

Chapter 35

Access to Housing in Urban and Rural Zimbabwe: Historical Observations on the Nuclear Family¹

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The Geographical Setting and Current Scope of the Problem

Harare is the capital city of Zimbabwe, and since the 1950s, when it was called Salisbury, the capital of Rhodesia, has been the largest city in the country—the center of industry and government. The population has never ceased growing, experiencing a higher level of population growth during the Liberation war (1965–1980), as many people migrated for security reasons. After Independence in 1980, the population has continued to grow with an increase in the number of women and children coming to stay in the city. About 64% of the country's population lives in the three largest urban areas of the country (Vakil, 1991). Most of this African population live in what are called "high-density areas," located for the most part on the periphery of one side of the city. Harare itself is an extremely spread-out urban area, the product of ninety years of suburban growth, and poor use-planning of urban "open spaces." The other side of Harare is the low-density suburbs, a euphemism for the previous all-white suburbs from the pre-Independence period. This area, often with minimum one-acre stands, security walls, and night-security guards, takes up the majority of urban residential land area. It is also where Harare has achieved the dubious honor as the city with the greatest density of swimming pools in the world (Vakil, 1991).

In contrast to the rich side of town, the population in the high-density areas are confronted with a growing population density due primarily to the increased reliance on the lodger system both for revenue, and, for many, the only available housing alternative. Harare does not have extensive squatter settlements in the peri-urban areas and those that have been built are subject to harassment, eventual forced removal and relocation either to farm land or to the high-density areas.² Because of the continued "vigilance" against squatter areas, the lodger system and overcrowding of existing housing in the high-density areas hide the true proportions of inadequate provision of housing for the majority of the urban population. Of Harare's population in 1982, at the time of the last census, an estimated 15% are made up of women-headed households, of which more are self-identified as such in the middle- and higher-income groups than in the poorer population.³ This low percentage reflects the historical prevalence and preference for "single" male labor in the urban economy, as well as the inability of census data to enumerate the higher number of poor women who do not fit neatly into nuclear family categories. In Zimbabwe, unlike in South Africa, even domestic service jobs

remain dominated by men. The current estimates of population are that 70% of Zimbabwe's women live in the rural areas; approximately 30% of peasant families operate on a "split-family survival strategy," and 40% of all farming is done principally by women. (Herald, 1992; Potts and Mutambirwa, 1990).

Unintended consequences of the Government's pre-Independence promises, and the post-Independence view of "housing as a social right," led to the further entrenchment of the existing prevalence of male dominance in access to urban housing. The policy to make all municipality-owned housing in the high-density areas open to home ownership by the sitting tenants offered an immediate solution to demands for access to home ownership. This solution, however, also removed the great majority of the existing housing stock from municipal control, therefore limiting the state's ability to provide accommodation to women (Schlyter, 1989, p.192). Even the existing single-sex hostels were transformed into family housing at Independence, which placed further emphasis on the recognition of the nuclear family to obtain access to these one-room "flats."

Beyond the existing stock at the time of Independence, newly constructed residential housing has been far less than promised and anticipated. The new housing that has been legally built has been primarily of the self-help core housing type, which necessitates individual capital. For this reason, such new housing has been predominantly built and occupied by male workers who have access to capital through their employers, informal employment, or extended family. Such access is not officially or legally restricted to men. As Ann Schlyter's recent study has shown, women are able to succeed in these new areas of residential development, but their numbers are relatively few (Schlyter, 1989, p.195). For poorer women with children the main form of accommodation in the urban areas remains lodging—often in small one-room shacks built on the stands of existing houses in the high-density area. Rents range from approximately \$40 to \$100 dollars per month, which is often one-half or more of the tenants' monthly income. Recent demolition of "illegal" lodger structures in Epworth reportedly included one area consisting of over 400 one-room shacks, dubbed the "Epworth Sheraton," which was occupied almost exclusively by women tenants all paying rent to one landlord.⁴ Although racial and sex discrimination in housing has been officially removed since Independence, numerous problems and limitations remain, reflected in class and gender differences in access to housing.

The next section will examine the historical precedents specific to housing policies, which have been partially responsible for the continued emphasis on married housing and the nuclear family unit.

