, are thought to be those expenses which the urban poor are the least prepared to discontinue (Mwanza 1999:27). Nonetheless, it is simplistic to assume that urban residents who do not support rural relatives are necessarily the poorest of the poor. In some cases, although very much exceptions to the general rule, there is little need for support, simply because rural (or other) relatives are living relatively well. This produces the paradoxical situation of the less well placed in the urban economy occasionally remitting more than the wealthier. Arguably, the responsibility for the welfare of a large number of extended family members is a mixed blessing in this context, as this occasionally prevents investment in the migrant's own urban (and rural existence). Not only economic considerations are significant in this context, however. One respondent explained her favourable perception of Rusape as being based on its distance from her husband's rural home, which meant that there "are few relatives here who give me problems."

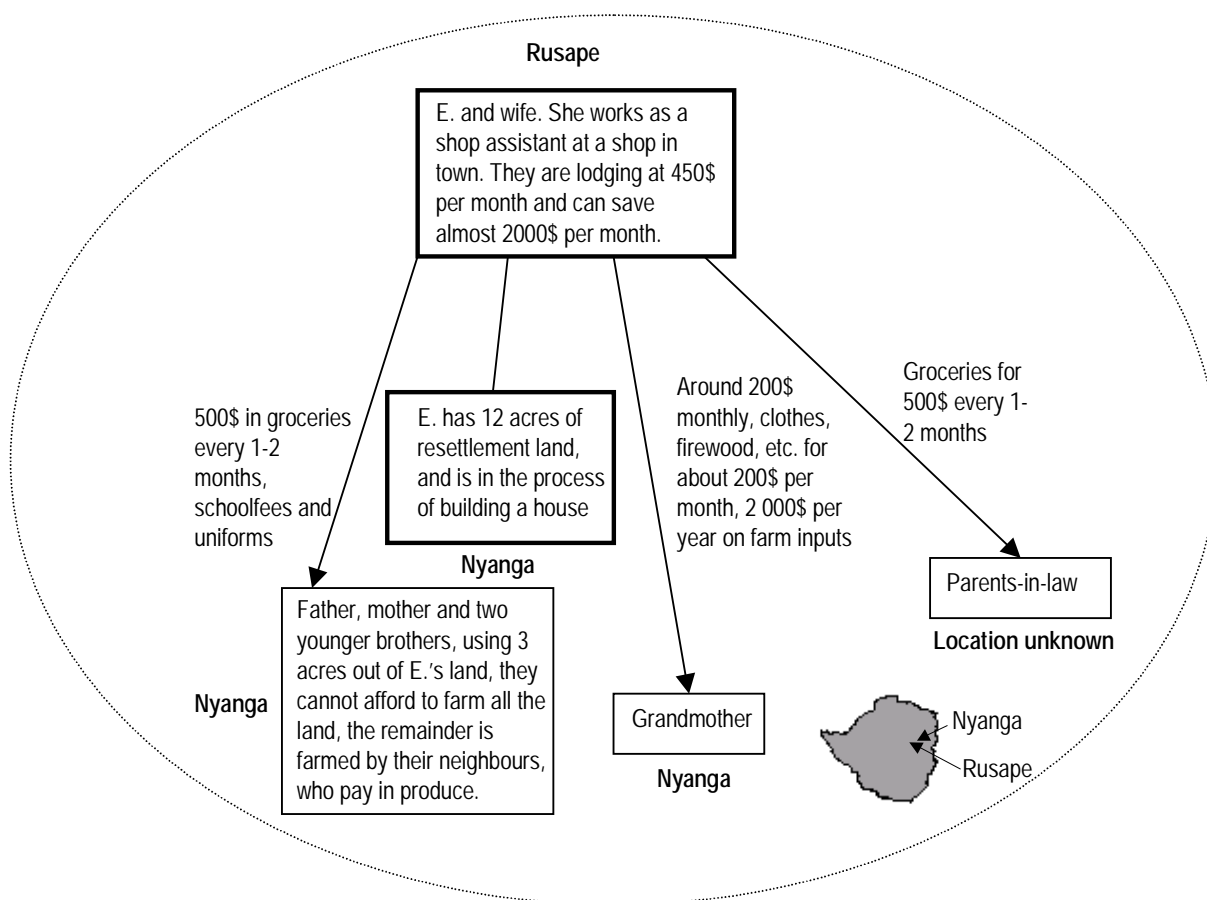
Fig. 9.6: Lucy's support network



The bold rectangle delineates the respondent's urban household. Flows of cash, labour, and goods are detailed through the arrows connecting the urban household with a household which is part of the wider household system (indicated by a fine rectangle). The wider household system is indicated by the ellipse. The map used to denote the location of Rusape and Tsanzaguru is a map of Makoni District.

While remittances to rural areas serve to support rural relatives and also to keep relations with the rural area intact in the event of urban hardship, they do also undermine the possibility of avoiding such hardship by investing in urban safety nets. Smit (1998) notes a similar tendency with respect to urban housing in Durban, where "income that would otherwise be available for investment in urban housing is sent to the rural home to support relatives there" (p. 86). In other instances the support of rural kinfolk defers investment in rural agriculture, as the case of Elliot (Fig. 9.7), an employee with a parastatal, suggests. The support of a multitude of kin, both by marriage and birth, meant that he could not afford to build a house in town.

Fig. 9.7: Elliot's support network



The bold rectangles delineate the respondent's household. In this case Elliot has assets in Rusape as well as in the Nyanga resettlement area. Flows of cash, labour, and goods are detailed through the arrows connecting the urban household with households (indicated by fine rectangles) which are part of the wider household system. The wider household system is indicated by the ellipse.

Those well placed within the urban economy, therefore tend to have the most extensive (and the most expensive) support networks. This situation, however, is hardly surprising, being a result of traditional obligations in combination with the high under- and unemployment levels characterising Zimbabwean society today.

This in effect means that a wage worker supports multiple members of the extended family, resulting in what some authors argue is a form of state abuse of the extended family unit to replace service functions which the state is no longer providing (Rwezaura et al. (1995)). In this sense, the informalization of service provisioning, as a consequence of structural adjustment policies, is shifting the reproductive burden of labour onto the household. Meanwhile, the financially debilitating role of socio-economic obligations is noted by Ocholla-Ayayo (1997) and by Findley (1997), who argues that:

