

**No Place for 'Undesirables': The Urban Poor's Struggle for Survival in Bulawayo,
Zimbabwe, 1960-2005.**

By

Busani Mpofu

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University and some points were initially raised in my BA special honors dissertation on Bulawayo.

Signed:.....B. Mpofu.....

Date:.....07 June 2010.....

No Place for ‘Undesirables’: The Urban Poor’s Struggle for Survival in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 1960-2005.

Abstract

This thesis studies the social history of the poor in Bulawayo, the second largest city in Zimbabwe, between 1960 and 2005. This is accomplished by focusing on the housing and unemployment crises they faced and the manifest reluctance of authorities to either provide enough housing or to accept mushrooming informal housing and economic activities in response to these acute shortages. I attempt to highlight the fragility of the poor’s claim to the right to permanent urban residency emphasizing inadequate state funding and poverty and continuities in some discourses from colonial to the post colonial era as factors responsible for spreading and sustaining the discrimination against low income earners in the city. These included authorities’ perceptions that all Africans belonged to rural areas, have access to land, and that low income Africans were immoral and unclean. While these perceptions tended to be fuelled by the racial divide between whites and blacks during the colonial period, class and gender dynamics among Africans crisscrossed that racial divide.

After independence, while these perceptions were still alive, central government policy ambitions and failures were instrumental in influencing the welfare and fate of the urban masses and their relations with the former middle class Africans and nationalist leaders who assumed power in 1980. It becomes clear that there was a misunderstanding by authorities on how most of the rural land was not able to support some families because of infertility or lack of resources to successfully till the land by most some families. The overall conclusion is that poor people’s rights to permanent residency were elusive up to 2005 and their living and survival space has been continuing to shrink in the city.

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Contents

<i>Declaration</i>	ii
<i>Abstract</i>	iii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	iv
<i>Table of Contents</i>	v
<i>Detailed Table of Contents</i>	vi-vii
<i>List of Tables</i>	viii
<i>List of Maps and Figures</i>	ix
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	x-xi
<i>List of Appendices</i>	xii
<i>Glossary of Zimbabwean Specific Terms</i>	xvi
Introduction	1
Chapter 1	
Unemployment and Housing Crises in Bulawayo before 1960:	28
Chapter 2	
State Response to Unemployment and Poverty during the “Turbulent Years”, 1960-1980	56
Chapter 3	
Increasing Unemployment, Poverty and Informality during the Turbulent Years	92
Chapter 4	
Low Income Earners and the Housing Crisis during the Turbulent Years; 1960 to 1980	120
Chapter 5	
The Poor and the Housing Crisis after Independence	152
Chapter 6	
Worsening Unemployment, the Poor and Informality after Independence	200
Chapter 7	
The Urban Poor and the ‘Curse’ of the Two ‘Operations’ in 2005	238
Thesis Conclusion	282
Bibliography	295

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
The Socio-Economic Development of the city of Bulawayo	1
Studying the Social History of Bulawayo and Poverty	7
Research Methods	22
Thesis Outline	25
Chapter 1	
Unemployment and Housing Crises in Bulawayo before 1960	28
1.1 The Influx of Migrants and the Urban Crisis in Bulawayo	28
1.2 Struggles over the Provision of Housing to Africans before 1960	43
1.3 Increasing African Demands for Security of Tenure in Urban Areas	50
1.4 Conclusion	54
Chapter 2	
State Response to Unemployment and Poverty during the Turbulent Years, 1960-1980	56
2.1 Radicalising African Nationalism and the Unsettled White Politics	56
2.2 The Build-up to the Enactment of the Vagrancy Act and its Operation in Bulawayo	58
2.3 Unemployment, Low Wages, Poverty and the Failure of Influx Control Measures in Bulawayo after 1960	69
2.4 African Wages and Productivity Debate: How to Stabilise the Urban African Community	79
2.5 Poverty and the African Population Explosion Debate	84
2.6 The 1970s: A Decade of Denial of the Existence of African Unemployment in Rhodesia	87
2.7 Conclusion	91
Chapter 3	
Increasing Unemployment, Poverty and Informality during the Turbulent Years	92
3.1 Problems Associated with Urban Informality and the Poor in Bulawayo	92
3.2 The African Advisory Board and the Welfare of Africans in Bulawayo	109
3.3 Conclusion	118
Chapter 4	
Low Income Earners and the Housing Crisis during the Turbulent Years; 1960 to 1980	120
4.1 Population Influx and Pressure on Low Income Housing	120
4.2 Discriminatory African Home Ownership Schemes in Bulawayo	124
4.3 Complications in Funding Low Income Housing in Bulawayo	138
4.4 Fears and Effects of the Housing Crisis	142
4.5 Conclusion	150
Chapter 5	

The Poor and Low Cost Housing Crisis after Independence	152
5.1 Bulawayo, National Politics and the Question of Lack of Industrial Development after 1980	152
5.2 Background of the Poor in Bulawayo after 1980	156
5.3 The Urban Poor and SAPs in Bulawayo	168
5.4 National Housing Policy in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe	172
5.5 The Birth of and Conflict between the Council and National Building Brigades	177
5.6 Conversion from Rental Housing to Home Ownership Status	181
5.7 The Council/Central Government Struggle over Beer Profits	183
5.8 Private Sector Initiatives in the Provision of Low Income Housing	185
5.9 Limitations of the Housing Waiting List Figures and the Severity of the Housing Crisis in Bulawayo since 1980	187
5.10 Other Constraints in the Provision of Low Income Housing	194
5.11 Response to the Shortage of Accommodation in Townships	196
5.12 Conclusion	198
Chapter 6	
Worsening Unemployment, the Poor and Informality after Independence	200
6.1 Worsening Economic Problems after Independence	200
6.2 Vending as a Coping Mechanism	207
6.3 Urban Agriculture as a Coping Mechanism	214
6.4 The Politics of <i>Shebeening</i> and Prostitution as Coping Mechanisms	220
6.5 Relocating to Rural Areas as a Coping Strategy	228
6.6 Other Coping Mechanisms	231
6.7 Conclusion	237
Chapter 7	
The Urban Poor and the ‘Curse’ of the Two ‘Operations’ in 2005	238
7.1 Towards the Urban Crisis in 2005: A Shattered Economy and Desperado Politics	238
7.2 Possible Reasons behind Operation Murambatsvina vis-a-vis the Poor in Urban Areas	243
7.3 Effects of Operation Murambatsvina on the Urban Poor in Bulawayo	252
7.4 Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle: A Reconstruction Programme for the Urban Poor in Bulawayo?	259
7.5 Conclusion	280
Thesis Conclusion	282
Bibliography	295

List of Tables

Table 1: Estimated African population in Bulawayo, 1946-1975.	36
Table 2: Registered African workers who found jobs during the first 4 weekly periods in 1963	75
Table 3: Total number of houses built in Bulawayo African Townships between 1965 and 1971	142
Table 4: Population Growth in Bulawayo from 1982 to 1991	154
Table 5: Government NHF loans to Bulawayo city council between 1983 and 1988	176
Table 6: Housing units built by the Housing Brigades in Bulawayo since 1984	178
Table 7: Housing Applicants on the Bulawayo waiting list between 1988 and 1998	188
Table 8: Housing Applicants on the Bulawayo waiting List between 2000 and 2005	189
Table 9: Low Income Earners Excluded from All Housing Schemes	190
Table 10: Low Income Earners Excluded from All Housing Schemes	191
Table 11: Disparities between applicants on the waiting list and the number of houses built from 1988 and 1998	193
Table 12: Low income earners who sought assistance from the Bulawayo Council's Social Welfare Offices for help between 2000 and 2005	204
Table 13: Number of structures destroyed and number of people affected by Operation Murambatsvina in Bulawayo (City Council figures)	257
Table 14: Number of structures destroyed and number of people affected by Operation Murambatsvina in Bulawayo (ZRP figures)	257

List of Maps and Figures

1. Map of Zimbabwe showing Bulawayo and other urban centres.	xiii
2. Bulawayo Street map showing townships or high density areas	xiv
3. Map showing Bulawayo and its surrounding areas	xv
3. Map showing Ikhwezi bar in Pelandaba Township	114
4. Map showing Mpopoma South Township in Bulawayo	128
5. Map showing some medium and low density suburbs in Bulawayo	211
6. Picture of a vendor selling African bush mice/rat meat in Makokoba Township in Bulawayo.	279

List of Acronyms

AAG-	Affirmative Action Group.
ABM-	(African) Advisory Board Member.
AI-	Amnesty International.
BCC-	Bulawayo City Council.
BCI	Bulawayo Chamber of Industries
BSAP	British South Africa Police
BURA	Bulawayo United Residents Association
BUTA-	Bulawayo Up and Coming Traders Association.
BWPA-	Bantu Wage and Productivity Association.
CABS-	Central African Building Society.
CBD-	Central Business District.
CTJP	Christians Together for Justice and Peace
CHOGM-	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.
CZI-	Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries.
ESAP-	Economic and Structural Adjustment Programme.
Fewsnet	Famine Early Warning System Network
ILO-	International Labour Organisation.
IMF-	International Monetary Fund.
IPOC-	Inter-Agency Provincial Operations Committee
IOM-	International Organisation for Migration.
LAA-	Land Apportionment Act.
LGPWUD-	Local Government, Public Works and Urban Development.
MP-	Member of Parliament.
MDC-	Movement for Democratic Change
NAZ	National Archives of Zimbabwe
NHF-	National Housing Fund.
NLHA-	Native Land Husbandry Act.
NDP-	National Democratic Party.
NUAARA-	Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act.
OGHK-	Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle.
OM-	Operation Murambatsvina.
ORO-	Operation Restore Order.
PDL-	Poverty Datum Line.
RAWU-	Railway African Workers Union.
RF-	Rhodesian Front.
SAP-	Structural Adjustment Programme.
SRLP-	Southern Rhodesia Labour Party.
SRTUC-	Southern Rhodesia Trade Union Congress
TAWU -	Textile and Allied Workers Union.
T.T. Ls-	Tribal Trust Lands.
WB-	World Bank.
UDI -	Unilateral Declaration of Independence.
UNDP-	United Nations Development Programme.
UN-	United Nations.
ZANU PF-	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front.

ZAPU- Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union.
ZBS- Zimbabwe Building Society.
ZLHR- Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights.
ZRP- Zimbabwe Republic Police.