Accommodation for the Urban African Population: The Colonial City and the African Worker

From its origins in 1890, colonial Harare's population was always more African than European, but the settlers chose to deny Black Africans permanent resident status in the city. The dominant idea was that while Africans could come into the city as workers, they should never become residents. This attitude was challenged by the reality of a growing European demand for African domestics, and from a growing industrial and service economy entirely reliant on African laborers for unskilled and some skilled labor.

After World War II, job opportunities for African men increased and the African population more than doubled in the first five-year period. Lack of accommodation for single male workers as well as married workers caused the state to attempt legislation to force industrial employers to provide resources for housing their workers. In an attempt to avoid "slum" conditions, the state and municipality took responsibility for building and supervising such housing. While providing access to housing, the colonial state went to great lengths to control urban residential space. African occupancy was limited to municipal or government-built townships, and then only for male workers who could prove employment, and to African women who could prove marriage and/or employment. At the same time, the state attempted further to regulate the lives of African men and women living in the city. Pass laws were more strictly enforced, and marriage was promoted among the African working classes by subsidizing rents for married housing with the rents paid by employers to house single men living in hostels. Frequent raids in the Township were carried out by the municipal police to evict women without proof of marriage (Mnyanda, 1954).

The early expressions of the frustrations caused by such measures were voiced through the Reformed Industrial and Commercial Worker's Union, which owed a large part of its existence to township and housing issues. The example given by Julius Mpageni, of the African Waiters Association, at an August, 1949, meeting of the Union, points to the untenable living situations reached by this stage:

[he] told the meeting of an African who was arrested for trespassing on European property in town. At the Court this African was told that he had no right on that property and he must go to the Location. The African went to the Location and was given a house to share with three others. The wife of this African came along, and she lived with him in a spare room. The Location Police then raided and found the married woman in the spare room, she was not registered and was arrested for vagrancy, even though she was living with her husband.⁵

Such harassments, and the recounting of them, along with frustrations caused by the increasingly high cost of living in the city, were key grievances used by nationalists in the urban areas to organize workers' opposition to white rule.

Stability and Labor Efficiency

In the period of rapid industrial expansion following World War II, particularly that of tobacco processing in Harare, women's labor also became sought after. The most influential lobbyist of European industrial and reform groups, the National Joint Council, organized the Government in 1951 to investigate the further expansion of employment opportunities for women. The Joint Council's observations on the role of women in the urban economy reflect the more general tendencies to view Africans first as production inputs:

It appears that the majority of African women living in the locations or Townships, unlike those living in the Reserves, have little with which to occupy themselves and from this aspect alone it appears that employment of some kind would be beneficial.... There are objections to the employment in industry of married women with home responsibilities. It would be an advantage if married women in the Locations could be trained in some profitable home craft which they could use in their homes and would bring in some money.... Employers on the whole appear to think that repetitive work done by women and girls compares very favorably with that of the African male and that they could be employed in great numbers and in a greater variety of jobs.⁶

The investigation that followed revealed, among other things, that the majority of employers hiring women in the early 1950s preferred to hire the wives of workers already working in town, as such women already had secured accommodation in the married section. This meant the employer did not have to worry about finding accommodation, while at the same time limiting options for women who were not married and seeking employment (NNLB, 1952). Such hiring practices placed

further emphasis on the nuclear family model for African working-class housing.

African Elite Demands for Married Housing

An unintended consequence of previous European attempts to "rationalize" urban and peri-urban space along racial lines was to confine Africans from diverse backgrounds and classes within the same limited space and style of housing (Vambe, 1976; Mnyanda, 1954). A cross-section of educated clerks, government workers, teachers, etc.—the elite of the male African population—were forced during the period after 1945 to share accommodations with newly arrived male migrants coming to work in Harare's burgeoning unskilled labor market. These educated single men were indignant about having to live "cheek by jowl," with the uneducated, and demanded better housing away from the existing African Townships. Married elites were demanding as well that their wives and children should not have to be exposed to the moral degradation of the Township, and therefore a new African elite neighborhood should be created. J. Z. Savanhu reported that some in the African middle class argued they "would help to produce racial harmony. Unfortunately, it was general among Europeans to regard Africans as belonging to one class." He described the African middle class as "frustrated and hemmed in by government laws and municipal by-laws." Savanhu recommended creating "a separate area contiguous to the present location," where middle-class Africans could buy land and set an example for the other Africans. He stressed this was not

segregation from one's people, but the middle class African has a better sense of hygiene, cleanliness and culture. For these extra amenities they are prepared to pay.... The middle class did not wish complete separation from their own people. They wished to combine the best of their own traditions and customs with the best of Western Culture and civilization (Savanhu, 1953).