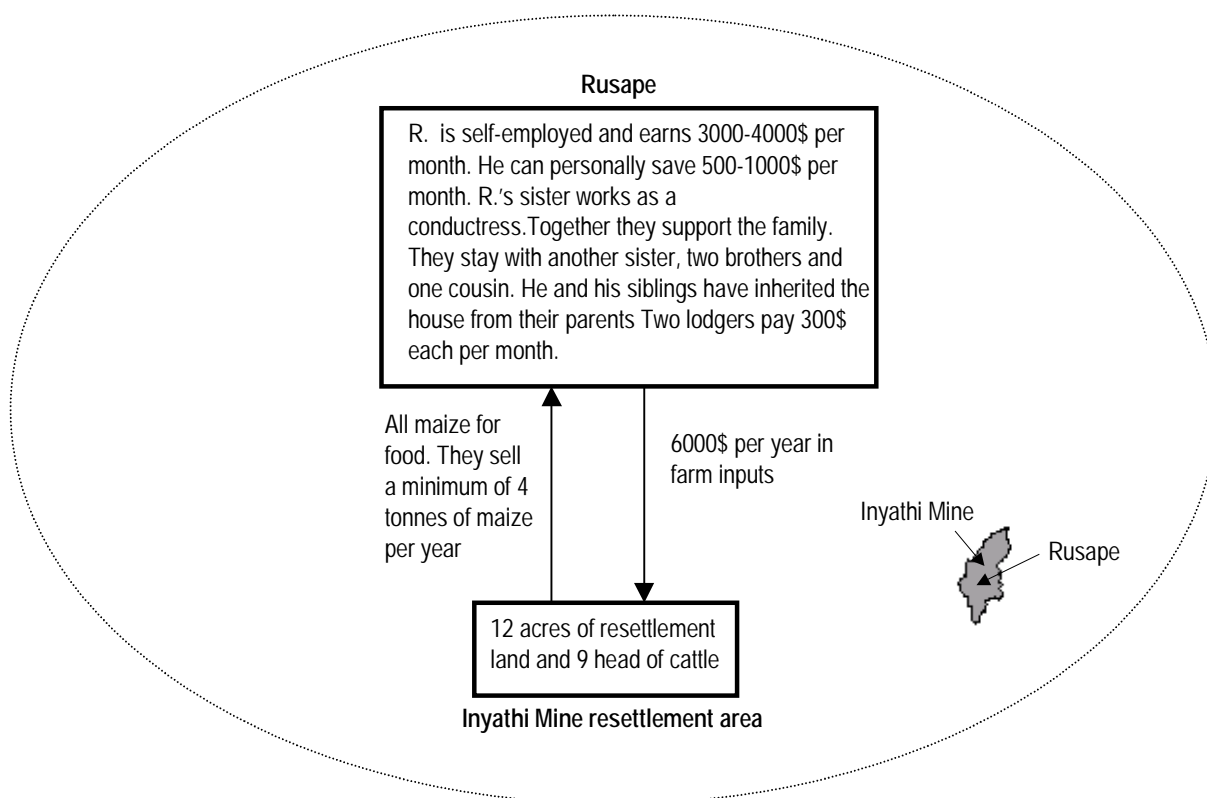
Extended family obligations can become burdensome to the migrant. When a migrant in the city does earn a regular salary, his or her family obligations have a way of expanding to encompass the entire salary. Family members who feel they have a claim on migrants call on them for help, and they may not feel able to refuse. Thus, even though the migrant earns a significant amount, he or she may save or remit very little. In fact, migrants may even be forced to go into debt to meet their urban expenses (Franqueville, 1987) (p. 120).

In this context, Roitman's (1990) slightly romantic view of straddling between the formal and the informal sector, as a process whereby : "One foot is firmly planted in the market while one rests comfortably outside; two relations of production define one person" (p. 685), can surely be queried. By analogy, the question is whether feet are really placed "firmly" and "comfortably" in either the rural or urban sectors, for the majority of both urban and rural dwellers in Zimbabwe today.

Balancing the rural and the urban

In this respect, it is hardly surprising that those who are most inclined to turn rural linkages to their urban advantage, are those who are not obliged to support a large number of relatives and those who are able to straddle both spheres of production while not being financially responsible for a large extended family. Raymond (Fig. 9.8) is a young (24 years old) respondent who is consolidating his position within the urban economy, primarily through the construction of another house (in addition to the one which he and his siblings have inherited from their parents) in Rusape, while relying on food supplies and to some extent proceeds from the sale of agricultural goods produced in the rural areas. Meanwhile, the low number of dependants he is expected to support means that he is able to invest in both the rural and urban spheres of the economy.

Fig. 9.8: Raymond's support network and assets



The bold rectangles delineate the respondent's household. In Raymond's case assets are found both in Rusape and in Inyathi Mine resettlement area. Flows of cash, labour, and goods are detailed through the arrows connecting the urban and rural components of the household. The wider household system is indicated by the ellipse. The wider household system in this case only includes Raymond and his immediate family in Rusape.

Nonetheless, the relationship between the number of dependants and socio-economic success in both the urban and rural spheres of production and reproduction is not straightforward, just as the relationship between land ownership and consolidation of urban financial status is not a simple one. Moreover, success within the urban economy does not necessarily necessitate rural land ownership in the short run at least, and in some cases a large number of rural dependants inhibits the achievement of relative urban prosperity.

Rural linkages as exit options

In this sense, rural linkages apart from their traditional role as financial obligations to extended family members, serve as an exit option for the urban migrant in the event of urban hardship, rather than a means of investment in rural assets. Preserving rural links effectively means that at least the rural

home is available as a place of temporary refuge or long-term subsistence. This notion of the family as a source of refuge is suggested by Adepoju and Mbugua (1997:43) in the face of unemployment and other types of social and economic upheavals:

The family has also become an economic refuge for unemployed members – especially for the increasing number of jobless young people – in the absence of alternative state arrangements. For divorced and widowed women, the family also acts as an emotional and economic refuge, when as such women are disinherited by husband's kin in societies where the concept of "community property" – which would enable wives to share the wealth of the marriage – is non-existent (p. 43).

Seeking refuge within the family is however not necessarily a straightforward process, as my respondents suggested. Complications in this context include simply not having a rural home, and to the extent that such a rural home existed, not having nurtured one's links with rural relatives. Ferguson (1999) in the context of Zambia, provides an illuminating description of the conditions for rural return migration:

Moving to a rural area entailed a kind of day of reckoning, a tallying of the ledger of social debts and credits that had built up over the years. The decision of where people would go was largely about to whom they could go, and what treatment they could expect when they got there. It was at this point that what I have called the social and cultural "compliance" of urban workers with the demands and expectations of a wider social nexus was most acutely put to the test, and it was at this point that noncompliant urban workers were most vulnerable to the resentments and sanctions of their rural kin (p. 128).

Thus, even a temporary escape to the rural areas requires not only a rural home, but also long-term investment in rural relationships, a physical possibility of refuge, such as a house, and a means of subsistence. As suggested above, a good number of respondents lacked a rural home, while an additional three or four informants stated that they refrained from visiting their rural home, or using their land as they were involved in conflicts with their relatives in the rural areas. The lack of a rural home was in some cases connected with foreign background, predominantly of Malawian or Mozambican origin, occasionally meaning landlessness in the Zimbabwean

context, while in many more cases it was the result of widowhood or divorce depriving mainly women of rural land.

The kind of spatial insurance policy visualised above, in this rural context, excludes a large segment of the urban population a priori, as suggested by the case of Joyce, a young widow who came to Rusape to escape from an arranged marriage in 1998. Today she is trading in the beer hall while trying to support her child who stays with her former parents-in-law in a nearby rural area, which she herself left to avoid being married to one of her deceased husband's brothers. Although she likes staying in Rusape since life is comparatively cheap, she notes that paraffin is now becoming more expensive, and prices are rising and that she has no options if life was to become harder. She regarded her uncles in the rural areas of Mutare as a closed option as she said it was "difficult growing up with them". Joyce perceived that she was stranded in Rusape. Joyce's position in terms of rural escape routes is obviously limited, and this perception of being stranded in town is echoed by other migrants who felt they could not return to their rural homes.