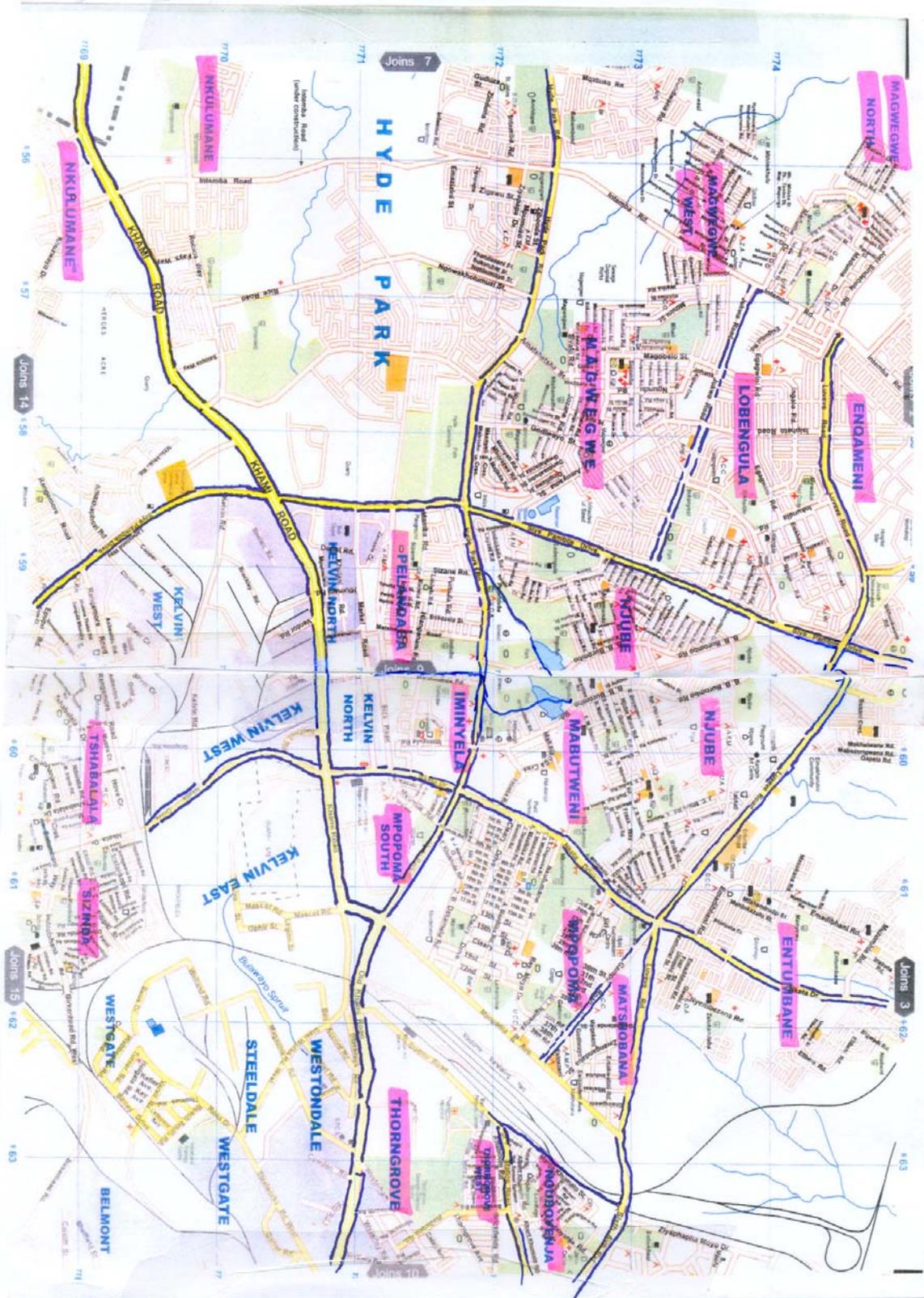
List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Records of single men in Bulawayo, showing addresses of the houses they occupied and their respective occupations. 321

Map of Zimbabwe showing Bulawayo and other urban areas.



Source: <http://geology.com/world/zimbabwe-map.gif>



Glossary of Selected Zimbabwean specific terms.

Chimurenga war of liberation.

Gukurahundi the word used to describe the 1982-1987 political conflict between the national government and the Matabeleland leaders that led the government's Fifth Brigade army kill between 20 000 and 30 000 people in the region.

Introduction

This thesis studies the social history of the poor in Bulawayo, the second largest city in Zimbabwe, between 1960 and 2005. It is argued that poor people's rights to permanent residency were elusive during this period. This is accomplished by focusing on the housing and unemployment crises they faced and the manifest reluctance by authorities to either provide adequate housing or to accept mushrooming informal housing and economic activities as a response to these acute shortages. I emphasize inadequate state funding and poverty of most urban residents, together with the persistence of salient perceptions by authorities that all Africans belong to rural areas and have access to land on which they can fall back in hard times. This notion serves as a vital lubricant in the perpetuation of discourses that sought to exclude the poor from the city since the colonial period. Other discourses like the idea that low income Africans were immoral and unclean are also present when justifying the use of physical force to banish the poor from the city. While these perceptions tended to be fuelled by the racial divide between whites and blacks, class and gender dynamics among Africans crisscrossed that racial divide. After independence, government policy ambitions and failures were instrumental in influencing the welfare and fate of the urban masses and their relations with the former nationalists who assumed power in 1980. This was intertwined with the persistence of brutal city/state struggles over the responsibility of providing services to low income earners with catastrophic effects on the poor and it highlighted the fragility of their claim to the right to permanent residency in the city.

The Socio-Economic Development of the city of Bulawayo.

Bulawayo was formally established as a white settler town on 1 June 1894¹ and as was the norm in Southern Africa², black people working in the town were housed outside it in the Old Native Location (now Makokoba Township). Africans were expected to build houses for themselves and most of the houses were thus built of all sorts of materials that

¹ Preben Kaarsholm, "Siye pambili-Which Way Forward? Urban Development, Culture and Politics in Bulawayo", in Brian Raftopolous and Tsuneo Yoshikuni (eds), *Sites of Struggle-Essays in Zimbabwe's Urban History*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 1999), p. 230.

² Anthony D. King, *Urbanism, Colonialism, and the World Economy*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 57.

included pole-and-dagga, thatch, corrugated iron and a few of brick houses with a corrugated iron roof. The township was only properly surveyed in 1922 when plots were leased to Africans at five shillings per month.³ The first municipal housing, which consisted of standard cottages was built for those “who either would not or could not build themselves.”⁴

In 1929, all private building was banned and private ownership of houses was abolished. Some privately built houses were demolished but compensation was paid to owners at a valuation agreed between the owner, Township Superintendent and the Native Commissioner. This marked the end of the initial home ownership schemes on which African housing was originally premised in Bulawayo. Home ownership schemes were resuscitated in the 1950s, albeit on a selective basis.⁵ By 1930, a total of 284 municipality houses had been built. Two hundred and twenty rooms were built for bachelors but were soon occupied by families.⁶

In 1933, the Mayor of Bulawayo claimed that “The council has reached a stage when the housing accommodation practically meets the demand”⁷, but this was the last time in the history of African housing that such a claim could be made. Barely three years after, the township had become a slum.⁸ Housing conditions were appalling, the township was overcrowded and residents lived in squalor as housing failed to meet demand. The Location could officially accommodate 2,524 people in 342 cottages for married people and 631 rooms for single men. However, a census held the same year revealed that the population was 6,077, with 3,849 men, 1,237 women and 991 children.⁹ It was also during this period, between 1931-1940, that the Bulawayo Municipality was accused by

³ Hugh Ashton, “Housing Policy and Practice 1894-1994” in Michael Hamilton and M. Ndubiwa, *Bulawayo: A Century of Development, 1894-1994*, (Harare: Argosy Press, 1994), p. 53.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁷ Bulawayo mayor quoted in Hugh Ashton, “Housing Policy and Practice,” p. 56.

⁸ Report of the Medical Officer of Health (Sgd A.H. Shennan), February 1942, p. 1. Slum dwellings were “houses whose demolition is definitely recommended, where no repair could be expected to make the house really habitable for any length of time” and “houses where demolition is not necessarily recommended but where by virtue of overcrowding, general squalor, lack of cleanliness and insufficiency of sanitary inconveniences (from a practical apart from a by-law point of view) they are generally undesirable as residences.”

⁹ Muchaparara Musemwa, “A Tale of two cities: The Evolution of the city of Bulawayo and Makokoba Township Under Conditions of Water Scarcity, 1894-1953”, in *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 55, No. 1, 2006, p.p. 205-206.

Eastwood, a Labour Party member of abusing financial resources meant for the development of African areas as he revealed in 1942 that “some ten thousand pounds {sterling} were taken from the African beer-hall profits and used for purely European purposes.”¹⁰ In 1937, the government built a Native Village Settlement for married couples in Luveve Township.¹¹

The growth of secondary industry between 1932 and 1938 set the town on a path to capitalist development and gave birth to the modern urban centre, with the establishment of secondary industries such as meat canning, jam, sweet and cigarette factories¹² increasing the demand for labour. Before then, Southern Rhodesia was largely a primary producer dependent on South Africa and other countries for its capital and consumers goods and even for discriminatory political ideas critical of Africans in urban areas.¹³ The growth of secondary industry and the proximity of Bulawayo to the heart of the regional economic system that lay in the most industrialised and developed area of Witwatersrand in South Africa¹⁴ easily made it the industrial capital of Southern Rhodesia.

In the early 1940s, the industrial development, encouraged by the government and the stimulation of local economic growth as part of the war effort during Second World War was largely responsible for the sudden, dreadful deterioration of African housing.¹⁵ As the country’s main resources and manpower were directed to the war effort, African housing was inevitably low down on that list. This contrasted with the unprecedented industrial growth in Bulawayo which was granted city status on November 4, 1943.¹⁶ Industrial growth led to a tremendous demand for labour. Between 1943 and 1949,

¹⁰ Terrence Ranger, “City, State and the Struggle over African Housing: The Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act and the Transformation of Bulawayo, 1946 to 1960”, *Seminar Paper*, Economic History Dept, University of Zimbabwe, April 2001, pp. 15-16.

¹¹ Tsuneo Yoshikuni, *African Urban Experiences in Colonial Zimbabwe: A Social History of Harare before 1925*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2007), p. 79. See also P. Kaarsholm, “Siye pambili-Which way forward? p. 232.

¹² N. S. Kane, cited in M. Musemwa, “A Tale of two cities”, pp. 193-194.

¹³ NAZ S3678/4, (Newspaper Cuttings), *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 3/11/34, “Plain Words on Native Locations.”

¹⁴ Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia-1900-1933*, (London: Pluto Press, 1976), p. 227. In 1948 for example, Bulawayo boasted of having c240 firms compared to Salisbury’s 140. Sambureni, cited in Ian Phimister and Brian Raftopolous, “Kana sora ratswa ngaritswe”: African Nationalists and Black Workers-The 1948 General Strike in Colonial Zimbabwe”, in *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 13, No. 3 August 2000, p. 300.

¹⁵ Muchaparara Musemwa, “A Tale of two cities”, pp. 193-194.

¹⁶ David Pasteur, “From Frontier Town Board to a Modern Municipality” in Michael Hamilton and M. Ndubiwa, *Bulawayo: A Century of Development*, p. 11.

numbers of people officially recorded as formally employed doubled from 25,000 to 48,000. Housing demand skyrocketed while supply dwindled.¹⁷ The mayor of Bulawayo blamed the acute housing shortage on unemployed Africans whom he wanted excluded from the Location.¹⁸

Various reports were published on urban African conditions in general such as Percy Ibbotson's report on a 'Survey of Urban African Conditions in Southern Rhodesia' in 1943 and the well known report by E. G. Howman who was commissioned to investigate economic, social and health conditions of Africans employed in urban areas in 1944, all of which pointed to miserable housing and living conditions. The 1944 Howman Committee report for example, argued that the acute housing situation for Africans was not caused by the Second World War, but by "a short sighted and unsocial view of industrial progress" which had encouraged industrialisation and set aside large areas for factories but with "no thought and no provision" being made for the African labour force.¹⁹ The Commission further reported that "Africans squeeze into what rooms they find, seek out all kinds of shelters about the towns and "married couples share rooms with bachelors."²⁰ J. P. McNamee, commissioned by the council in 1948 to report on township conditions argued that:

I...shudder when I think back to the gross overcrowding in the municipal hostel, the rows of sleeping bodies outside the rooms in 2nd Street, Old Location (there was literally no room for them inside), the warrens on some industrial sites and commonage plots, whose owners shamelessly charged rent...²¹

Makokoba, Mzilikazi and Barbourfields townships, known as BAT (Bulawayo African Townships) were the first to be built in Bulawayo.²² In 1949, when an African administration department was set up and tasked with providing African housing under

¹⁷ Hugh Ashton, "Housing Policy and Practice", p. 56. See also David Pasteur, "From Frontier Town Board to a Modern Municipality", p. 11. Pasteur estimated that the African population increased from 18,000 to 52,000 between 1941 and 1951.

¹⁸ City of Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, Minute of His Worship the Mayor (Councillor D. Macintyre, J. P., M. P), 31st July, 1945, p. 3.

¹⁹ E. G. *Howman Report* on the Economic, Social and Health Conditions of Africans Employed in Urban Areas, 27th January, 1944, pp. 9 and 16.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ J. P. McNamee, quoted in Hugh Ashton, "Housing Policy and Practice", p. 56.

²² Interview with Charlton Ngcebetsa, Bulawayo Tower Block, Bulawayo, 7 January 2009. Ngcebetsa (Jnr) is the son of a famous colonial Bulawayo pressman and socialite. He worked for the various Council departments since 1962, including the social welfare and housing departments.

the directorship of Hugh Ashton, only the BAT townships and Nguboyenja were already in existence.²³ By then, there were about 1,664 houses for married couples and accommodation for 10,968 single men in all Bulawayo townships. During the next four years the municipality built accommodation for 9,706 single men as against 1,021 family units,²⁴ but all this fell short of the housing demand.