African elites used the productivist arguments of greater stability and performance to further their demands for better accommodation in the urban areas, and specifically for security of tenure in the urban areas. Such demands from the African elite eventually coalesced with the state's goal to provide a more stable African residential area based on married family life, as opposed to the existing location which was dominated by male-only single-sex hostels. The new African suburbs were built in the mid-1950s, with the largest being New Highfield.

The 1950s, therefore, saw an official emphasis on “properly married” nuclear families in the African residential areas. This ideal community materialized, to a large extent, as women and men settled down to a lifestyle which afforded them unprecedented opportunities to create the model home and model nuclear family. But beneath this idyllic image of suburban bliss—often enough showcased by the colonial government to the outside world—remained hidden a myriad of familial and social relations which betrayed European and African notions of the nuclear family.

Mapoto Wives: The Antithesis of Respectability

Both the colonial authorities and the African elites shared an antipathy to a living arrangement that was seen to threaten the moral fiber and the stability and productivity of the African male worker: *mapoto* wives (literally wives with pots)—an informal relationship in which single women traded domestic work and sex for access to housing and/or income. Women who entered such relationships were different from prostitutes, although in commentary by African men and women little distinction is made between *mapoto* and prostitution. Views expressed in the African press in the mid-1940s express the victimization attributed to women who lived outside of the narrow range of acceptable marriage relationships:

I would like to air my disgust at the woman who lives as a *mapoto* wife. To me, she is wicked, and such people are responsible for the lack of development in our country. The single young man in the city is losing direction because of such women. If he gets paid at the end of the month, the wicked woman takes the money and does not leave him enough to buy clothes, thus rendering him a strolling beggar.⁷

Women's views were seldom expressed through the media, but when they were, men responded overwhelmingly negatively, as above. One letter from a single woman living in the African Location in 1944 asked “What shall we do?” as their white employers did not provide accommodation for single women, and in the location “there are standing regulations that forbid home-ownership for women.”⁸

The actual prohibition against single women living in the African location went back to the “Natives Registration Act of 1936.” The Act was passed to “safeguard native society, especially in regard to its women kind,” through attempts at greater interventions by the state to

control relationships between men and women. The Secretary for “Native Affairs” in 1937 outlined the purpose of this control to the municipal officials:

In regard to the difficult question of Native sexual life, there can be no doubt that we must aim at the elimination of immorality. Regarding the women, sometimes loosely termed “concubines” [*mapoto* wives], who have formed alliances with men, but have not married, gradual pressure should be brought by the Location Superintendents to the end that the parties shall either marry by civilized rites, or see that their union is in accord with native custom, and register it. The Location Superintendent should not issue passes to women who indulge in a succession of merely temporary unions.⁹

For the state, the letter goes on, the ideal is that the worker with permanent employment should marry. For the temporary worker, however, “it is not thought that sexual intercourse is a necessity for young bachelors ... if facilities are provided for games and recreation.”¹⁰ Obviously, such sentiments were not shared by the young bachelors, as interviews with men who lived in hostels and women who lived with relatives reveal elaborate and numerous ways for men and women to have had relationships. Besides prostitution and male homosexual relationships inside the hostels, the *mapoto* arrangement was the most prevalent.

Interviews with women who were single and living in town prior to the 1950s reveal that becoming a *mapoto* wife was a common alternative for women, especially for those who had been divorced or abandoned. There was a respectable form of *mapoto* relationship, in which the man, if he was “morally decent,” would first go to the woman's rural area and visit her parents, even if he was unable to afford *lobolo*.¹¹ Many such relations developed between *mapoto* wives and men from outside Zimbabwe. The men were unwilling to enter into a “proper marriage” in Zimbabwe, having left a wife in their home country.