The extent to which the remainder of my respondents felt that such rural refuge was possible can be surmised from their discussions on my hypothetical query of what they would do "if things were to get tough". This question was posed in the light of rural return migration which authors such as Potts with Mutambirwa (1998) had identified both in Zimbabwe and internationally in the wake of economic restructuring and rising unemployment. Rural areas in this context, were described as something of a safety valve. This perception was prevalent also among respondents who lacked a rural home, and in some cases rural land was a desirable asset also for those relatively well placed within the urban economy, as suggested by Esther, a widow in her fifties who came from Harare to Rusape in 1976. Since 1984 she had been working full time as a domestic worker for an English family in town who paid her reasonably well, while she also ran a profitable wedding cake and flower arranging business. Her network was widespread, occasionally encompassing even the international scale, with a daughter who was preparing to return to the UK to engage in nursing. Although she intended to stay in Rusape for the rest of her life, had a piece of urban agricultural land in town, and was also preparing for her future in town by constructing a house, the perception of rural land as an exit option was ingrained in her intention to purchase land in the future. Although she would have liked to have had a piece of rural land, her main aim at the time of the interview was to put her son through university, and she suggested that after having achieved this goal, she would ask her children to purchase a plot for her in the rural areas. This perception of the rural home as a safety valve was to a large extent corroborated by many of my respondents who viewed a relocation to their rural home as a very obvious strategy for escaping urban hardship. Many

migrants had moreover, used their rural homes as places of temporary refuge in the past.

In view of the widespread phenomenon of urban to rural (return) migration, however, those migrants who *did not* conceive of their rural homes as the obvious solution in the face of unemployment or other urban misfortunes, are perhaps more interesting. As noted above, many respondents simply lacked a rural home, but among those who claimed to have a rural home (and in many cases land in their rural home), a number of migrants did not consider withdrawing to the rural areas as an option. The most obvious explanation for a group of wealthier respondents was that they were successful enough to withstand urban hardship for some time, while their optimistic expectations of the future harboured few intimations of prospective hardship. One such example is provided by Thomas, a young, well-educated and enterprising electrician, who had managed to reap the benefits of the building boom in and around Rusape and who argued that only short-term, and easily manageable hardship was likely to occur.

Another reason occasionally mentioned for shunning return migration to the rural areas, had to do with perceptions of urbanity, and by comparison the dislike of rural life. This was not always connected with affluence, however, but had more to do with a view of farming as laborious and the rural areas as undeveloped and dirty. As one respondent suggested: “Most of the teachers who are working in the rural areas are moving in and buying houses to attain an acceptable living standard with furniture, etc. In the rural areas there is no electricity.”

In some cases, therefore, the move to an urban area was considered something of an evolutionary social step, and one which they would only unwillingly reverse. Likewise, such urbanity also presented the possibility of distancing oneself from demanding relatives. Barbara (Case 9.1), a woman in her thirties typified this independence-seeking quest for an urban life, away from her mother-in-law and the hard work associated with rural life.

Case 9.1: Barbara

She came to a communal area under Rusape to stay with her mother-in-law when she was married. Her husband was studying at the Teacher’s College in Gweru and has since become a teacher. At the time, however her husband was not working so Barbara wanted to be supported by her mother-in-law, although she was not actually asked to move to the communal areas by her mother-in-law. She stayed with her mother-in-law for eight years, and by this time her husband had begun working and was supporting her and his mother as well. They left her mother-in-law and came to stay here in Rusape in 1999, as they wanted what she described as a “change of place”. They chose Rusape rather than the rural areas so that they could find a stand to build a house on and they were waitlisted for a stand in the high density areas at the time of the interview, although they were still presently lodging. Rusape was also

chosen as the town is located near her husband's communal area. Barbara enjoyed staying in Rusape since she described town life as much "better" than life in the rural areas – "you have to work harder in the rural areas". She imagined she would stay in Rusape for the rest of her life, especially as she and her husband were hoping to buy a stand to build a house. If things were to get tough, she suggested that she would trade, something which she was already doing on a seasonal basis.

In other cases, conflicts with rural relatives or a lack of capital for the purchase of farm inputs, left respondents with a feeling of being stranded. One respondent, Sarah, had moved to Rusape with her husband as he needed treatment at the district hospital in town, and had in the process left a very successful resettlement farming venture behind. After his death she was unable to return to her rural area, as she had not farmed for the two years preceding the interview, while she lacked the capital to purchase inputs for the farm. She survived in Rusape through rents from a house she owned in Harare, and was effectively trapped between the rural and the urban, rather than straddling the two spheres. Perhaps even more indicative of the predicament faced by those lacking assets within the urban economy and whose rural links offer no prospect of refuge as a result of conflicts with relatives, is the case of Joyce referred to above. The respondent was unable to return to her uncles in Marange, outside Mutare as "it was difficult growing up with her uncles", while her late husband's brothers were trying to force her into an arranged marriage in the rural area where her child was staying with her former parents-in-law.

The role of rural linkages as security valves was thus prominent among my respondents, but nonetheless, not as all-encompassing as Ferguson (1999) suggests for Kitwe on the Zambian Copperbelt where rural relatives are described as exercising significant power over their urban kin through a variety of means, such as "ostracism, gossip, withholding of aid when in need, sorcery and sorcery accusation, burning down of houses, and even – in some accounts – assault and murder" (pp.116-117). In this sense, the monetary engagement in rural relations, argues Ferguson (1999) may be a matter of extortion on the part of rural kin, rather than voluntary urban assistance. Indeed, a (urban) style of "localism" which "signifies a micro-political economic attachment to rural allies" (p.110) was noted among his respondents as a cultural expression of the influence exerted by rural relatives.

In the case of Zimbabwe, in general, however, the possibility of rural retirement (and hence the reliance upon rural kin also in the long run) may be less forthcoming than in Zambia, where Ferguson (1999) claims that land was easily available to his respondents. Among my respondents, the perception of rural linkages as exit options was grounded instead in a view of rural homes and relatives as essentially temporary destinations of spatial relocation in the event of urban hardship. Indeed, many had used their rural homes as temporary refuges in the past, and did not as in cases reported by Pottier

(1988:43) from Mbala, a small town in Zambia, view their migration to Rusape as a stepping-stone to rural return migration. Although migration was often framed by a general desire to be *close* to a rural home outside Rusape, none of my respondents suggested that their move to Rusape was part of wider plans of returning all the way home, although some respondents expressed a desire to eventually retire in their rural home.