Conditions in the railway and municipal compounds were far worse than at the Location. The worst of all were private employers' locations and other settlements on the peripheries of the city. In the industrial areas of Bulawayo around 4,000 men, together with their wives and children were said to be living in "indescribable squalor."²⁵

In the 1950s, townships based on "home ownership schemes" were built and these included Pumula in 1952, Pelandaba 1953, Njube 1954, and Mpopoma South in 1956. Hostels for bachelor workers including Burombo, Sidojiwe, and Vundu among others were also built in the 1950s.²⁶ In the 1960s a number of townships were built which were a mixture of home ownership and rented accommodation. Those included Tshabalala, Magwegwe, Mabutweni and Iminyela. Lobengula, Nkulumane, Emakhandeni and Entumbane townships were built in the 1970s.²⁷ However, as David Johnson aptly observed, at no stage in their history were African townships able to cope with the influx of Africans into the cities.²⁸

An important factor behind the lack of urgency in providing African housing by both the national and local authorities since the establishment of the town was that for many years political thought remained dominated by the concept of racial separation, that "the interests of each race would be paramount in its own sphere."²⁹ Towns and cities like Bulawayo were classified as European land. The assumption was that Africans were only

²³ P. Kaarsholm, "Siye pambili-Which way Forward?", p. 232. Mzilikazi Township was built in 1942.

²⁴ Bulawayo Municipality, in *NADA*, Volume 37, 1960, p. 75.

²⁵ Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890-1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle*, (London and New York: Longman, 1988), p. 260.

²⁶ Bulawayo Municipal Records Library (BMRL) H4/Dept CS Sidojiwe Hostel, Memo from the Director of Engineering Services to Director of Housing and Community Services- "Inspection of Sidojiwe Flats", 29 June 2001. See also *Chronicle*, 15 December 1997.

²⁷ P. Kaarsholm, "Siye Pambili-Which way Forward?" p. 232.

²⁸ David Johnson, *World War II and the Scramble for Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1939-1948*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2000), p. 143.

²⁹ Hugh Ashton, "Housing Policy and Practice", pp. 58 and 54. Also see Richard Gray, *The Two Nations, Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 222-224.

sojourners in the city and were to be tolerated there only as long as they were useful. They had no permanent rights in the city and when they ceased to be useful, such as when they were unemployed, the assumption was that they should leave, having no rights of permanent residency or ownership of houses and no security of tenure.³⁰

Not surprisingly, a highlight of the 1940s urban African housing crisis in Bulawayo was the serious fight between the local authority and national government, the main contention being the refusal by both parties to shoulder the financial responsibility of providing accommodation. Municipal officials insisted that the Location should contain only “sojourners” and argued that if the national government wanted “decent” long-term residents then it should provide a village settlement for married couples,³¹ like it had done in Luveve in 1937, which was however, also vigorously resented by the powerful Bulawayo Councillor Donald Macintyre who argued that:

We don't accept the responsibility of a place like Luveve [the government village outside Bulawayo for married couples]. We believe that Luveve caters for an entirely different type of Native, a semi-urbanised type. We propose to provide just for the Native who works in town.³²

Institutionalising labour migration was predicated upon the assumption that “labour would remain cheap and labourers would not remain in urban areas indefinitely.”³³

The population influx that exacerbated the housing crisis in the 1940s also gradually led an unemployment crisis after the war as the growth of African employment stagnated in the 1950s due to a declining rate of economic growth in the country.³⁴ The economic stagnation co-existed with rising inflation and low wages and this severely affected low income African workers and their families who relied on wages as their most important source of income. After the war for example, a former chairman of the Industrial Development Advisory Committee, D. A. Edwards, argued that “the native’s rate of pay

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Terence Ranger, “City Versus State in Zimbabwe: Colonial Antecedents of the Current Crisis” in *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Volume 1, No. 2, July 2007, p. 167.

³² Ibid, p. 176.

³³ M. Musemwa, “A Tale of two cities”, p. 199.

³⁴ T. R. C. Curtin, “Rhodesian Economic Development under Sanctions and ‘The Long Haul’” in *African Affairs*, Volume 67, No. 267, April, 1968, pp. 107-109.

could be doubled and trebled and as a source of labour, they would still be cheaper than almost any labour force in the world.”³⁵

The job insecurity faced by low income earners had serious implications for their continued stay in the city. Unemployment had a significant bearing on Africans’ ability to access accommodation in cities in general as it determined one’s continued legal presence in an urban area. Access to accommodation was dependent on formal employment since under the 1946 Native (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act (N(UA)ARA) employers were made responsible for payment of rentals for their employees in accommodation provided by the municipality. If one lost a job, they would also lose their accommodation and would be given two weeks to search for a job before being evicted from the urban area.³⁶

Studying the Social History of Bulawayo and Poverty.

This study focuses on the urban poor, loosely defined here as the formally unemployed, domestic workers, low paid factory workers, women, foreign migrant workers, squatters and vagrants and many others in the informal sector of the economy including vendors and hawkers who formed the majority of the residents in townships where about three quarters of the city’s population resided after independence.³⁷ Low income earners have survived in the hostile urban environment despite stringent and repressive legislative measures. They managed to develop survival strategies that enabled them to access incomes to make up for the absence or loss of employment or to supplement inadequate wages from the formal sector. That is, they successfully created their own jobs and provided housing for themselves³⁸ but at the risk of compromising their right to permanent urban residency. Besides receiving low earnings, this group also endured lower status than the African middle class which consisted of highly qualified and better-

³⁵ D. Johnson, *World War II and the Scramble for Labour*, p. 142.

³⁶ Ennie Chipembere, *M. Phil Thesis Draft, (Colonial Policy and Africans in Urban Areas, with Special Focus on Housing, Salisbury, 1939-1964)*, University of Zimbabwe, 2002, p. 37.

³⁷ City of Bulawayo, *Local Development Plan Number 1, Western Area, 1980-1995*. A detailed analysis of “street occupations” that most low income earners in the Third World in general engage on was done by Ray Bromley. See Ray Bromley, “Working in the Streets: Survival Strategy, Necessity or Unavoidable Evil”, in Josef Gugler, (ed) *The Urbanization of the Third World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 161-162.

³⁸ Amin Y. Kamete, *Governing the Poor in Harare, Zimbabwe, Shifting Perceptions and Changing Responses*, Research Report No. 122, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002), p. 14.

paid teachers, preachers, clerks, salesmen, social workers, journalists, businessmen, nurses, lawyers, doctors and other professionals.³⁹

While low income earners also suffered from other prejudices that were experienced by all African communities in general, this thesis contends that their situation was generally much worse and deteriorated over time. This is informed by the fact that the lower down somebody was in the class hierarchy, the harsher was their experience of colonisation⁴⁰ and this experience did not change in the post independence era.

After independence, the space for the poor in the city has constricted because of the increasing macro-economic problems of the country. Despite an increasing influx of the African population into the city before and after 1980, the central government, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and donor agencies focused their poverty alleviation programmes mainly on rural areas as the majority of the traditionally socio-economically disadvantaged population have resided there.⁴¹ This left the poor urban Africans and those who were forced into city by the liberation war in the 1970s, the *Gukurahundi* massacres⁴² in the 1980s, droughts in 1982-1984/85, 1986-87, 1991-1992, 2001-2003 and victims of the political and electoral violence associated with the Third *Chimurenga*⁴³ to face increasing economic hardship forcing them to resort to informal economic activities for survival, and exposing them to the risk of arrest and deportation to rural areas.

C. O. Rambanapasi labelled squatters, the unemployed, the self employed and the very lowly paid Africans the “fringe urban population” and argued that it was dangerous and misleading to lump into one class this “urban fringe population” and the other urban low income group mainly because the “fringe population” was a very small urban

³⁹ Michael O. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe, 1898-1965*, (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2002).

⁴⁰ Koni Benson and Joyce Chadya, “Gender and Sexual Violence in Bulawayo, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1946-56” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 31, Number 3, September 2005, p. 592.

⁴¹ BMRL N6A/17 Squatters/Vagrants, “A Situational Analysis of Urban Poverty Bulawayo” by Ben Strydom (Chairman and Director of Combined Churches and Mobile Soup Kitchen) (undated), pp. 2-3.

⁴² This was a “dissident eradication” operation unleashed by the Government of Zimbabwe in the early 1980s on Matabeleland and Midlands provinces that left between 20,000 and 30,000 civilians dead.

⁴³ This refers to the period from 1999/2000 characterised by chaotic farm invasions and portrayed by government as an extension of the liberation war now to achieve economic independence.

minority.⁴⁴ Rambanapasi's characterisation of squatters, the unemployed, the self employed and the very lowly paid Africans as the "fringe urban population" is problematic. Firstly, this characterisation can be used to justify their exclusion from urban areas. Secondly, to say that this group is a minority in urban areas is wrong as they have been a majority in many cities and their numbers have been increasing steadily especially during and after the structural adjustment period following the decline of the formal sector economy.

This study focuses on Bulawayo which, as one of the most dynamic industrial and transport centres in early colonial Zimbabwe, attracted a considerable number of migrants who settled in the city alongside the already existent African population and a consistent community of white settlers. With thriving industrial concerns, the city was able to absorb a sizeable work force. As a result Bulawayo represents a fascinating case study for the analysis of the dynamics of socio-economic interactions between various groups competing for urban spaces and resources but it is worth noting that very few members of the white community suffered from poverty in colonial Zimbabwe because of deliberate political engineering.

White immigrants were effectively screened for political creed and social outlook and most of those who slipped through the net were "deported without very much ado". The demands of most Bulawayo whites were thus pretty uniform, "a house, a garden, a motor-car, at least two good "boys", (one house-one garden-)..."⁴⁵ In the 1930s, white poverty in Southern Rhodesia was attributed to unemployment and the Commissioner of Labour blamed the causes of white unemployment on the increasing capacity of Africans to compete with the whites making the unskilled and semi-skilled whites find it increasingly difficult to obtain work. The Commissioner also blamed employers for their tendency to economise by employing more Africans at a lower pay, thereby displacing Europeans and also that employers took advantage of prevalent unemployment to offer absurdly low wages. As a result, some white men were out of employment because they

⁴⁴ C. O. Rambanapasi, Book Review: *Urban Low Income Housing in Zimbabwe*, Christopher C. Mafico, 1991: Aldershot: Avebury, in *Urban Studies*, March 1993, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 460-463.

⁴⁵ Gerda Siann, *Bulawayo Diary*, Undated, p. 71.

refused to work for less than standard wages.⁴⁶ Poor whites appeared incapable for various reasons, of finding and keeping employment, or of maintaining themselves without continuous assistance from the state and charitable organisations.⁴⁷ In 1960 however, the difficult unemployment and overcrowding conditions in Bulawayo mainly affected blacks as there was very limited, if any, white poverty in the city.

Unlike other urban centres in Zimbabwe, Bulawayo not only experienced a rural refuge population influx during the later years of the liberation war in the 1970s, it also witnessed an upsurge immediately after independence when the government unleashed *Gukurahundi*, a “dissident eradication” operation in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces that left between 20,000 and 30,000 civilians dead.⁴⁸ Prolonged forced rural-urban migration led to over-urbanisation in Bulawayo and led to a spontaneous emergence and growth of squatter settlements around the city.⁴⁹ The impact of droughts on areas surrounding Bulawayo in 1982-1984/85, 1986-87 and in 1991-1992, and 2001-2003 also forced starving rural people into the city in search of food and jobs. Yet the relocation of some industries from the city to other urban areas because of the perennial shortage of water, together with the closure of many textiles firms under the structural adjustment policies in the 1990s worsened unemployment and housing problems and exacerbated poverty conditions. It is also crucial to understand the impact on resource allocation and development of having a national government that regarded Bulawayo as politically “dissident” city for much of the post colonial period.⁵⁰

This thesis begins in 1960, the year in which the national government stepped up its efforts to exclude the unemployed and other people regarded as undesirable from

⁴⁶ NAZ 249/39/2 Report on Unemployment and the Relief of Destitution in Southern Rhodesia by the Commissioner of Labour, 14th March, 1934, pp. 3-5.