Accommodation, however, was difficult for *mapoto* wives and their husbands. They could not participate in the married accommodation scheme easily, although many were able either to bribe or to trick the municipality's allocation officials. For the most part they would live with married relatives, outside the city in the peri-urban areas, or on nearby commercial farms. Relations were often strained for *mapoto* wives living with married couples, as the *mapoto* husband was looked down upon by the other man, and the *mapoto*

wife was seen as a constant danger because she might seduce the properly married husband.¹² The availability of mapoto wives on nearby commercial farms was encouraged by the European farm owners who had a difficult time attracting farm labor, competing as they were with better paying industrial work in the city. One man, originally from Malawi, told how he left a job with the municipality after 20 years (1940s–1950s) to go live and work on the nearby Beatrice Farm because of mapoto wives. He explained the relationship between hostel men and mapoto wives:

To visit women, we would go to the cottages, go where the lady stayed, we could visit the lady, but she wasn't allowed to visit us. I used to go to Old Bricks [section of the Location] for women. I used to have mapoto wives. Mapoto wasn't a girlfriend. They would stay with the babies. Men would say the children were not theirs; the parents, anyway, would not let the men take the babies as they hadn't paid *lobolo*. I so many children that way. Back then, Men with no wives were known as soldiers. I himself never lived in a cottage but went from the Hostel to Beatrice Farm. On Beatrice Farm I was able to build my own hut, that was when I got a mapoto wife. In the Hostels, women were not allowed; if you had an affair, you had to do the things outside.¹³

Such stories make it clear that the municipality was to some extent able to limit women without proper marriage certificates from occupying legal housing in town, and through harassment made illegal occupation of housing difficult. At the same time, some women were able to manipulate the municipal authorities and gain access to married housing, as were men with unregistered marriages.¹⁴ For those mapoto wives unable to gain access to legal housing, or to have relatives to live with, the alternative was to live illegally in the house with her husband (and usually other men) and to run when the police came searching for marriage certificates.¹⁵

Women who lived through this period in the Townships often give an alternative interpretation why the Municipality forbade single women from occupying housing. They do not talk about the "moral degradation" which was often cited by colonial and African elites. Rather, in many cases, it came down to the difficulties caused by men who fought with, and over, mapoto wives. As an example, one woman told the following story:

A woman named Sekisei, a mapoto wife, didn't come one night to visit her man, because she was proposing to another man. The next day her man showed up, asked for some

water, and when she turned her back to get it for him, he took out a knife and stabbed her many times in the back and in the front. She died. Before the police arrived the neighbors beat the man up badly.¹⁶

Not all the stories are about murder, but the violence perpetrated against mapoto wives is constantly referred to by both men and women when asked about how mapoto wives were treated. Compared with wives married with the consent of the wife's parents, and with lobolo paid, the mapoto wife was often treated worse. In a sense, their mobility was also a liability, as men often abused them physically for reasons of jealousy or spite.¹⁷

The treatment and experiences of mapoto wives contrast greatly with those of the model wife responsible for "a normal and happy family life." Living as a mapoto wife was a necessity for many women unable to fit into the life-cycle strategies of the majority of urban and rural women in Zimbabwe who became "proper wives." It is clear that colonial labor policies, and housing policies manipulated to serve labor efficiency, helped to foster the growth and maintenance of the mapoto system. Such policies were also responsible, in large part, for the precarious and difficult existence many such women faced living in the city. This situation is indicative of most African urban areas. The literature on women in some larger areas may be useful to researchers and planners (e.g., Hansen-Transbert, 1984; Bozzoli and Nkotsae, 1991).

The mapoto wives represent a minority of women in the urban areas, but they show clearly the precarious position many women were in, given the choices made concerning housing policy in the past. There are certainly other choices for married and single women than the mapoto arrangement, but the scope of this paper limits adequate discussion of such options. I have presented the previous historical sketch in the interest of emphasizing to what extent past policies have worked against equal access to shelter for women in the urban areas. These inequalities continue, contributing in many ways, among predominantly poor women to a bevy of social and health problems for women and their children.