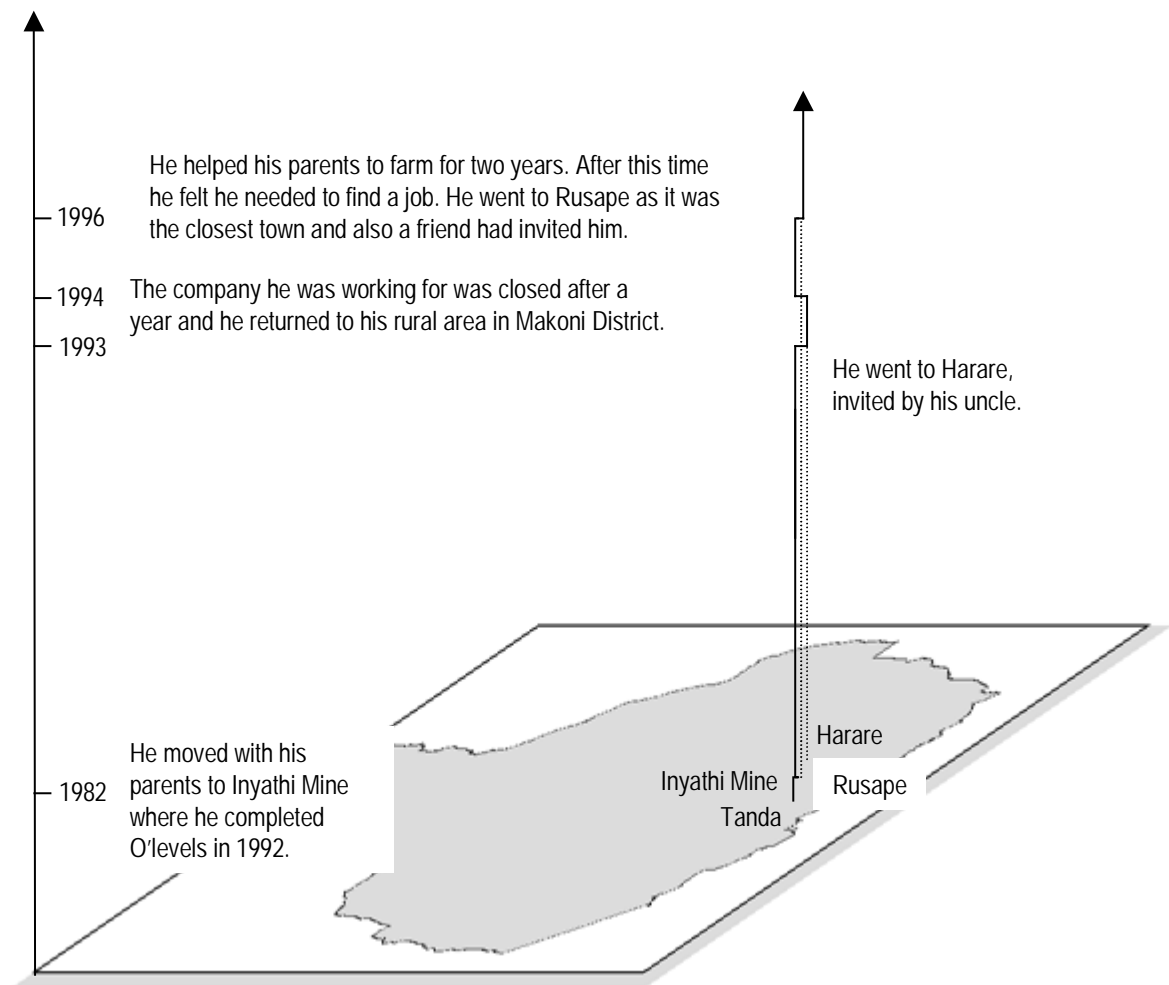
The case of Gift (Fig. 9.9), a builder in his mid-30s, presented below, is typical of the way in which especially male migrants, more subjected to the vagaries of the formal labour market than their female counterparts, use their rural homes to counter urban insecurity. Female rural mobility is also related to shrinking livelihoods, especially through divorce or widowhood, but is more indirectly connected with the formal labour market, through their husband's employment or unemployment.

Gift's life course is intimately connected with employment possibilities, as his life history suggests, and although he planned to stay in Rusape for the remainder of his life, his links with the rural areas are firmly entrenched through his (nuclear) family in the village as well as a house, and part of family resettlement land.

Thus, rural areas were mainly viewed as sources of *temporary* refuge, and occasionally voluntary retirement and not as suggested by Ferguson (1999) for Kitwe in Zambia, permanent, and largely involuntary exile from a coveted urban existence upon unemployment or old age. Given the great similarities between Zambia in the 1970s and Zimbabwe at present, the dependence on rural links may conceivably be enhanced by a plummeting urban economy, however.

In an economy where urban remittances to rural areas are the most important source of rural socio-economic differentiation, it is hardly surprising that the most important links are of an urban-urban nature. Although rural areas can provide temporary refuge, respondents frequently stressed both the desire to remain in an urban area, and the necessity of securing (urban) employment. This is connected with the input-intensive nature of Zimbabwean small-scale agriculture, and a general monetisation of the rural economy, as well as the introduction under ESAP of user-charges on most basic rural services, such as healthcare and education. In migrants' past, urban linkages had frequently been resorted to as a means of navigating the economic landscape in search of urban livelihood opportunities.

Fig. 9.9: Gift's migration history



The figure covers Gift's migration history mainly from when he left his rural area. He was born in 1967 and left Tanda communal area in Makoni District at the age of fifteen. The figure is not to scale.

Urban income diversification, emigration and urban-urban links

The question of course remains as to which exit options, (involving either mobility or stationary activity) those who are lacking a rural home, or those who are unable to resort to rural solutions, can engage in? Engaging in trade either in Rusape or on farms and in communal lands surrounding the town, was the most obvious stationary solution suggested by above all female informants. In many cases, respondents suggested that if life was to become harder, they would simply do “nothing”, in practice, however, this might not

be a viable option, and petty trading with vegetables given its low barriers to entry appears to be the most readily available way of responding to urban hardship for women.

With respect to male migrants, a number of respondents mentioned diversifying sources of income already at this stage of their lives, and a few informants suggested that engaging in informal sector business, especially in view of its lacking taxation, would be a viable means of easing urban economic pressure. Repairing electrical goods was suggested as a lucrative source of supplementary earnings by Lovemore, a man in his early thirties, who was engaged in improving his livelihood options in anticipation of further hardship, despite being employed in a relatively well-paid and stable manner already at present. For as he explained, he was preparing for “things to get tougher by studying electronics” to acquire enough knowledge to start his own business, which he felt would be viable even during harder times.

For those who were less optimistic about finding alternative sources of income in Rusape itself, emigration was often mentioned, especially by male respondents, as a strategy which could be resorted to in the face of urban hardship. Emigration of (mainly well-educated) Zimbabweans to South Africa has been noted in the literature by Gaidzanwa (1999) for instance. South Africa having lost some of its favour, Botswana and Mozambique were felt to offer the brightest prospects among my respondents, however. Prospective emigration was often linked to family members living in these places who were thought to be able to provide assistance upon arrival. Mozambique especially was perceived as a country which was fast developing, and those migrants who were of Mozambican descent often expressed a desire to return to their parents’ place of birth. Emigration, however, involved relying upon a network of relatives and friends.

In the case of inter-urban mobility within Zimbabwe, urban-to-urban networks were also highly relevant, and many respondents had a history of circulating between urban areas and urban relatives. In this sense, the extended household is in some cases spread over urban space in addition to the conventional emphasis on the dual household operating in both rural and urban spheres of production and reproduction. The reliance upon networks of relatives and friends in other urban areas is especially apparent among the unemployed and the single, such as Charles (Case 9.2), a twenty four year old male respondent who was, and had been for some years, supported by his brothers. Unable to find employment, the interviewee had recently moved to Rusape in the hope of securing a job, and to live with his sisters-in-law.