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 38-48. For more reasons why there was hardly any social problem of poor whites in Southern Rhodesia see Philip Stigger “Minute Substance versus Substantial Fear: White Destitution and the Shaping of Policy in Rhodesia in the 1890s” in Robert Morell, *White but Poor: Essay on the Poor Whites in Southern Africa 1880-1940*, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1991), pp. 130-150, and Bob Challiss, “Education and Southern Rhodesia’s Poor Whites, 1890-1930” in Robert Morell, *White but Poor: Essay on the Poor Whites in Southern Africa 1880-1940*, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1991), pp. 151-170.

⁴⁸ Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, *Breaking the Silence: A Report into the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988*, (Harare: The Legal Resources Foundation, 1999).

⁴⁹ Ben Strydom, “A Situational Analysis of Urban Poverty in Bulawayo”, pp. 2-3.

⁵⁰ Muchaparara Musemwa, “Disciplining a ‘Dissident’ City: Hydropolitics in the city of Bulawayo Matabeleland, Zimbabwe, 1980-1994” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 32, Number 2, June 2006, p. 241.

urban areas through the use of draconian legislation. Sanctions to block the entrance of foreign African migrants in urban areas had already been legislated. Unemployment had turned the poorest in the city against women working in industry. The year also marked the beginning of “turbulent years” in the history of local authorities as nationalist politics began to seriously affect local governments’ administration of African areas. This followed riots in Bulawayo during which rioters from Makokoba and other poor areas attacked not only stores and municipal property but also the newly built houses of the wealthy Africans in Pelendaba and Pumula townships. Great cleavages opened up within black society, as lease-holders demanded to be given arms to protect themselves against the poor, and between black and white societies as ‘moderate’ Africans denounced a government which had left them to their fate. Married women denounced “single” men as animals; “bachelors” denounced the elite as inhumane.⁵¹ The animosity between most city stakeholders and low income earners intensified in 1960, leading to increased calls to sanction the later in the city.

The year 2005 is appropriate as a cut off point for this study because it marked the climax of an urban crisis characterised by severe housing and employment shortages and a brutal government attack on informality⁵², highlighting the fragility of low income earners’ claim to the rights of permanent residence in the city. When the government’s military style clean up Operation Murambatsvina (OM) was still in progress, it launched a “rebuilding” programme codenamed Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle (OGHK) to cater for the homeless with preference given to victims of the blitz but it eventually led to a shameless exclusion of the deserving victims of OM.

This work is informed by the fact that generally, colonial and post colonial administrations, despite showing distinct wariness towards urban growth, have been too weak to either prevent over-urbanisation through rural development schemes or more coercive measures or to ameliorate it through the provision of housing and infrastructure and the creation of employment. Since the colonial period, governments have tried to deal with urbanisation problems by restricting residence for the urban poor through

⁵¹ Terence Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning: The Social History of Bulawayo, 1893-1960*, forthcoming, chapter 7.

⁵² A. Tibaijuka, Report of the Fact Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to Assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe, 12 July 2005, p. 7.

repressive policies and influx control measures. Mushrooming urban shanties and various informal activities were viewed as disorderly and were thus criminalised.⁵³

In the post colonial era, most African countries have experienced severe macro-economic problems that have impacted variously on the urbanisation process. Despite the urbanising impact of much public policy, nearly all African countries have sought to restrict urban growth rates and some have imposed severe policies to achieve this end.⁵⁴ Most governments policies have been pre-occupied with halting rural-urban migration because of the belief that it has been the major driving force behind urban growth⁵⁵ but research recent research has established that in most Sub-Saharan African countries rural urban migration has slowed down due to lack of economic opportunities in larger towns and the resultant increasing urban-rural migration in search of livelihood security.⁵⁶ What is clear however is that most governments have been unable to provide enough formal jobs, forcing most urban residents to resort to informal economic activities for survival. Yet governments have frequently resorted to criminalising informal sector activities to demonise them and justify draconian interventions.⁵⁷

For operational purposes in this thesis, the term unemployment is used to refer to those who were not in formal employment while urban citizenship refers to permanent urban residency. Colonial Zimbabwe is used interchangeably with Southern Rhodesia.

This thesis attempts to write the social history of the low income class in Bulawayo by establishing the continuities between the colonial and post colonial discourses against the poor and new ones that emerged after independence that were advanced to justify their exclusion from the city and also by highlighting the centrality of unemployment as the main cause of poverty among Africans. Unfortunately, for lack of

⁵³ Andrew Burton, *African Underclass-Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam, Salaam* (Nairobi: The British Institute in Eastern Africa, 2005), pp. 277-8.

⁵⁴ Charles M. Becker *et al*, *Beyond Urban Bias in Africa: Urbanization in An Era of Structural Adjustment*, (Portsmouth and London: Heinemann and James Currey, 1994), p. 1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ See Deborah Potts, "Recent Trends in Rural-Urban and Urban-Rural Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Empirical Evidence and Implications for Understanding Urban Livelihood Insecurity", *Environment, Politics and Development Working Paper Series*, Paper 6, Department of Geography, King's College London, 2008.

⁵⁷ Deborah Potts, "The State and the Informal in Sub-Saharan African Urban Economies: Revisiting Debates on Dualism", *Working Paper No. 18, -Cities and Fragile States-*, King's College, London, October 2007, p. 6.

space, there is no discussion of Bulawayo's vibrant sport, drama and musical cultures that township residents regarded more as a necessity than a luxury.⁵⁸

This thesis is thus distinct from Preben Kaarsholm's approach to the study of urban development, culture and politics which emphasizes cultural institutions and their forms of articulation vis-à-vis political issues from the 1940s to the late 1990s.⁵⁹ Cultural issues are discussed in this thesis only when they were used as justification for discriminating against low income groups in the city.

While Kaarsholm rightly noted that unemployment, homelessness and destitution continued to be seriously problems in Bulawayo after independence, he argued that the 1980s *Gukurahundi* campaign created "a period of silence" until 1987 after which cultural theatre groups played a role of "substitute politics," and concludes by arguing that there were enlarged areas which displayed permanence, having established themselves firmly where they lived.⁶⁰ There is no mention however, of the impact of *Gukurahundi* on development projects in Bulawayo, how it exacerbated the influx of people into the city fleeing the massacres which only worsened the housing crisis and unemployment in the city, government roundups of groups of low income earners in cities since the 1980s and, the perennial water shortages and factory closures, together with the collapse of the textile industry in Bulawayo in the 1990s that unsettled many low income earners in the city, most factors that contributed to much poverty in Bulawayo after independence.

Kaarsholm's work is however, very important in highlighting some themes pursued in this work. He for example, noted that until the 1960s, while the council gradually came to accept, for reasons of social control, letting families rather than single men settle in town and support some degree of permanence in such settlement, this remained a deeply ambiguous and disputed attitude. Out of fear of both, the council attempted to strike an impossible compromise between transitoriness and permanence, leading to half-heartedness that led to shocking misery and deprivation among the urban Africans.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Terence Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, forthcoming. see Postlude.

⁵⁹ Preben Kaarsholm, "Si ye pambili-Which Way Forward?"

⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 246-247.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 233.

Kaarsholm also revealed that even the council sponsored youth cultural activities in the 1960s were directed at re-traditionalisation and the establishment of an “awareness of roots” [rural], rather than “modernisation”, thus revealing the contradictory and half hearted character of township policies. He therefore rightly concluded that the Bulawayo Council’s policies were as contradictory as was its much vaunted liberalism which tended to promote the formation of an African middle class.⁶²

Another important work on the social and cultural history of Bulawayo is Terence Ranger’s forthcoming book, written in a novel like style with township “heroes” in some chapters, that mainly tells the social history of Bulawayo through the lives and activities of prominent townships’ residents who were leaders in various social, political, trade union and sporting activities like Masotsha Ndlovu, Sipambaniso Khumalo, Grey Bango, Charlton Ngcebetsha, Jerry Wilson Vera and Benjamin Burombo among others.⁶³ My thesis attempts to write the social history of Bulawayo through lives and experiences of non-prominent low income township dwellers. It does not discuss cultural, sports, political and business issues that most of these men were preoccupied with except when their activities discriminated against low income earners. Ranger rightly argues that sometimes the activities of some township residents cut across the class lines, which is the problematic of the political economy and after all, classes are collectivities as not many individuals fit into them exactly.⁶⁴ His book however, only extends to 1960.⁶⁵

Class and gender dimensions were crucial in the perpetuation of poverty conditions among low income Africans and women in general. Elite self-perceptions and actions were influenced by the contradiction between individual ambitions and the needs of the larger African community. Jane L. Parpart and Miriam Grant, using historical and geographical approaches, researched the black middle class in the city of Bulawayo, exploring their historical and spatial dynamics in the relatively more affluent African middle class township of Pelandaba. Their study aimed to place the emerging elite in the broader context of changing political, social and economic forces, seeing elites not as a

⁶² Ibid, pp. 240 and 242-243.

⁶³ Terence Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, forthcoming.

⁶⁴ Ibid, chapter 4 entitled “Mr Black Bulawayo, 1930-1949.”

⁶⁵ Important works on early colonial urbanism in Zimbabwe in general include those of Lawrence Vambe, Richard Gray and Ian Phimister. See Lawrence Vambe, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, (London: Heinemann, 1976), Richard Gray, *The Two Nations*, Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, especially chapter five on “Industrialisation and Class Struggle, 1938-1948.”

separate group, but as an often fractured and fluid group of people seeking to advance themselves while also striving to live successfully as part of a larger community. Moreover, criticisms from both Europeans and “less fortunate” Africans also created an on-going dilemma about self-identity, individual aspirations and political and social loyalties. The study also notes how this changed over time as the settler regime became locked in battle with nationalist forces.⁶⁶ Their book which they had started writing in 2004 and which was supposed to contain the final conclusions of their research has not yet been seen by this author.

The origins of the mistrust between the ruling former African nationalists and urban workers, which could partly explain the attack by the government on urban workers dates back to the 1930s and 1940s. Through their study of the 1948 General Strike in colonial Zimbabwe, Ian Phimister and Brian Raftopolous highlighted the mistrust in urban areas between the nationalists and urban workers. They revealed how meetings of early political organisations in Bulawayo were only organised and attended by middle classes who considered themselves as long term residents while other workers, considered to be migrants, remained ostracised.⁶⁷ Drawing on this scholarship, this thesis partly explains the misfortunes of the poor in post colonial Bulawayo through the actions of the chequered career of the elite in Zimbabwe after 1980, actions that originated from their past relations with the low income earners as present actions are invariably embedded in the past.⁶⁸

Since the colonial period, the issue of the permanent residency of the poor in urban areas have always surfaced in times of urban crises in Zimbabwe which tended to be characterised by problems of governance and city/state clashes over the provision of housing and other amenities to low income earners. An interesting discussion of the 1940s urban housing crisis in Bulawayo, which is crucial to understanding the history of city/state struggles in Zimbabwe was made by Terence Ranger who highlighted how the Bulawayo “tradition” of maintaining its independence from the state has always been an

⁶⁶ Jane Parpart and Miriam Grant, “Constructing Difference and Managing Development: Material and Discursive Visions of “Progress” among African Elites in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 1953-1980”, in *LABOUR, Capital and Society*, 37, (2004), pp. 289-295.

⁶⁷ Ian Phimister and Brian Raftopolous, “African Nationalists and Black Workers.”