Life Outside the Nuclear Family Today

The lack of a coherent housing policy directed at single women, or more specifically women outside of the nuclear family, continues a legacy of dependence and violence against certain groups of women and their

children. Perhaps the most desperate result of a lack of policy, and the subsequent reliance on the predatory private market of the lodger system, with its makeshift one-room wooden houses, has been the alarming rise in "baby dumping" in the urban areas such as Harare. A case can be made connecting this crisis, in which mothers abandon or kill newborn babies, to the lack of shelter alternatives for women. Many young women, living with relatives or parents in an existing urban household, become pregnant by young men of another urban household. Traditionally, the father is responsible to provide shelter for his child and the mother. When the father is unwilling or unable to meet his responsibilities, the young woman is sometimes forced out of her relatives' house. In such a case, a child may be too much of a responsibility, and such babies end up abandoned or killed.¹⁸ This example is a dramatic indication of the dilemmas facing Zimbabwe policy makers, which need to be addressed as part of a concerted effort to move away from housing based primarily on the male wage earner and nuclear family.

The majority of single women are not driven to these desperate measures, and like a number of women in the grandmother's generation, they fend for themselves and their children in a difficult and sometimes hostile environment. Due to the short supply of housing, however, even those with supportive families and boyfriends often live similarly to the *mapoto* wives of fifty years ago. The primary difference is the reliance on a private landlord system that makes it possible for young couples to cohabit, but certainly not in conditions they would choose were a choice available. Another similarity to earlier times is the continued reliance among many young men on prostitutes. Young women prostitutes are able to afford the high lodger fees charged in the existing residential areas. These women service men, often "regulars," who are young men living with their families in the same or another residential area. Just like those of the 1940s, these men are often waiting to be able to afford marrying a "proper wife," while, in the meantime, they contribute no small portion of their current income to prostitutes or girlfriends.

The problems of urban housing in Zimbabwe, as in many African countries, continue to be linked to the rural areas, where some of the same contemptuous attitudes against single women continue. The urban areas in Zimbabwe are in no way severed from the rural areas, and therefore such attitudes continue to be important when planning future policies.

Rural Attitudes toward Single Women

In the rural areas, as in the city, the predominant preference expressed among the older generation of interviewees has been toward a nuclear family norm. The same is true of the younger generation, but for them, there is also the understanding that economic and housing pressures make it difficult for everyone to realize that ideal. In the rural villages where I carried out research, older men tend to express hostility toward single women in town, referring to them as prostitutes. The presence of "loose women" is another reason to justify keeping their wives in Chikwaka.¹⁹ This view is usually expressed by men, who, on the other hand, are likely to express privately that they had affairs with such women when they were younger.

Women in Chikwaka tended to express their preference for staying in Chikwaka for economic advantages, rather than joining their husbands in town. Women in the urban survey often expressed their choices as something their husbands had decided, and therefore what they must do. In Chikwaka, the tendency was to stress the savings life in the rural areas provided for the family: no rents, self-sufficiency in certain foods, such as maize, eggs, and milk; lower school fees for the children, etc. Most of the women have spent time in Harare, often during the war for security reasons, but still argue the rural area is a better place for their families to live.²⁰ The views expressed about their husbands working in town were generally evasive, no doubt because I knew some of their husbands from town, and they wouldn't readily confide in me.

For single women, living in Chikwaka meant (and still means) living by another set of rules that restrict access to housing and land for women. First and foremost, as in the colonial city, women are denied access to land on their own. The two cases when a woman may be allowed land are those of widows or divorcees, but these decisions are left up to the male headman, who uses the arbitrary criterion of the woman's age. The reasoning behind this selection process remains one of "social peace." If a woman is "young," she would pose a threat to married couples as she "might seduce their husbands." For this reason, only women seen as mature enough to support their families were allocated stands on their own. According to some of the oldest members of the community, women rarely got access to stands unless they were living there before their husbands died or left them. This helps, in turn, to explain the added

pressures forcing urban divorced and abandoned women to stay in the urban areas.

Most of the wives of men originally from Chikwaka were brought into the village from a nearby village. They were then usually expected to live with the husband's parents for a few years, until the husband was able to establish a separate home nearby. One woman recounted how she and her husband lived in a converted granary at the husband's parents' house for the first two years after getting married, until they could afford to build their own home. Throughout the marriages the husbands would return to their homes on weekends and during annual leaves. In many ways the married couples in Chikwaka and the Highfield sample shared similar life-cycle experiences. The majority in both cases benefited from the organization of housing based primarily on the nuclear family as the most privileged group.