Case 9.2: Charles

Charles arrived in Harare in 1989, where he stayed until 1998. He completed his O’levels in 1994. After he had completed school he was “just seated” for two years, during which time his brothers were supporting him. He failed to find employment

during this time and he was not involved in trading or self-employment either, nor was he working for his brothers. In 1996, his brothers told him that they could now afford to send him to college. One brother works as a teacher and one as an administrator. He was at college for two years doing book-keeping and finished college in 1998. Since then he had been “seated”. He had been looking for jobs but he was failing to find employment. He arrived in Rusape in January 2000. His brothers had built a house in town as they felt that stands were easier to secure in smaller towns and that towns like Rusape offered better living conditions in general. Charles had moved to Rusape to stay with his sisters-in-law while his brothers were working in Harare. Charles had hoped to find a job in Rusape as he felt it would be easier to find employment in a smaller town with a less competitive job market. Up to the time of the interview in August of 2000, Charles had, however, been unsuccessful in this respect, and suggested that perhaps he needed to move to another town to secure a job, or that he should engage in self-employment. His brothers were however supporting him and he stayed in their house along with his two sisters-in-law and their children. This was Charles’ sole source of income, and he suggested that if things were to get tougher he could always count on being supported by his elder brothers who were also supporting their mother.

In the case of female respondents, this kind of mobile existence, whereby the respondent moves from one relative to another, is often connected with caring for elderly or ailing relatives, or providing childcare for members of the extended family. The reproductive roles of women are therefore not only being transferred to the market in terms of informal sector activities, but are also used to motivate migration between family members needing assistance. Tekla (Case 9.3), a woman in her early twenties, had for some time been moving between various urban areas to assist relatives with different tasks. An only child, with apparent financial resources, Tekla was preparing to rewrite her O’levels while staying with her mother in Rusape, and saw no reason for leaving unless she managed to secure a place to train as nurse or an opportunity to leave for the UK.

Case 9.3: Tekla

Tekla lived in Harare until 1991, when she moved to Hwedza (a district neighbouring Makoni District) to attend boarding school. She completed her O’levels in 1993 and at the end of the year returned to her father in Harare where she stayed from 1994 to 1997. During this time her father was essentially supporting her although she played netball for KG 6, an army camp and was paid a symbolic amount of money for this. Tekla was hoping to eventually be recruited as a soldier. In 1997, however, she moved instead to Chiredzi a town in the south-east of the country, to look after her cousin’s children while his wife was attending a course in nursing in the UK. In 1999 her cousin, who was working for a sugar mill, was transferred to Mutare, Manicaland’s provincial capital, to work for a paper mill, so

she went with him. She stayed there from August 1999 to February 2000. Her cousin and his children then moved to the UK to join his wife, and Tekla moved to Rusape to stay with her mother. At the time of the interview she was preparing to rewrite two O'levels. Her mother who worked as a cross-boarder trader was supporting her, and Tekla had no income of her own. Tekla felt that her mother had no problems in supporting her, and she imagined that she would stay in town for as long she could as her mother was able to provide her with everything she needed. If she managed to find a job outside Rusape she said that she would not hesitate to leave. Her eventual aim was to become a nurse, preferably in the UK, but she needed to be qualified in science and in mathematics at O'level to be able to pursue this goal.

In these cases, the respondents have relatives who can afford to pay for their keep. Indeed, access to urban networks and urban sources of support appear to be a more obvious source of socio-economic differentiation than do rural networks or land ownership. The constraints presented by Zimbabwean land policy, and a general trend of de-agrarianisation even within rural areas, as noted by Berkvens (1997) for instance, as well as the importance of urban remittances to rural agriculture as a differentiating mechanism, support this notion.

The ability to circulate between urban areas and relatives who have a firm foothold within the urban (formal) economy, rather than between the small town and the rural home, is a clear advantage with respect to a more long-term kind of spatial insurance policy. Whereas access to a rural home offers refuge of some sort, the income earning opportunities in the rural areas are more constrained than within the urban spheres of the economy. The pinball analogy suggested above, whereby the migrant moves rapidly from one urban area to another, requires the existence of an urban network which can be navigated by the prospective migrant. Those who are able to combine the possibility of rural refuge (and perhaps even income earning through lucrative rural agriculture) with a well-functioning and widespread urban network of friends and relatives, while themselves being initially well placed within the urban economy, are clearly advantaged.

Obtaining a secure existence within the urban economy, moreover is obviously related to assets, especially empowering resources such as education, and the highly tangible asset which urban property ownership represents. A differentiation of types of linkages is thus relevant. The ownership of residential property in *other* urban areas provides a very literal source of refuge and a stable income less dependent on the goodwill and good fortune of urban relatives than cash remittances for instance.

Consider the case of Kudzai, who not only belonged to the category of migrants who most obviously were able to reap the benefits of life in Rusape, but also had a web of well developed urban and rural networks which he could rely on, while his high level of education paradoxically enabled him and his family to remain *stationary*. Kudzai was a secondary school teacher in his

early thirties who was married to another teacher. Having moved to Rusape in 1996 to escape the hardships of Harare, the family was waitlisted for a house in the medium density area. Although they were no longer able to save as substantially as they used to, Kudzai and his wife were nonetheless able to exercise the kind of “geographical solidarity” described by Massey (1995), through investing in the housing market in Rusape, while reaping the benefits of living in a place characterised by low living costs.

Mobility, therefore, is both enabling and constraining, depending on the measure of choice which the migrant exercises over his or her own mobility. The ability to remain stationary requires investment in certain urban assets, while those who lack options are constrained in their mobility towards other areas, as signified by the often used expression by the elderly and the widowed that they have nowhere else to go. Meanwhile, the influx of migrants from other urban areas in particular, runs the risk of inflating the price of urban property and rental charges in Rusape, possibly resulting in a displacement of long-term residents, or at least a further marginalisation of the weaker socio-economic segments of the urban population.

Vaa (1996) suggests similar fears among residents in Bamako’s informal settlements upon the formalization of deeds. The notion that traders from Mutare are displacing local vegetable vendors and traders of second-hand clothes, as suggested in media coverage is a further case in point. A perception among numerous migrants, as well as the Housing Director, that outsiders are purchasing residential property in Rusape affirms the notion that better placed and more recent migrants are establishing themselves in the town. This in turn produces a paradoxical situation where those most in need of exit options, to escape rising urban living costs and shrinking informal employment opportunities, are grounded by their very lack of such options. Among my respondents, the more affluent meanwhile through inroads made in above all urban property ownership, have little need for the kind of spatial insurance policy suggested above.

Perceived length of future residence in Rusape

The expression of permanence vis a vis the informants’ mobility to Rusape, is therefore highly connected with present or future urban property ownership in conjunction with the existence of exit options. Such sentiments were often expressed by respondents when explaining their intention to remain in Rusape. On the one hand, the ownership of an urban home provided an explanation for wishing to remain in town, while the lack of a rural home or relatives in other urban areas was accompanied by a shrug and the slightly defeatist observation that “I have nowhere else to go”.

Table 9.3: Residential property access among respondents

Type of access to property	Females	Males	Total
Ownership	24	21	45
In the process of building house	3	1	4
Waitlisted for purchase of stand	7	17	24
Lodging	26	26	52
Employer provided housing	3	1	4
Staying with relatives	10	6	16
Total	73	72*	145

**Two male respondents were recorded twice, as they owned a house and were also waitlisted for purchase of a stand. Those respondents who were lodging/renting and waitlisted were recorded as only waitlisted.*

The desire for a future in Rusape often takes the form of investments in residential property. This is in keeping with Peil's (1995) observation on retirement migration to Mutare as connected with home ownership, for as she argues "control over property both facilitates and symbolises commitment to a place" (p. 158). As suggested by Table 9.3, roughly half of the respondents could be described as planning to invest or having invested in housing in Rusape. While many respondents allegedly intended to spend their entire lives in Rusape, and therefore expressly aspired to urban home ownership status, others realised that the expenses associated with purchasing an urban residence could never be met, given their present, and in many cases also perceived future, financial situation. Yet, other respondents were transitory residents and for various reasons therefore had no desire to purchase a house in town.