⁶⁸ Jane Parpart and Miriam Grant, “Material and Discursive Visions of “Progress” among African Elites in Bulawayo”, p. 294.

important feature of the relations between the two arms of government since the colonial period.⁶⁹ This thesis argues that the state/city struggles continued to impinge on the provision of housing to low income earners in Bulawayo but that new trends emerged after independence. In the 1940s, while the state shed all responsibility of providing African housing to local authorities, after independence the national government interfered several times. This intensified after 2000 when according to Terence Ranger, elected mayors have been dismissed, whole municipal councils have been sacked, and state appointed commissions have attempted to run cities. “A whole series of state authorities -- governors for both Harare and Bulawayo and district administrators for the townships -- have been inserted above and into the cities.”⁷⁰ At times the central government has established and imposed its own builders and housing committees that operated like a parallel council and also carried out duties meant to be done by the elected council, leading to continued shoddy provision of services to the poor.

If there was any area where colonial authorities and African men acted in complicity, it was on policies that perpetuated the discrimination of women in urban areas. Restricted access to formal employment and formal housing left women in Bulawayo subject to poverty and sexual violence and with minimum legal protection from the state that reluctantly recognised their presence. This was revealed by Koni Benson and Joyce Chadya who researched sexual violence and changing African gender dynamics in relation to colonial urban influx control, segregation and mounting political and economic tensions in Bulawayo after 1946. They explored the experiences of newcomers to the city, the colonial definition of twelve as the age of consent for African “women”, and the monetisation of sex as the justification for rape. The study uses women’s testimonies of rape and sexual assault as windows of insight into the multiple battles for the power to define the city, both in terms of behaviour, and in terms of the use of space,⁷¹ but their study only extends to 1956.

⁶⁹ Terence Ranger, “City Versus State in Zimbabwe.”

⁷⁰ Ibid, pp. 161-2.

⁷¹ Koni Benson and Joyce Chadya, “Gender and Sexual Violence in Bulawayo”, pp. 587-610. Other impressive works on gender discrimination and female poverty in urban areas in Southern Rhodesia include those of Diana Jeater, Timothy Scarnecchia, Teresa Barnes and Lynette Jackson. See Diana Jeater, “No Place for a Woman: Gwelo Town, Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1920” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 26, Number 1, March 2000, Timothy Scarnecchia, “The Mapping of Respectability and

Women in Bulawayo were also subjected to gender discrimination by African men. The “laissez faire” attitude to the urbanisation of women that the state and the local authority of Bulawayo seemed to follow between 1930 and 1944 seemed to be very disturbing to African men who felt that their society was changing for the worse by allowing unmarried women to visit urban areas. This was revealed by Teresa Barnes who examined responses of the colonial state and African men to the urbanisation of African women.⁷² Lynette Jackson rightly argued that during the colonial period, urban women in Zimbabwe were “consistently located at the intersections of colonial discourses of disease, control and regulation.”⁷³ This thesis attempts to add to this literature by highlighting how authorities and African men continued to invoke tradition to discriminate against women in the city after 1960.

Other studies on urban poverty in Bulawayo have focussed on the hopes and vulnerabilities of the urban youth and their roles in households, highlighting how parents and officials among others perceived them as problems. Studying the high density townships of Nkulumane, Luveve and Lobengula, Miriam Grant’s article on social and economic identities of urban youth focused on the resources that youth in Bulawayo possessed and the obstacles they faced and the relationship between their lives and broader national questions regarding their role. This thesis does not focus on social problems faced by one particular age group even though it also discusses some economic problems that forced youths to resort to prostitution as survival mechanisms while some have migrated to neighbouring countries, especially to South Africa in search of greener pastures.

Other studies on Bulawayo researched the economic impact of HIV/AIDS in Nketa and Mpopoma Townships and established the devastation and suffering caused by the HIV/AIDS to most vulnerable members, the poor, powerless and marginalised, leaving many households “teetering on the brink of permanent hunger, homelessness and

Transformation of African Residential Space” in Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni, (eds), *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe’s Urban History*.

⁷² Theresa Barnes, “‘We are afraid to command our children’: Responses to the Urbanisation of African Women in Colonial Zimbabwe” in Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni, (eds), *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe’s Urban History*.

⁷³ Lynette A. Jackson, “When in White Man’s Town: Zimbabwean Women Remember Chibeura”, in Jean Allman, Susan Geiger and Nakanyike Musisi (eds), *Women in African Colonial Histories*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 2002), p. 209.

destitution” without any glimmer of hope for the foreseeable future. For such households, staple foods like maize meal, sugar, tea and bread had become scarce luxuries.⁷⁴ This thesis contends that the HIV/AIDS scourge certainly complicated the poverty situation in Bulawayo and that contrary to the long standing belief that women were the only disease carriers; some men in Bulawayo now believed that other men were also responsible for spreading sexually transmitted diseases.

Low income earners have endured housing poverty in Bulawayo since the colonial period. Efforts to increase housing production and to arrest slum conditions in various townships did not succeed. The lowering of standards frequently proved to be illusory because any savings in capital were quickly made up by increased costs of maintenance.⁷⁵ City authorities implemented “redevelopment” programmes for older townships like Makokoba since 1953 as a way of eliminating slum conditions but with little success. This study highlights the housing poverty in Bulawayo and contends that lack of a proper low cost housing policy, city/state squabbles over funding and the administration of low income housing projects were factors mainly responsible for the slow delivery of low income housing. Beyond providing a legal framework for the provision of low income housing, the post colonial government was mainly a campaigner for and not a provider of housing.

This work also criticises Mirjam Zaaijer’s assessment in 1998 that compared to many other African cities, poverty was not yet visible in Bulawayo. Zaaijer argued that the city had no big squatter settlements and virtually everybody had access to basic services and estimated the number of destitute people (street kids, vagrants, homeless) to be between one and two thousands. Yet in contrast, Zaaijer also accepted that even local

⁷⁴ Miriam R. Grant and Andrew D. Palmiere, “When Tea is a Luxury: The Economic Impact of HIV/AIDS in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe”, *African Studies*, 62, 2, December 2003, pp. 213-241.

⁷⁵ Hugh Ashton, “The Economics of African Housing”, in *The Rhodesian Journal of Economics*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1969, pp. 33-4. Other studies on housing poverty and possible solutions in Zimbabwe in general include those of Christopher Mafico, *Urban Low Income Housing in Zimbabwe*, (England and Gower: Averbury, Brookfield, 1991), Amin Y. Kamete, “Revisiting the urban crisis in Zimbabwe: Some Forgotten Dimensions”, *Habitat International*, Volume 30, 4, 2006 and Diana Auret, *Urban Housing: A National Crisis?* (CCJP and Mambo Press: Gweru, 1995).

Bulawayo opinion leaders were of the view that the city's levels of poverty, homelessness and unemployment had reached alarming proportions.⁷⁶

Zaaijer's argument highlights the problematic of evaluating the effects of urban poverty of a certain group of people by comparison between cities or countries. As Anthony O'Connor aptly observed, it is in many ways easier to discuss poor countries than poor people, that is, by dealing with issues like national aggregates rather than poverty as experienced by individuals. Poverty may not be so visible to the outside world; it may be hidden in homes, institutions and workplaces and therefore felt by those directly affected by it. It is the individual who may die of starvation, not entire nations.⁷⁷ As such, this thesis attempts to analyse the experiences of poor individuals and families in Bulawayo townships and contends that poverty was recognised as a social problem in Bulawayo townships since the colonial period.

The attack on low income earners during the urban crisis in 2005 was more linked to issues of political survival by the ruling party, justified through the pursuit of "authentic" "patriotic history"⁷⁸, which revealed prejudices held by the national government over the permanent residency of the poor in urban areas. It exposed the persistence of the colonial discourse that every black African belonged to rural areas as the government openly stated that "virtually every Zimbabwean has a home in the rural areas..."⁷⁹

This thesis highlights the centrality of unemployment as the main cause of poverty among Africans. At times people regarded as poor may not consider themselves as such. However certain characteristics associated with their survival mechanisms point to poverty conditions. For example, John Iliffe established that when asked to describe the poor, townsmen in Accra, Ghana in 1975 commonly referred to the unemployed who were wholly parasitic and others who sought temporary jobs.⁸⁰ Josphat Moyo, who first

⁷⁶ Mirjam Zaaijer, *Urban Economic Restructuring and Local Institutional Response: The Case of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe*, HIS Project Paper Series, (Rotterdam: Institute for Housing and Urban Development, 1998), p. 27.

⁷⁷ Anthony O'Connor, *Poverty in Africa, A Geographical Approach*, (London: Belhaven Press, 1991), pp. 3 and 7.

⁷⁸ Terence Ranger, "Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History, and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe" in *Journal of Southern African History*, Vol. 30, Number 2, 2004.

⁷⁹ Government of Zimbabwe, Response to the Report by the UN Special Envoy on Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order, August 2005, p. 24.

⁸⁰ John Iliffe, *The African Poor*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 172.

arrived in Bulawayo in 1945, highlighted that the jobless in the Old Location were regarded as being very poor.⁸¹ Cain Sibanda, who arrived in Makokoba Township in 1948 also argued that there was serious poverty among the African communities in the township. He then asked this author a question, “How do you describe a situation whereby you find a house with a floor looking like sand, with more than six people staying in a room? The only property you find in there are small bags crammed in one corner. Is that not poverty?”⁸² For Mr Sibanda, overcrowding and lack of valuable property was a sign of poverty. It meant that one had no money with which to acquire property.

Clive Kileff also established the centrality of work and money among black Africans in urban areas of Southern Rhodesia. He noted that black African men strongly believed that work was linked to happiness, money and survival while unemployment brought anomie and death, theft and hunger, for a “man can only be happy in town when he is working. All what he needs, or all what he lives on, comes from money. If this town man can not get the job, all he had to do is to hang himself.”⁸³ Therefore, as John Iliffe rightly observed, most of the poor in colonial towns in Africa were unskilled labourers who became very poor due to any one of the following four circumstances: “they may have been unemployed, or worked especially in ill paid occupations, or they had unusually large families or their general wages may have been very low.”⁸⁴

This is also related to various contested definitions of poverty used by anthropologists, economists, development workers, geographers, sociologists and urban planners and historians. Economists sometimes use indexes and formulas to back up their theories that may be very confusing to historians, while sociologists and development workers may feel they have the monopoly of writing about poverty because of the proximity of their work to the poor in societies and also because the word poverty is usually a catchword in most of their programmes. There is no one correct, scientific, agreed definition of poverty because poverty is inevitably a political concept, and thus

⁸¹ Interview with Mr Josphat Moyo, Manwele Market, Mzilikazi Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Monday 19 November 2007.

⁸² Interview with Mr Cain Sibanda, Manwele Market, Mzilikazi Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Monday 19 November 2007.

⁸³ Clive Kileff, *Research Report*, University of Rhodesia, Undated, pp. 79-80.

⁸⁴ John Iliffe, *The African Poor*, p. 169.

inherently a contested one.⁸⁵ R. M. Hartwell argued that there is no universally acceptable or unambiguous definition of poverty and the first three groups of scholars to concern themselves with poverty were historians, economists and sociologists and yet between themselves they have never solved the problem of definition.⁸⁶ Therefore, from the onset, any study of poverty should be aware of the dangers and limitations of making cross disciplinary conclusions.

The changing forms of poverty over time and between places, and the different measurements of poverty are some factors that make it very difficult to study poverty. What one may regard as poverty may not be regarded as such by people said to be experiencing such poverty. Writing about the politics of measurement in general in early modern Europe James C. Scott noted that there was "... no single, all purpose, correct answer to a question implying measurement unless we specify the relevant local concerns that give rise to a question."⁸⁷ He noted that particular customs of measurement may be "situationally, temporarily and geographically bound."⁸⁸

For many purposes, Scott rightly argued that an apparently vague measurement may communicate more valuable information than a statistically exact figure and expounded that every act of measurement was an act marked by the play of power relations, that is, one that had to be related to the contending interests of the stakeholders for it to be understood. At times state approved measurements produce gross inefficiency and a pattern of either undershooting or overshooting fiscal targets.⁸⁹ This was also highlighted by Carey Oppenheim who noted that statistics are snapshots, they do not show how long people are living in poverty, it could be a week, months or even years. As such figures do not convey the intensity of poverty which results from spending a long time living on a low income. Statistics as such do not show the depth of poverty, they can only provide a partial picture.⁹⁰ Worse still, as has been noted above, poverty is a contested political concept, no government world over would want to hear that most of its

⁸⁵ Pete Alcock, *Understanding Poverty*, (London: The Macmillan Press, 1993), p. 3.