For those women in Chikwaka who were unable to live within the options of marriage, housing in the rural areas could present difficulties, depending primarily on the stage in the women's life-cycles. The most common difficulty is for women who choose to leave for the city before marrying in the rural areas, or for those girls who become pregnant and are chased from their homes by their fathers. In the old days, many such women would become *mapoto* wives in town. Today, the connotations from the viewpoint of much of Zimbabwean society seem to be similar to the ones applied to *mapoto* wives, even if the name is no longer current. The views expressed by older respondents in Chikwaka still hold such women and girls in contempt. Older women explained how they would, during their youth, ostracize their peers who had left for the city unmarried. They were labeled prostitutes, and very often had difficulty returning to Chikwaka, even if they returned with husbands willing to pay lobolo. Later, as women in Chikwaka married, they continued to feel contempt for such women, as they now were seen as potential seducers of their husbands working in town. In this way, the pervasive image of all unmarried women in town as prostitutes is still shared by many of both the men and women in Chikwaka villages.

The young woman who was divorced or abandoned by her husband who has already paid her lobolo was considered part of the husband's parents' family and allowed to remain living with them at their homestead.²¹ Evidence collected about the children of the men and women in the urban surveys revealed that in most cases

a divorced daughter lived in the same house with her parents. This was not the case with divorced sons, and reveals a crucial aspect of current housing options for women in Harare. It is along these lines that these rural and urban examples are also evidence of what Pauline Peters has described as:

"... certain points of vulnerability in development cycles when, given particular political economic conditions, a developmental phase of disadvantage or failure can feed into an exacerbating spiral and thence longer-term, inter-generational reproduction of disadvantage" (Peters, 1983, p. 117).

Such reproduction of disadvantage is indicative, in the Zimbabwean urban and rural evidence, of historical and present difficulties women outside of "nuclear family" units face in access to accommodation.

Conclusion

The preceding discussion has attempted to present the factors which have historically created the emphasis on the nuclear family as the fundamental category for the perception and allocation of legally sanctioned housing in both urban and rural Zimbabwe. The discussion has remained at a general level, with all the inherent problems of over-generalization and simplification of diverse human activity and strategies. The structural constraints, however, concerning access to housing for women are great. For this reason, generalizations are warranted and valid even as such evidence distorts the ability of individual women to overcome these constraints to achieve their goals. Clearly there are a number of women who have managed on their own to provide themselves and their children with urban and rural housing (Schlyter, 1989). It is, however, an achievement made difficult by prevailing attitudes in society, and by prevailing discrimination within the overall direction of state housing policies.

It has been pointed out by Ann Schlyter that gender-neutral housing regulations are not sufficient to overcome the past discrimination against women. She calls for "positive discrimination" to allow women better access in the future to housing. Another element must be incorporated into this critique. It is the need to understand how current class biases influence the future goals for housing policies in Harare. The current emphasis within government housing programs is toward what is now called "medium-density" housing as a solution to the severe shortage of middle-income housing. It is possible to see such housing as primarily

for young married couples, the children of the elite of the previous generation, who are currently forced to live with their parents either in the low-density wealthier suburbs, or in houses in high-density areas owned by their parents. The need for such housing is real enough. But the transformation of policy at a time when the housing backlog for low-income housing continues to increase reveals a choice in priorities not very different from that made in the 1950s. The colonial state, as well, in its allocation policies attempted to appease the most vocal and politically important sections of the urban African population when it opted to invest in homes to foster "a normal and happy family life." Interestingly, both the colonial government and the current government turned to foreign aid to finance such plans: the Colonial Development Corporation in the 1950s, in the interest of colonial labor efficiency and political stability, and today, USAID, in the interest of "Third World" economic and social development. In both cases, however, these interests have overlooked fundamental needs of women who are not to be found in a nuclear family unit.²²

The formation of middle and elite classes was fostered, in part, by past state policies of family housing. Attitudes towards housing and rural ties are today conditioned by such class views. The elites of the 1950s are now much in command of economic and political resources, having obtained the middle-class lifestyle they demanded. For these classes, housing continues to be a political issue, this time for their children. The elites as well are less likely to see their rural homes as a necessity beyond that of status for the family. For the poorer classes, however, of whom women are in the majority, such emphasis on housing for the nuclear family has been, and continues to be, a major and difficult hurdle to overcome as individuals and extended families struggle for urban and/or rural survival.