Meanwhile, the status of home ownership, while arguably a form of security against poverty and a potential for income earning both in terms of actual rents and with respect to the possibility for engaging in economic activities from home, is however, not straightforwardly connected with socio-economic well being. In the *PASS report* (1997) covering Zimbabwe, a majority of house owners in the urban areas were in fact classified as belonging to the very poor (as opposed to poor, and non poor) category, something which led the authors of the survey to conclude that rental tenure was in fact connected with the ability to pay rent. The literature and my own findings suggest that home ownership in the case of the urban poor is often connected with longstanding rent-to-buy arrangements from the local authority, and thus is a question of having entered the housing market at a stage when it was still relatively easy to penetrate. These kinds of households would under present market conditions have been excluded from acquiring their own housing. Home ownership, despite the advantages it provides is therefore not necessarily linked to a high or even reasonable level of income. For this reason, also, most of the elderly who had purchased their housing on rent-to-buy agreements from the local authority, typically commented on their limited options in other places, while also stressing the positive aspects of

owning a house in town. Bearing this in mind, many home owners were in fact among the poorer respondents in my sample. Poverty in such cases is in large measure connected with age, widowhood and the responsibility for many young dependant grandchildren, largely the result of the HIV/Aids pandemic. Clearly, respondents such as these have little choice both with respect to mobility or their lives as stationary residents of Rusape. The connection between income, and the predominant view of urban property ownership as an undeniable asset is therefore questionable with regards to long-term owner tenants.

Prospective home owners, or recent home owners, given the rising cost of constructing or purchasing a house, in contrast were found only among the more affluent respondents. Many respondents who aspired to a future in Rusape therefore stressed the significance of purchasing a home. One respondent, Daniel, who lacks a rural home, has a clear view of the connection between home ownership and these kind of long-term plans, where the building of a house in Rusape, was perceived as one of the major goals in his life in large measure related to a future in Rusape, which he described as his “new home”

Just as perceptions of a long-term future in Rusape are intimately connected with home ownership, the deliberate decision not to build a house in town are stressed by those respondents who view their residence in Rusape as more transitory. Given the many perceived advantages of life in Rusape among the large majority of respondents, the more interesting cases are perhaps those of the minority, i.e. those informants who stressed the disadvantages of Rusape, and their intention to remain in town only for a short period of time.³⁸ Again, such considerations are intertwined with the migrant’s ability to negotiate the different levels of the settlement hierarchy as well as the space economy as a whole. As suggested above, mobility requires exit options, as well as resources of other kinds, such as education and capital, but mobility per se does not guarantee a higher level of living standard.

In this vein, different groups of migrants stated their deliberate intentions to leave Rusape at some stage, the exact intended duration of residence varying greatly. A large number of female migrants were especially keen to remark on the expenses associated with urban life, and the benefits of (re)locating to the rural areas for farming purposes. In most cases such mobility was to be undertaken by the migrant herself, and possibly her children, provided that they were not already living in the rural areas with their grandparents, and leaving a husband in town. In some cases, respondents expressed an intention to return to their rural homes upon the completion of their children’s education often in many years time. Many migrants, both male

³⁸ It should be stressed, however, that many respondents indicated their intentions to remain in town with uncertain references such as ‘for a long time’, or until ‘things beyond my control give me reason to do otherwise’.

and female, argued that they would stay in Rusape as long as they were working or trading, and would upon unemployment return to their rural homes. Others who were at present unemployed suggested that they would give Rusape a few months and then move to another urban area in search of brighter employment prospects. For many migrants living in Rusape was very much related to employment.

Connected also with employment concerns were informal sector entrepreneurs who engaged in a deliberate strategy of exploiting local markets and, having exhausted the opportunities presented by the market in Rusape, were intent on moving on. As Christine's (Case 9.4) story suggests, business concerns required mobility for some respondents.

Case 9.4: Christine

Christine and her husband who is a brick-moulder, moved to Rusape from a nearby smaller urban area. Her husband employed about ten people, and the turnover from the business varied from Z\$5000 to Z\$10 000 per month to as much as Z\$50 000 per month. Christine estimated her husband's personal income to between Z\$10 000 and Z\$15 000 per month. At the time of the interview Christine and her husband were lodging, but she expected them to be able to build their own house in Chiduku communal area, in Makoni District, where their rural home was located, sometime during 2001. They were not planning on building a house in Rusape, and she estimated that they would stay in town for three or four years, since her husband's business would require a "change of place". Christine imagined that they would then move to Marondera, where she felt that "more people are building houses".

For the well-educated, Rusape was felt to offer little in terms of further education or professional opportunities. One respondent, a police officer who had initially chosen to be posted to Rusape as it provided the double advantage of inexpensive housing and both rural and urban policing experience, now felt that the limited opportunities for undertaking computer courses was a major reason for requesting a transfer to Harare. Other respondents, mainly of urban background, often made similar statements regarding the limited attraction of the town, relating its small size, its dirtiness, its lacking entertainment opportunities and generally inadequate "development".

Nonetheless, the contrast between those seeking refuge in rural areas because of the expenses associated even with life in a low cost place such as Rusape, and sentiments expressed by those who had an opportunity of moving on and who viewed Rusape as dirty and undeveloped is striking. The ability to leave certain places and access others, or indeed the ability to remain in places, is in this sense highly stratified. The deliberate negotiation of the settlement hierarchy is an activity available to only the select few who are able to reap the pros of adjustment, while dodging the cons.

9.4 Conclusion

Among my respondents, negotiating the settlement hierarchy and navigating between and among different places, both rural and urban, was intimately connected with where relatives were residing, and where a living could be secured. In this sense, extended family networks are important determinants of mobility patterns.

Meanwhile, it is also important to differentiate between various kinds of links and rural and urban assets. The rural area presented an exit option for those willing or needing to leave the urban sphere of production and reproduction, provided certain conditions, such as having invested in rural relationships, having access to rural land, and possibly also housing, could be met.

Urban links, meanwhile, in terms of money at least, were found primarily among the unemployed, the underpaid and the elderly, who were in need of support. Thus, access to different kinds of remittances (and by extension linkages), depends very much on one's position in terms of need within the family web of support. Real assets are found primarily within those niches of the economy which can provide a source of cash, niches which in turn are found predominantly within the urban economy.

Again, the theme of exclusion suggested throughout this thesis, is relevant to the fortunes of the urban poor, who may be experiencing a two way kind of exclusion. Being in practice expelled from the rural, while being internally displaced within the urban, the marginalised have few other places to negotiate. In this sense, the access to places in itself is a factor of stratification.