⁸⁶ R. M. Hartwell, "The Consequences of the Industrial Revolution in England for the Poor" in The Institute of Economic Affairs, *The Long Debate on Poverty*, (Surrey: The Unwin Brothers Ltd, 1972), p. 11.

⁸⁷ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State- How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 26-30.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Carey Oppenheim, *Poverty: The Facts*, (London: Child Poverty Action Group, 1990), pp. 37-8, 44.

people languish in poverty. Sometimes, this has led governments to delay publishing statistics on low income, or producing them less frequently, sometimes omitting some years for comparison. Thus lack of correct, up to date government information, research and sometimes deliberate obfuscation makes the whole exercise of determining the extent of poverty difficult.⁹¹

Measuring poverty can therefore be regarded as an exercise in demarcation. According to Megnad Desai, lines have to be drawn where none may be visible and they have to be made bold. Where one draws the line is itself a battlefield.⁹² Understanding poverty thus requires an understanding of the social policies which have been developed in response to it and which have thus removed, restructured or even recreated it.⁹³ It is for this reason that this thesis also traces the state and local authority policies and actions that intensified poverty and promoted the exclusion of the poor from the city, with emphasis on housing poverty and problems associated with informal employment.

Research Methods.

My interest in the social history of Bulawayo began in 1999/2000 when I participated in a historical research project on the social history of Bulawayo as a research assistant conducting interviews⁹⁴ when I was a final year BA student in economic history and history at the University of Zimbabwe. I returned to do an honours course in economic history and wrote a thesis on various problems that were faced by the council in providing social services to various classes of Africans between 1960 and 1980.⁹⁵ I proceeded to do an MA in Economic History and wrote a thesis on challenges faced by the undesirable Indian migrants in Bulawayo during the colonial period.⁹⁶ I discovered that many members of the Indian community were migrating from the city because their businesses were under threat during the third *chimurenga* chaos, some of them being

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 44.

⁹² Megnad Desai quoted in Carey Oppenheim, *Poverty: The Facts*, p. 37.

⁹³ Pete Alcock, *Understanding Poverty*, pp. 4-5.

⁹⁴ This was for Terence Ranger's forthcoming book *Bulawayo Burning*.

⁹⁵ Busani Mpfu, *BA Special Honours Dissertation*, "The Dynamics of Providing Social Services in a Colonial Urban Authority, with Special Reference to African Housing and Social Advancement in Bulawayo, 1960-1980", University of Zimbabwe, July 2003.

⁹⁶ Busani Mpfu, *MA Thesis*, The Struggles of an 'Undesirable' Alien Community in a White Settler Colony: The Case of the Indian Minority in Colonial Zimbabwe, with Particular Reference to the City of Bulawayo, c1890-1963, Economic History Dept, University of Zimbabwe, May 2005.

forced to pay monies in exchange for their safety, hence they became suspicious of anyone and this made it difficult to conduct interviews with them.

I embarked on this study to try to highlight the fragility of the poor's claim to the right to permanent urban residency emphasizing inadequate state funding and poverty and continuities in some discourses from colonial to the post colonial era as responsible for spreading and sustaining the discrimination of low income earners from the city. I also attempt to understand why the post colonial government continued to regard low income earners in urban areas as belonging to rural areas and why there was a manifest reluctance by authorities to accept informal activities in the face of increasing housing shortages and unemployment. It becomes clear that there was a misunderstanding by authorities on how most of the rural land was not able to support some families because of infertility or lack of resources to successfully till the land by most some families.⁹⁷

One most important research tactic I learnt when doing interviews was that to get quality information one has to interview an informant more than once at times. Interviewees tend to become more relaxed and willing to speak their minds when they have known the interviewer for sometime. Most of them were not comfortable divulging information to researchers they do not trust especially during times of political and economic turmoil. As such I planned to invest quality time in conducting interviews for this thesis. My observation was that most of my interviewees were willing to say more about the events and circumstances of recent years, most likely because of the poverty conditions that were being experienced in the whole country. It took a lot of persuasion to encourage them to narrate their experiences during the colonial period.

The fieldwork research for this thesis was conducted at a time when the country was experiencing political and economic crisis in the months prior to and after the March 2008 harmonised Parliamentary, Council and Presidential elections. A negative response encountered during interviews because of the crisis forced me to reduce the scale of interviews and then redirected efforts to finding other primary sources especially in the municipality records library which documents minutes of all council committees since 1930 and is rich with information on low cost housing problems and other difficulties

⁹⁷ See Beacon Mbiba, cited in Mbiba and Ndubiwa, "Decent Work in Construction and the Role of Local Authorities: The Case of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe", *Unpublished Report*, January 2006, p. 29.

faced by low income earners in Bulawayo. Due to the political sensitivity surrounding the birth and implementation of a government initiated OGHK “reconstruction” programme in 2005, I decided against interviewing beneficiaries of this programme who were already resident in Cowdry Park Township but managed to find interesting information on this operation from other primary sources.

I therefore relied on Bulawayo council records for a number of files for both the colonial and post colonial period for minutes that were rich with council efforts meant to curb informal housing and informal economic activities. The municipality archives also contained newspaper clips that revealed interesting cases of the urban poor’s attempts to survive in a hostile environment. The Bulawayo Historical Reference Library was another research area full of useful primary and secondary material.

I also relied on the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) for some broader national policies on issues regarding housing and the welfare of low income earners since the colonial period. This also proved a very convenient place for reading various newspaper editions, very much unlike the Bulawayo Historical Reference Library where I had to pay for every newspaper copy that was extracted on my behalf. The NAZ was however, not very helpful on files with information on the post colonial period. Undertaking archival research at the NAZ was a challenging exercise as it was at the height of power shortages in the country due to load shedding.

I therefore tried to balance my research with primary sources that included interviews, Government documents, government press statements, Commissions’ reports, council minutes, annual council reports on housing, minutes of African Advisory Boards, newspaper reports and a number of relevant secondary sources which discuss urban issues related to themes discussed in this thesis. I was also able to read newspapers and some important documents on the internet. The selection of interviewees was just random as it was believed that themes discussed in this work cut across all townships in Bulawayo.

A challenge was that the urban poor are not a homogeneous group. Their diversity makes it even harder to study them. John Iliffe aptly argued that the problem with the poor is that they are diverse, and poverty itself has many facets and the African peoples

have their own varied and changing notions of it.⁹⁸ It was for this reason among others that interviews were conducted which sought to establish views of what Bulawayo residents regarded as poverty or what it meant to be poor and as argued above; they blamed most of their poverty on unemployment. The challenges met did not hinder the progress of my research as a way was found around those setbacks to gather information enough to sustain this thesis.

Thesis Outline.

The thesis begins with an overview of urbanisation and industrialisation progress in Bulawayo highlighting how the welfare of African urban workers deteriorated during the 1940s urban crisis and how population influx and the rush for jobs in the city exacerbated the already poor living conditions during the war-time industrialisation period. This was at a time when the city council was fiercely opposed to shouldering the burden of housing Africans. This first chapter thus seeks to demonstrate how the political and economic need of the Bulawayo African was paralleled by his need for social amenities⁹⁹ and how the administration of urban Africans and the whole question of permanent residency which urbanisation brought in its wake represented a particular dilemma for the British rulers of the colony who conceptualised Africans as tribal residents living under the control of chiefs.¹⁰⁰

In colonial urban Africa, the poverty question could not be separated from the labour question, together with the official and unofficial laws that governed the relationship between the rulers and the ruled. For one to understand severe urban poverty there is thus a need for an analysis of wages and conditions of work.¹⁰¹ This is the subject of discussion in chapter two which explores the state's response to increasing unemployment and job insecurity among Africans during the "turbulent" years (between 1960-1980).

Colonial city authorities in Africa generally unsuccessfully tried to limit the unanticipated urban growth by marginalising the growing numbers of Africans who

⁹⁸ John Iliffe, *The African Poor*, p. 172.

⁹⁹ Gerda Siann, *Bulawayo Diary*, p. 68.

¹⁰⁰ Bill Freund, *The African City: A History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 65-106.

¹⁰¹ John Iliffe, *The African Poor*, pp. 168-169.

failed to fit colonial criteria for town residence. Such people's rights to urban residence were eroded by policy response to urbanisation that criminalised not only many of the economic activities they adopted, but often their own very presence in towns.¹⁰² In Bulawayo, as formal jobs decreased and paid starvation wages for unskilled African workers, affected urban residents turned to informal economic activities for survival but this without the blessing of the authorities who expected residents to subsist through formal employment. This is discussed in the third chapter of thesis which discusses relations between African Advisory Board members in Bulawayo and the majority of Africans to point out class and gender dynamics in the perpetuation of discrimination against low income earners.

Poverty among Africans and lack of state funding were the major factors behind the housing crisis during the turbulent period when the state and various classes of the white community intensified efforts to guarantee their economic and political survival in the face of increasing competition from urban Africans. Africans without formal jobs performed juggling acts to access accommodation. Problems faced by various groups of low income earners in accessing low cost housing in Bulawayo and remaining in continuous occupation and other factors that generally militated against the provision of adequate low income housing during the turbulent years are explored in chapter four. It is argued that women were the worst victims of a lack of proper housing policy in the city as they could not access rented housing in their capacity as individuals.

In the post colonial African city, beyond deracialisation, independence was not in fact a remarkable break in African cities as the colonial character of planning and structures remained in place. As a result, Freund rightly observed that most independent African countries resorted to systematic roundups and expulsions of urban dwellers living in self constructed shacks.¹⁰³ This is the subject of discussion in chapter five which is the longest in the thesis because it attempts to introduce new social trends and the various classes of low income earners that existed in Bulawayo before focussing on the impact of the severe housing crisis on the poor who resorted to squatting and vagrancy and

¹⁰² See Andrew Burton, *African Underclass*.

¹⁰³ Bill Freund, *The African City*, pp. 65-106.

intensified lodging as some coping mechanisms. Again, poverty among Africans and lack of state funding are emphasized as the major factors behind the housing crisis.

The most disturbing feature of rapid urbanisation in Africa has been the failure of the urban economy to offer jobs to the flood of the new urbanites.¹⁰⁴ The worsening unemployment problem that led to burgeoning informal activities carried out by the formally unemployed and formally employed low income earners in the post colonial city of Bulawayo as survival strategies is discussed in chapter six. This chapter highlights the contradictions of the restriction of informal activities in the face of ballooning unemployment.

The thesis then analyses the effects of the 2005 urban crisis on low income earners in Bulawayo through the lenses of OGHK and its precursor OM that left the urban poor homeless and with no source of livelihood. Drawing from the experiences on residents that were affected by OM, this last chapter of the thesis argues that the execution of two operations revealed the fragility at the poor's claim to rights to permanent residency in the city. The poor were only tolerated because they subsidised the state but could be brutalised any time when the government felt their presence or activities did not support the ruling party. The chapter problematises the centrality of the government's authoritarian nationalism that had become the hallmark of all political, agrarian, economic and social policies in the country and which left many of its victims, both in urban and rural areas, poorer.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

Chapter 1.

Unemployment and Housing Crises in Bulawayo before 1960.

Urban growth in Africa proceeded rapidly during World War Two and did not cease to advance steadily thereafter until the late 1950s. Cut off from Europe, African secondary industry was able to develop in a number of centres to service an existing market for consumer goods like cooking oil, cigarettes, beer and soft drinks that had to be manufactured in the bigger and more urbanised African colonies.¹⁰⁵ This chapter analyses contradictions that arose during the war-time industrialisation period and after the Second World War in Bulawayo and how they affected Africans in the city. It is argued that economic expansion led to an unprecedented unemployment and housing crisis in Bulawayo. This was because in the post war economic expansion, it became clear that expansion and rising unemployment were perfectly compatible, posing serious problems for both the authorities and the unemployed. Economic expansion made life worse, not better, for many wage labourers across British Africa because of the Africa-wide inflation that was being experienced.¹⁰⁶ The problem was that “nowhere did colonial planning envision the emergence of great cities for African proletariats or conceive systematically of the need for cultural and economic continuities and infrastructure aimed at the survival of poor people in large numbers.”¹⁰⁷

1.1 The influx of Migrants and the Unemployment Crisis in Bulawayo.

The Second World War industrial expansion led to an influx of Africans into Bulawayo and other major towns in colonial Zimbabwe. According to David Johnson, many of these Africans had fled their rural communities as resistance to forced labour. Once in towns, they found employment in European households, municipalities, building industry, shops and stores, the railways and a number of secondary industries. Wages higher than those in rural areas were also a pull for Africans into the urban sector even

¹⁰⁵ Bill Freund, *The African Worker*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 40.