Notes

¹ This paper is based on primary research and observations made during 16 months' research in and around Harare, Zimbabwe, 1991–1992. Special thanks for help in preparing this paper to Rita Aggarwal.

² This process was recently carried out days before the arrival of Queen Elizabeth for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference in August 1991. For an account of squatters' strategies and organization see Bourdillon, 1991.

³ Such estimates are highly suspect, as the last census in 1982 did not count women living within households designated as having a "male head" other than their husbands. (Schlyter, 1989, p. 28).

⁴ The name is a play on the most luxurious hotel in the City Center built by the Chinese after Independence. *The Herald*, Zimbabwe, June 1991.

⁵ "RICU Meeting," 14 August 1949, Reported by Detective R. Robinson, Criminal Investigation Division, National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) S517.

⁶ Joint National Council, Race Relations Committee, "African Women and Industry," Sept. 18, 1951, NAZ S2788/19.

⁷ Letter to Editor from Edwards Sillew Zaranyika, Mangwende Reserve, Mrewa (June 21, 1944), *African Weekly* p. 5. (Translated from the Shona by Simba Handiseni.)

⁸ "Homeless Women," Letter to Editor from Sarah Shoniwa, *African Weekly*, June 7, 1944.

⁹ C. Bulluck, Secretary for Native Affairs, to Town Clerks, 1937, NAZ S482/535/39.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Interview at Machipisa Market Highfield, October 19, 1991.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Interview, Highfield, Sept. 24, 1991.

¹⁴ Interview at Machipisa Market Highfield, October 19, Survey #9, Highfield, December 4, 1991, Miss Scott, Sept. 10, 1991.

¹⁵ Survey #38.

¹⁶ Interview, Highfield, Sept. 10, 1991.

¹⁷ The "true" wife of a mapoto wife's man was also a potential and real physical threat to the woman. There are numerous references to men beating mapoto wives in the surveys and interviews. Surveys were carried out by a team of Research Assistants: Joseph Seda, Aaron Jonasi, Peter Mayavo, and Nhamho Samasuwo. See also Jeater (1990) for the complex issue of women's limited freedoms in the urban areas compared to the rural areas, and the new forms of oppression developed to meet such freedoms.

¹⁸ The connection between "baby dumping" and economic hardship is clearly seen when one compares the dramatic increase in such cases in the past two years, a period of economic hardship for the poor in urban Zimbabwe.

¹⁹ The rural interviews were carried out during a number of visits by the author in a 12-month period. The area is Chikwaka, a section of Goromonzi District some 50 kilometers east of Harare. Interviews were collected in Ndamba and Mapfumo villages, five kilometers from the main tar road between Harare, Muhrewa, Mutoko, and the Mozambican border. These areas are the most populated rural sections of Zimbabwe, and historically the source of the majority of Harare's population.

²⁰ Interviews in Ndamba Village, January 30, 1992: Mapfumo Village, February 1 and 5, 1992. The following materials were collected in these 10 interviews.

²¹ Interviews in Ndamba Village, January 30, 1992: Mapfumo Village, February 1 and 5, 1992. The following materials were collected in these 10 interviews.

²¹ Susan Jacobs' (1989, p. 166) research argues that wage labor allowed young men to be free from familial obligations derived from parents paying lobolo for his wife. This led to less responsibility for the family to look after daughter-in-laws, and for more "arbitrary behavior" and "incidence of divorce without just cause" on the part of men.

²² In the decade 1980–1990, USAID provided \$51,000,000 earmarked for housing to Zimbabwe, which was 12.2% of total aid to Zimbabwe (U.S. Embassy, 1990). Another \$50,000,000 has recently been approved.

Vambe, Lawrence, 1976, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, London: Heinemann.

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