10 Summary and Conclusions

10.1 Conceptual framework and methodology

Globally sweeping winds of liberalisation are transforming societies and economies in the countries both of the North and the South. In Sub-Saharan Africa, as elsewhere in the less developed world, structural adjustment policies, and stabilisation measures promulgated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have been the major policy instruments used to diffuse these winds. States in these countries, as the structuralist argument would have it, have been forced into co-operation with these global actors through the execution of economic agendas intended to liberalise internal and external markets, linking the global with the local in the interests of free trade and enterprise. Measures, which in the long run will, it is suggested both by these institutions and governments, lend countries access to global markets, stimulate economic growth and in the long run at least produce poverty alleviation at the local level.

In the short run, however, effects on poverty have been all but promising, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, where margins among the poor to begin with were slim to say the least. At the local level, rising rural inequities and concentration of resources in both rural and urban areas, rather than economic growth, have followed the introduction of adjustment policies. The Aids pandemic and adjustment along with the generally deteriorating economic conditions which have followed in its wake, have had effects on lower income (and indeed middle income) households that have been particularly devastating.

Nonetheless, significant portions of society have also benefited from the opportunities created by structural adjustment policies. On the whole though, the social and economic changes characterising Zimbabwean society in the past decade and a half have been detrimental to the majority of people's livelihoods.

This study attempts to trace the effects of these global processes of economic liberalisation on mobility within the national space economy of Zimbabwe. The focus has been on the small town, a focus justified by the rapid growth of such centres all over the African continent, as well as by a neglect in the literature of the causes behind the mobility to lower level urban centres in Zimbabwe, and indeed in Sub-Saharan Africa in general.

The argument has been advanced that the effects of structural adjustment, alongside the dramatic consequences of the Aids pandemic, are producing a situation in which households are experiencing significant challenges to their livelihoods. The study of such challenges require that the conceptual tools available for the analysis of migration in general, and mobility to small towns in particular are redefined. I have argued that mobility in general, under conditions of socio-economic hardship needs to be perceived less in terms of household income diversification, and more as flexible responses to increasingly constrained livelihoods. The inability to support a large number of relatives (be they rural or urban) in the wake of structural adjustment, as well as shrinking economic opportunities in general, affects the way in which relations within the extended family can be used to guide mobility. This situation also suggests a paradox, on the one hand the growing inability to maintain linkages to relatives and on the other the heightened reliance upon wider kin networks in the case of economic hardship.

Meanwhile, small and intermediate sized towns are clearly growing both in Zimbabwe and in other African countries. The sizeable literature on small towns and rural development has little explanation to offer in respect of such growth, however. Conceptual clarification may instead be sought among theoretical frameworks on the construction of social and economic space, found in Massey's (1993, 1995) and Harvey's (1982, 2000) work for instance.

A recognition of the exogenous, structural logic of mobility, alongside a study of the internal operations of the household, and individual motivations for mobility, represents a fruitful wedding of many theoretical approaches. Such a conceptual synthesis would be an apt way of capturing the multi-faceted nature of migration in Sub-Saharan Africa under structural adjustment, without risking the derogation of the actor. Thus, theoretically there is a need to revert to a recognition of the very real structural parameters of mobility in most of Sub-Saharan Africa in the structural adjustment era. The notion of individual strategies is also an important reminder of not only how people view themselves, but perhaps also of the necessity of engaging in individual decision making under such economic conditions. Thus, individual decision making needs to be placed in social and cultural context, and as structurationist approaches suggest, framed by an interplay between agency and structure. While there is a need for a renewed perspective on migration in the context of current structural changes, the case of Zimbabwe provides an interesting angle on small town mobility. Being a society in which the pre-

independence creation of the migrant labour system still influences the strong linkages between rural and urban spheres of production and reproduction, Zimbabwe is in many respects different from other Sub-Saharan countries. Likewise, until recently, male employment has been largely formalised, also a legacy of the colonial era, which makes Zimbabwe quite remarkable in a general African context. In this sense, small town mobility in Zimbabwe needs to be placed within the wider historical context of mobility in Southern Rhodesia and the changes which independence and structural adjustment have brought to the structural parameters of Zimbabwean economy and society.

With this conceptual and empirical background in mind, my research interests have focused on three inter-related questions. Firstly, the wider structural features of Zimbabwean mobility were considered as an explanatory framework for the current increase in mobility directed towards small towns. Secondly, what the small town has to offer in the context of rising prices, falling wages, massive (formal) unemployment and a generally harsh social and economic climate was explored. The focus in this context is thus on the small town itself. Thirdly, how households and individuals use their mobility to cushion the effects of structural changes, through spreading the household system over space, and the ways in which investments in people and places are used to guide mobility were examined. This mobility is related to the settlement hierarchy through the search for places where the ills of adjustment policies can be avoided or where opportunities created by such policies can be exploited.

My contention is that mobility in the context of economic hardship is stratified through the ability of migrants to exit, enter and stay in places. In this sense, the small town represents a possibility for realising (or maintaining) a higher quality of life for the select few, while it offers the prospect of refuge from high metropolitan living costs, and an escape from rural hardship for the majority of migrants.

This argument is advanced through the application of a number of methodological approaches. A literature review of mobility in Southern Rhodesia situates migration processes temporally, while it also provides an overview of the historical connection between mobility and livelihoods. This discussion is carried into contemporary Zimbabwe on the basis of a synthesis of the massive literature on Zimbabwe's experiences of structural adjustment, and the more limited material on post-independent migration. The study assembles a picture of the link between livelihoods and mobility in both colonial and independent Zimbabwe from a number of disparate and varied sources. This in turn sets the empirical stage for my interest in small town growth. The study of mobility to small towns, and the exploration of the wider aspects of livelihoods found within small and intermediate sized towns remains long overdue. Most Zimbabwean migration literature tends instead to focus mainly on Harare.

Semi-structured interviews with 143 migrants to the rapidly growing, small town of Rusape (c. 26 000 inhabitants) in Eastern Zimbabwe, alongside interviews with local and central government officials, and informants on local historical developments, as well as archival sources such as Town Council housing records, and numerous government reports and press material have been used to inform my view of the process of small town growth. Guided by many practical considerations of interviewing under time pressure and in a politically volatile climate, this methodology nonetheless has the advantage of relying on a number of diverse and hence unconnected sources of information. These sources have moreover been analysed in relation to the secondary literature on Zimbabwean and wider African experiences in the separate chapters.

10.2 Results

I see my contribution as consisting of the empirical documentation and assessment of assumptions common in the literature as applied to the contemporary economic reality in Zimbabwe. The structural advantages of a small town like Rusape were evident with respect to a number of aspects of provisioning, aspects that had also influenced many migrants' decision to move to Rusape. In comparison with larger urban areas like Harare, my respondents perceived a small town to offer many benefits. This was also reflected in the residential background of the sample of migrants, among whom as many as two-thirds had previously lived in a larger urban area at some stage of their lives.

Lower living costs, especially related to housing and transportation, were important advantages connected with small town life. The sheer availability of rental housing, as well as investment possibilities centred on the low price of residential properties and town land, were important considerations of mobility in respondents' narratives. The small size of Rusape likewise posed significant advantages, as local transport could in many instances be entirely avoided. The difficulties associated with metropolitan life were moreover suggested by much evidence from local newspapers and surveys of the housing and transportation sectors in Harare, which established the expensiveness and substandard quality of these services.