¹⁰⁶ Frederick Cooper, *On the Waterfront: Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 176 and 253.

¹⁰⁷ Bill Freund, *The African City: A History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 98.

though they were still much lower than the basic minimum thought necessary for the reproduction of a worker and his family.¹⁰⁸

The war-time influx of Africans into town and increasing family settlement there produced chaotic conditions that led to an urban crisis characterised by acute housing shortages and poor relations between the city and the state.¹⁰⁹ In Bulawayo, the question of the permanent urban residence for the majority of Africans workers came to the fore as authorities' initial policy of wanting to industrialise without stabilisation of the labour force proved unworkable, that is, "working and living conditions and influx controls were incapable of reproducing the type of the labour force desired by the manufacturing capital, that is, a stabilised, permanent labour force."¹¹⁰ Whereas the 1946 Native (Urban Areas) African Accommodation and Registration Act N(UA)ARA authorised and eventually required local authorities to house their African populations, they were not well equipped to accept such a substantial and increasing commitment. To control the influx of Africans, local authorities were also made responsible for the operation of pass laws, which were dropped in 1961.¹¹¹

For women, those who sought formal jobs were subjected to embarrassing controls. Their formal incorporation into urban areas through the N(UA)ARA was also accompanied by their formal incorporation into the country's influx control discourse because of their increased rates of migration, the changing nature of their economic involvement, authorities' desire for stabilisation and the growing number of women in formal employment. Strategies for controlling them involved compulsory genital examinations in search of venereal diseases on African nannies, food handlers and especially on unattached women who were thought to be disease carriers. The examinations were only discontinued in 1958.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ David Johnson, *World War II and the Scramble for Labour in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1939-1948*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2000), p. 142.

¹⁰⁹ Terence O. Ranger, "City Versus State in Zimbabwe: Colonial Antecedents of the Current Crisis", in *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, July 2007.

¹¹⁰ Frederick Cooper, here paraphrased by Lynette A. Jackson, "When in the White Man's Town": Zimbabwean Women Remember Chibeuza", in Jean Allman, Susan Geiger and Nakanyike Musisi (eds), *Women in African Colonial Histories*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), p. 209.

¹¹¹ Eric Gargett, *The Administration of Transition: African Urban Settlement in Rhodesia*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1977), p. 9.

¹¹² Lynette A. Jackson, "When in White Man's Town", pp. 202-203. Francesca Locatelli also revealed how colonial authorities in Asmara were obsessed with the "venereal disease syndrome" which became an

Because of the workers' strikes since the late 1930s and 1940s right across the mining and urban centres of colonial Africa, governments were frightened and pushed to investigate social conditions faced by African workers in urban areas.¹¹³ In colonial Zimbabwe, the Robert Tredgold Report of 1946, R. Hudson Report of 1948 and the McNamee Report of December 1948 all pointed to miserable housing and living conditions of Africans. This was similar to Kenya where Cooper highlighted that the Willan Commission assigned to study work and working lives following the 1939 strike "was followed in quick and anxious succession by a spate of investigations of African diets and budgets during the war, and more commissions, social surveys and studies after it..."¹¹⁴

The 1940s and 1950s were therefore times of intense political, economic and social turmoil in colonial Zimbabwe, and Bulawayo was at the heart of these transformations.¹¹⁵ Economically, Bulawayo was a major employment centre, boasting the headquarters of the Rhodesian Railways, plus numerous, small but viable gold mines that attracted labourers from beyond the borders of the country. Bulawayo was also a temporary stopover for Central African labourers trekking to the better-paid industries in South Africa, though some of them never reached their intended destinations and settled permanently in Bulawayo.¹¹⁶

Getting a job in the city was regarded as an escape route from poverty. For example, Josphat Moyo, who first arrived in Bulawayo in 1945, stayed at the "House for the unemployed" (*Indlu yamalova*) near the railway station that was used by the municipality to temporarily accommodate newly arrived jobseekers without relatives in the city. Mr Moyo argued that:

excuse for clamping down on women but also for justifying other forms of control over the African population living in Asmara's "native quarters." See Francesca Locatelli, "Beyond the Campo Cintano: Prostitutes, Migrants and 'Criminals' in Colonial Asmara (Eritrea), 1890-1941" in Francesca Locatelli and Paul Nugent (eds), *African Cities: Competing Claims on Urban Spaces*, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), p. 231.

¹¹³ David Norman Souter cited in Cooper, *On the African Waterfront*, p. 256.

¹¹⁴ F. Cooper, *On the African Waterfront*, pp. 256-257.

¹¹⁵ Koni Benson and Joyce M. Chadya, "Gender and Sexual Violence in Bulawayo, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1946-56" in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 31, Number 3, September 2005, p. 590.

¹¹⁶ Enocent Msindo, "Ethnicity and Nationalism in Colonial Urban Zimbabwe: Bulawayo, 1950-1963" in *The Journal of African History*, Volume 48, Issue 02, July, 2007, p. 267. For reasons why foreign migrants may have ended up staying permanently in Bulawayo or mining areas around Bulawayo and other areas of Southern Rhodesia, see Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia-1900-1933*, (London: Pluto Press, 1976), pp. 227-231.

People viewed us with contempt. The council provided us with soup and tea for survival. Being in the city without a job meant that you could not buy even clothes you wanted to look smart. As such no girl could ever look at you. Who would want to be married to a jobless person in the city?¹¹⁷

Finding a job was therefore his priority. When he arrived in the city, Moyo was very poor, owning nothing other than one bag with a few clothing items, no money and no food. He went to the city hoping for a miracle, trusting that established town dwellers would help him out.

Relations, or tribal associates, or former schoolmates who arrived in Bulawayo earlier were known as the “pioneers”, *amapayinela* in Ndebele. They usually accommodated and took care of new migrants until they were able to fend for themselves. New migrants were called *omafikizolo* (those who arrived yesterday) or *inyuwani* (the new ones).¹¹⁸

Cain Sibanda, who arrived in Bulawayo in 1948 stayed with his brother-in-law in Makokoba Township under extremely overcrowded conditions for many years until he was allocated a house in Mzilikazi Township because he was on the council’s housing waiting list.¹¹⁹

Bulawayo was an attractive destination for foreign and local immigrants because of the thriving secondary industries during the 1940s and 1950s. Juma Maseko’s father and a group of other five men left Nyasaland (now Malawi) and set out for Southern Rhodesia on foot. When they arrived in Umtali (now Mutare), they were told that they had arrived in Southern Rhodesia and they could look for employment but they said “No please, we want Bulawayo.”¹²⁰ Because they were tired and had run out of money for food they worked for a few weeks before proceeding to Salisbury (now Harare). When they arrived and were told to stay, they sang the same song, “No please, we want

¹¹⁷ Interview with Mr Josphat Moyo, Manwele Market, Mzilikazi Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Monday 19 November 2007.

¹¹⁸ F. Nehwati, “The Social and Communal Background to “Zhii”: The African Riots in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia in 1960” in *African Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 276, July 1970, pp. 260-261.

¹¹⁹ Interview with Mr Cain Sibanda, Manwele Market, Mzilikazi Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Monday 19 November 2007.

¹²⁰ Interview with Juma Maseko (Phiri), Makhumalo Beer Hall, Makokoba, Bulawayo, 4th January 2009. Juma was born on the 9th of June 1937 at Nyathi outside Bulawayo and grew up in Hyde Park where his father got a stand when he was still staying at Nguboyenja Township in the early 1950s. For more information on how migrant workers negotiated their way from the low paying northern areas to relatively high paying southern areas, see Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro*, pp. 228-229.

Bulawayo.”¹²¹ They spent some weeks again resting and to find more money for food and then set out for Gwelo (now Gweru) where, upon arrival and when asked by fellow foreign migrants to stay they sang the same song again, “No please, we want Bulawayo.”¹²² Upon arrival in Bulawayo his father looked for employment in the mines outside the city where he worked until his retirement and then returned to the city and stayed at Nguboyenja Township.¹²³ Mr D. Gumpo also left his home village of Gutu (Masvingo district) and set out for Bulawayo in 1955 because “Bulawayo was increasingly becoming a popular destination that all young men wanted to travel to and find employment in.”¹²⁴

As noted above, because of the industrial infrastructure in the city, Bulawayo was attracting a sizeable number of extra-territorial and internal migrants, not only from the surrounding Matabeleland region but from all over the country. The Federation of Rhodesia (Northern and Southern) and Nyasaland (colonial Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi respectively) from 1953 to 1963 made it easier for migrants from Zambia and Nyasaland to migrate to the relatively more industrially developed Southern Rhodesia, specifically the city of Bulawayo then. This increased the inflow of migrant labourers from Nyasaland and this, together with internal migration, led to increased urban African population pressure, a situation which exacerbated the housing problem.¹²⁵

In some parts of Africa, colonial policies drove rural dwellers into deepening poverty, sometimes as a deliberate policy to create “labour reserves” but at times a result of actions which worsened difficult ecosystems.¹²⁶ In colonial Zimbabwe, the implementation of the 1951 Native Land Husbandry Act (NLHA) in rural areas that created hordes of landless people fuelled rural-urban migration as peasants sought greener pastures. The amended Land Apportionment Act (LAA) of 1941 and the NLHA had substantially reduced the amount of land available to each African family. The number of stock permitted was also reduced. As a result, numbers of landless Africans

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Interview with Mr. D. Gumpo, Makhumalo Beer Hall, Makokoba, Bulawayo, 4th January 2009.

¹²⁵ Ennie Chipembere, *Mphil Draft Thesis*, “Colonial Policy and Africans in Urban Areas, with Special Focus on Housing, Salisbury, 1939-1964”, University of Zimbabwe, 2006, p. 6.

¹²⁶ Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past and the Present*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 21.

swelled. Land scarcity and poverty in rural areas were ejecting Africans at an increasing rate around 1960. Most of the landless migrated to urban areas as economic refugees.¹²⁷ The land could not support a growing number of Africans but neither could urban areas.

A report of the sub-committee tasked to look into “The Land Husbandry Act of 1951 and its relation to the Urban Housing Situation” in Bulawayo highlighted that the NLHA rendered many rural people landless leading them to drift into towns looking for employment. The African Advisory Board in Bulawayo expressed concern over the increasing number of people without work and accommodation in the city because of the effects of the NLHA in rural areas. The overcrowding situation was reported to be very bad in the Mabutweni and Iminyela townships that were initially built for bachelor workers who had to illegally accommodate their wives.¹²⁸ In Matabeleland districts around Bulawayo, the implementation of the LAA from the 1940s to the 1950s was exceptionally harsh as it led to death and hardships which resulted from being forcibly dumped in the disease-ridden wilderness. Africans evicted from areas like Fort Rixon, Filabusi and Matopos were dumped in Shangani and the newly created Lupane reserves which were infested with mosquitoes and wild animals like elephants, lions and hyenas.¹²⁹ The resultant rural-urban drift fuelled more unemployment and exacerbated overcrowding in townships. However, during the 1940s, the push factor of eviction was exceeded by the pull factor of labour demand in the city.¹³⁰

The implementation of the 1959 Land Apportionment Amendment Act in rural areas also led to large numbers of Africans being evicted from white properties.¹³¹ As the number of evictions grew, the number of Africans who migrated permanently to urban areas grew accordingly. This contrasted with the economic boom that died off in the 1950s leaving many urban Africans unemployed.¹³² Bulawayo therefore became a new

¹²⁷ T. H. Mothibe, “Zimbabwe: African Working Class Nationalism, 1957-1963”, in *Zambezia* (1996), XXIII (ii), p. 169.