Another favourable source of provisioning in a small town (*vis à vis* larger urban centres) was related to urban food security. The ability to engage in urban agriculture on Town Council land was an important aspect of livelihoods in Rusape, especially to the marginals of the urban economy. In Harare, the literature reports that this avenue of provisioning was effectively blocked among residents who had no access to plots. Urban development on City Council land and relatively harsh local policies were found to restrict the

opportunities for urban cultivation. In Rusape, the Town Council in contrast exercised a relatively lenient stance towards urban cultivators. A second source of food was rural cultivation in rural homes surrounding Rusape, or food remittances from rural relatives resident in these homes. In this sense both the size of the town and its character as a relatively “undeveloped” urban area alongside its location provided a number of advantages to my respondents.

Similar arguments were forwarded by my interviewees to characterise the perceived advantages of Rusape in terms of employment. The diseconomy of larger urban areas with respect to formal employment was dwelled upon by respondents who argued that jobs were difficult to secure and wages were low, especially in Harare. The high formal unemployment rates for Harare and Bulawayo seem to support this notion. Similarly, within informal trading, the markets found in larger urban areas were perceived to be saturated. Again, the relatively low level of economic development of Rusape was felt to be an asset.

Within the context of structural adjustment, therefore, a small town like Rusape offered numerous beneficial aspects of provisioning vis à vis larger urban areas, as well as with respect to the rural areas where income earning opportunities were perceived as more constrained, and living was regarded as more difficult. In this sense, the small town represented an urban alternative which was relatively inexpensive. Although advantageous circumstances of provisioning were to be expected in the small town, much of the literature on migration in Sub-Saharan Africa tends to assume that mobility is primarily directed from rural areas to large, often primate, cities. Following the introduction of SAPs, rural-return migration from metropolitan areas to rural homes, has been singled out as *the* expression of mobility in the wake of economic hardship. In this way, the downward link from cities to smaller and intermediate sized towns has not been recorded yet. The motivations behind such mobility, although logically credible, have not been documented previously.

The expectation of relying on rural homes in the case of urban hardship was pronounced in Rusape, but nonetheless was also a matter of former “investment” in rural links while the possibility of returning to the rural areas was also perceived to be conditioned by physical and economic parameters in the rural areas, such as access to housing and land. The usefulness of rural linkages thus varied with access to rural assets as well as the ability of rural relatives to support returning family members. Similar limitations apply also to urban mobility, and the possibility of accessing urban places. Access to formally employed, well-paid relatives in urban areas appeared to be links of a more useful kind than rural linkages in general.

Mobility in migrants’ pasts had been governed by the location of relatives in urban and rural places, but did not generally come across as a strategy of

dispersal of household labour as has been suggested by much of the theoretical literature on new household economics. Indeed, the stresses to the household as a livelihood unit suggested in the conceptual framework were apparent among my respondents. Much more fluid, individual considerations had instead guided their mobility, although aspects of gender, age and marital status were relevant with regards to the extent of individual decision making. The household operated not as a strategic arrangement for labour dispersal, but rather as a spatialised social security system in which contributions were directed towards the most needy, generally the elderly, those incapacitated by disease, the unemployed and the orphaned. Nonetheless, linkages to both rural and urban areas were important indicators of past mobility and future exit options.

In sum therefore, my aim has been to position a number of global processes, primarily the dynamics of structural adjustment policies, their effects on livelihoods and the ways in which mobility to a lower level urban centre is used to counteract economic hardship. I have attempted to place the migrant within his or her local, urban, household and the various sources of livelihood within as well as outside the town, but also within the wider, spatially dispersed network of rural and urban linkages in terms of assets and remittances in cash and kind.

10.3 Issues of further study

It is important to remember, however, that also within “low cost options” such as Rusape, provisioning will in itself be stratified. This has not been the subject of my study, but would be an interesting subject for further research.

To what extent one is able to enter or engage in the economic activities of a town like Rusape is related to both social and economic resources, both in the town itself, but also within one’s more widely dispersed network of friends and relations. The most obvious difference in my study was perhaps between those who were deliberately investing in housing in Rusape to strengthen their hold within the urban sphere of the economy and those respondents who had moved to town on the basis of a vague anticipation of cheap rented accommodation.

To most respondents, however, Rusape was clearly advantageous as a livelihood base vis à vis many other urban areas, and indeed also the rural home. The monetisation of the economy to some extent makes an urban income a necessity. The small town in this sense, does indeed offer the best of both worlds! The proximity to the rural areas, and a relatively high degree of urban food security as a result, combined with the possibility of engaging in urban income earning, while avoiding the high costs and practical ills of larger

urban areas, such as expensive housing and deficient urban transportation, were important advantages of living in Rusape.

The exclusionary tendencies suggested in terms of housing and urban agriculture in the study, merit a few reflections, more relevant to the future than the present, however. Firstly, if urban places like Rusape are perceived to be receiving migrants who cannot afford to enter, or who fail to subsist, in large, metropolitan areas, but who can for the time being exist in a place like Rusape, what will happen when they can no longer do this? Presumably this will result in return migration to a rural area, provided the respondent has a rural home and a means of subsistence in the rural areas. If, on the other hand, as suggested by the case of a fair number of my respondents, a rural area is lacking, or for some other reason inaccessible, this poses a very important question of both spatial and “survival” character. What will happen when the beneficial aspects of provisioning found in urban areas, such as Rusape, have been “exhausted”? Where will people go? Will they be able to go anywhere else? Are there smaller towns which offer the same benefits as Rusape?

Secondly, exclusionary tendencies were indeed making themselves known in numerous aspects of urban subsistence also in Rusape, which taken together might undermine the ability of low-income, marginalised households to provide for themselves. Within the housing market, rising rents consequent upon higher demand for rental housing is one obvious clue to future exclusion. The construction of additional housing (itself the subject of investment on the part of enterprising individuals and households) moreover lays claims on town land which has been or is currently used for urban cultivation among both poorer and wealthier households. Income-earning options are also becoming progressively constrained, as suggested by the testimonials of many of the self-employed vendors whom I interviewed. The widespread occurrence of self-employed traders who had left larger urban areas upon market saturation in these places, to explore the relatively unexploited prospects in Rusape, suggests that eventually such prospects will also be exhausted for the majority of traders.

Meanwhile, negotiating space is also about the kind of places one is able to access. The literature suggests the pivotal role of urban remittances in rural areas. For this reason, access to urban areas, either indirectly through urban relatives or more straightforwardly through engaging in the urban economy oneself, is a decisive stratifying factor of rural life. Nonetheless, for urban residents, like my respondents, the ability to rely on relatives outside the immediate household, both in Rusape itself, and in other urban areas, was also a primary mechanism of differentiation. For urbanites, a rural escape route might be the last resort, but a network of relatively well-situated urban relatives was a much more important source of economic advantage and a means of harnessing the more or less temporary possibilities found at the different levels of the settlement hierarchy. For this reason the differentiation

between people in terms of access to places is also made all the more obvious as urban areas are increasingly placed beyond the means of the rural poor. Exclusion from the urban to the rural is one such outcome, exclusion *within* the urban, for those who have no means of leaving, is a last resort devoid of choice for the very marginalised.

Bearing this in mind, a study of the mechanisms behind “internal displacement” and reactions, in terms of mobility, to the rapid growth of a town like Rusape would be an interesting subject for further study. When do diseconomies of scale begin to characterise a small town? What are the responses in terms of migration in the face of such developments? Is exclusion from the urban to the rural actually an outcome? How is internal exclusion expressed?

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