¹²⁸ Minutes of the African Advisory Boards, Bulawayo, Monday 13 November 1961, p.1 and Friday 1 September, 1961, p. 1.

¹²⁹ Jocelyn Alexander, Jo Ann McGregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the “Dark Forests” of Matabeleland*, (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), p. 47.

¹³⁰ Terence Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning: The Social History of Bulawayo, 1893-1960*, forthcoming, p. 154.

¹³¹ Hugh Ashton, “Housing Policy and Practice, 1894-1994” in H. Hamilton and M. Ndubiwa (eds), *Bulawayo: A Century of Development, 1894-1994*, Harare: The Argosy Press, 1994, p. 59.

¹³² Lene Bull-Christiansen, *Tales of the Nation: Feminist Nationalism or Patriotic History? Defining National History and Identity in Zimbabwe*, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2004), p. 50.

home for two types of permanent African urban settlers known as *abakhileyo* in Ndebele, that is, the voluntary and involuntary settlers. The voluntary group comprised those who left their traditional homes because of the lure of the city, or to escape social pressures of traditional society. Involuntary urban settlers comprised Africans dispossessed of the land rights under the NLHA and the educated elite for whom the rural areas offered no opportunity and who could only be gainfully employed in towns.¹³³

Other formally employed Africans stayed as tenants on white farms on the outskirts of the city, which were known as private locations. They worked and lived in the city centre by day, but at night commuted to “bedroom towns” on the private locations.¹³⁴ These were the poor peripheral commuters who were present in many African towns but were not so much acknowledged as tolerated.¹³⁵

Besides the growing number of migrants flocking to Bulawayo in the 1940s and 1950s, there was also an increase in the population of people born and bred in the city. In 1948, a substantial number of workers had already taken up permanent residence in cities with their families and were entirely dependent on wage labour for their reproduction.¹³⁶ In 1952, Boris Gussman observed the emergence of a “new town bred community, with different interests and different needs to the migrant community of the old... ill balanced, but yet with all the needs and the interests of a community.”¹³⁷ Gussman attributed much of the trouble and friction that characterised the urban scene during the 1940s to the failure to recognise the aspirations, the spiritual needs and even the existence of a permanent urban community.¹³⁸

In fact, Makokoba Township was first built by Africans including a number of Lobengula (last Ndebele King)’s queens and other pioneer women and had existed continuously since 1893. Some long term residents of townships descended from these pioneers,¹³⁹ known as *amapayinela* in Ndebele. Those born in towns were, by the 1950s

¹³³ F. Nehwati, “The Social and Communal Background to Zhii”, p. 260.

¹³⁴ Koni Benson and Joyce Chadya, “Gender and Sexual Violence in Bulawayo”, p. 153.

¹³⁵ B. Freund, *The African City*, p. 95.

¹³⁶ D. Johnson, *World War II and the Scramble for Labour*, p. 162.

¹³⁷ Boris Gussman quoted by E. H. Ashton “Introduction” in Bulawayo Municipality Records Library (BMRL) N6A/103B, M. Ndubiwa, “Urban Community Study, 6 June, 1974, p. ii.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Terence Ranger, “Myth and Legend in Urban Oral Memory: Bulawayo, 1930-1960”, in *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 44, 1, 2008, p. 78.

known as *mabhonirokisheni* or *amabhonilokitshi* in Shona and Ndebele respectively, meaning those “born in the Locations” and were regarded as having lost their social identity. No one envied their status, and they were even looked down upon by other Africans in the city who had homes in rural areas.¹⁴⁰ More than five decades later, after 2000 and under the third *Chimurenga* discourse, the patriotic history peddled by the ruling ZANU PF national government regarded townspeople as “those without totems” and were described as unpatriotic in the government controlled press because of their overwhelming support for the opposition MDC party.¹⁴¹

Rapid industrialisation in Bulawayo led to a continuous demand for labour during the war years.¹⁴² Between 1944 and 1948 the average annual average rate of industrial growth was estimated at 24.4%, the building, furniture and joinery industries growing the most rapidly. Yet as the industries grew, “the City of Bulawayo finds itself in a period of rapid expansion and, caught on the wrong foot, is scarcely competent to keep pace with it.”¹⁴³ Manufacturers themselves were in no hurry to assist. Dr V. E. Haas, an industrialist in Bulawayo argued that “an authority of native affairs in the Union” told the Chamber of Industries in October 1947 that he deplored “unnecessary urgency” about native housing conditions and went on to say that “I’m not worried about natives sleeping in the open air...They’ve done so since they came to this country and multiplied very nicely under such conditions.”¹⁴⁴ However, the President of the Chamber of Industries, C. M. Harries, noted that “we are giving more food, clothing and wages and getting results...We feel the time is now opportune to give every facility we can to improve conditions of natives.”¹⁴⁵

Most workers were given food rations to supplement their low pay. The rations were hardly enough and often substandard, and this forced workers to purchase extra food from their meagre incomes. Authorities in urban areas grudgingly accepted the

¹⁴⁰ D. Jeater, “No Place for a Woman: Gwelo Town, Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1920” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 26, Number 1, March 2000, p. 37.

¹⁴¹ Terence Ranger, “Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History, and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe” in *Journal of Southern African History*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2004, p. 233.

¹⁴² Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890-1948*, (London and New York: Longman, 1988), chapter five on “Industrialization and Class Struggle, 1939-1948”, A. S. Mlambo, E. S. Pangeti and I. Phimister, *Zimbabwe: A History of Manufacturing*, Harare, University of Zimbabwe, 2000, cited in T. Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, p. 154.

¹⁴³ T. Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, (forthcoming), p. 154.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 154-5.

presence of the poor African workers, with little thought from the state and the employers about the need to provide Africans with essential services. As D. Johnson observed, the underpaid and the underfed urban workers of Southern Rhodesia were plagued by malnutrition, scurvy, pellagra, bilharzias, hookworm, malaria, tuberculosis and a number of illnesses that resulted from deficient diets and unhygienic environment.¹⁴⁶ The fact that the 1945 Railway workers' and 1948 General strikes respectively began in Bulawayo attested to the very poor living and working conditions that existed in the city. This was also the trend in other countries like Kenya where Bill Freund indicated that "swollen townships alive with underpaid workers and poor people trying to keep their heads above water became the source of resistance to authority" which sometimes provoked strikes and played a critical role in creating a mass base for nationalist political leaders and parties which were also concerned with urban conditions.¹⁴⁷ The table below shows an estimated African population of Bulawayo, 1946-1975.

Table 1.

Year	Population	Numerical Growth	Percentage Growth
1946	50 000	1941-1951: 47 000	157 %
1951	77 000		
1956	100 000	1951-1961: 53 200	69%
1961	130 200		
1966	165 750	1961-1971: 87 600	67%
1971	217 800		
1975	270 000	1971-1975: 52 000	24%

Source: Eric Gargett, *The Administration of Transition: African Urban Settlement in Rhodesia*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1977), p. 57.

The increased inflow of migrants into Southern Rhodesia in the post Second World War period however coincided with a decline in the country's economic growth. The declining rate of growth in the Federal economy of colonial Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi led to the stagnation of African employment in the 1950s. This contrasted with

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, pp. 142-3.

¹⁴⁷ B. Freund, *The African City*, p. 97. On Tanzania, see A. Burton, *The African Underclass: Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam* (Nairobi: The British Institute in Eastern Africa, 2005), p. 194.

the European employment in the manufacturing industry that nearly doubled between 1953 and 1962 while the African employment grew by less than a fifth.¹⁴⁸

The economic growth began to decline from 1953 following the uncertainty and opposition to the Federation of Northern and Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland which lasted up to 1963. For example, the foreign share of investment between 1953 and 1960 fell from 67.7 % to 35.8%. The economic decline was linked to the increasing White opposition to “partnership” and the collapse of the liberal federalist project ambiguously pursued by Garfield Todd who doubled as Prime Minister and Minister of Labour during the same period. This was worsened by the increasing burden of servicing a foreign capital debt which had begun to match and even exceed the capital inflow. For most businesses, the internal market had remained tiny because of the low level of the black wages.¹⁴⁹ World demand for copper, the main foreign exchange earner for the Federation also began to fall, leading to a fall in capital inflows from £24.7 million in 1953 to £10.7 million in 1960. As the same time, capital flight from Southern Rhodesia increased from £15.5 million to £32.5 million during the same period.¹⁵⁰

The liberal minded Todd increased minimum wages for Africans from £4.15s to £6.10s a month but that did not halt the deteriorating conditions for most African workers and families. Increases in minimum wages were effected in January 1958 and caused an immediate outcry from a substantial section of the white electorate who argued that they would price the country out of the market, create mass unemployment and force many industries to close. As a result, Todd’s cabinet rebelled against him and forced him to resign in 1958 because his administration was considered too liberal, as it was the first to make a serious attempt to improve African education and improve the quality of life for the majority of Africans.¹⁵¹ The Minister of Native Affairs and Todd’s deputy accused him of stirring up “the natives to want more than they can be given.”¹⁵²

Since colonial Zimbabwe owed much of its economic development to the stimulus of foreign investment, not only during the period of British South Africa

¹⁴⁸ T. R. C. Curtin, “Rhodesian Economic Development under Sanctions and ‘The Long Haul’” in *African Affairs*, Volume 67, No. 267, April, 1968, pp. 107-109.

¹⁴⁹ T. H. Mothibe, “Zimbabwe: African Working Class Nationalism”, pp. 160-161.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid, p. 164.

Company (Chartered) rule (up to 1923) but also during and after the Second World War, loss of confidence abroad in the political stability of the Federation between 1953 and 1963 contributed to the economic stagnation.¹⁵³

Sir Edgar Whitehead replaced Sir Garfield Todd as Prime Minister in 1958. Whitehead's policies were influenced not only by the political ideology of his party but also by political developments in the Federation, such as the riots in Nyasaland in 1959 and the intensification of African political activities in Southern Rhodesia. He thus responded by adopting more liberal policies and also facilitating the creation of a moneyed African middle class that was to act as a buffer between whites and Africans but his government failed to arrest the problem of low pay and increasing poverty among Africans. In 1958, his government appointed an Urban African Affairs Commission under the chairmanship of R. P. Plewman to look into the affairs of urban Africans.

The Plewman Commission pointed out that wages for Africans were low especially for those with families to support. It noted that the productivity of African labour had been said to be low and this had been advanced as the main cause of the low wage level that prevailed, but the wages were below the poverty datum line and urged labour boards to fix wages with reference to minimum needs of the normal, married type of labourer, not thinking of the labourer as a single person and in such a way as not to encourage frequent migration. The commission also stressed the need to reduce economic and social insecurity which daily confronted urban Africans partly by allowing Africans freehold tenure, converting leasehold to freehold for tenants in home ownership schemes.¹⁵⁴

Because of the economic stagnation, the Rhodesian and Nyasaland Chambers of Industries called for the introduction of a three day working week for African industrial employees. But Labour and Social Welfare Minister A. E. Abrahamsen rejected the proposals in 1958 because he thought in Bulawayo alone the short working week would adversely affect about 8,000 Africans.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ T. R. C. Curtin, "Rhodesian Economic Development under Sanctions", p. 106.

¹⁵⁴ *The African Daily News*, Wednesday, July 2, 1958, "Commission Recommends that Africans get freehold title in urban areas."

¹⁵⁵ *The African Daily News*, Saturday July 12, 1958, "Three-day Week no Answer to any Industrial Problem."

In 1958, Whitehead blamed the increasing African population for causing unemployment and stressed that the government wished to deal with it through the development of rural areas, specifically through the NLH Act of 1951. He argued that the proportion of people who did not get land to cultivate in rural areas would be absorbed by the subsidiary occupations in African areas as well as in the European rural areas, farms and mines. The remainder of locals were to depend on work in secondary industry in towns.¹⁵⁶ However, the NLHA was a dismal failure in this respect and local African workers shunned European rural areas, farms and mines because they paid low wages and employers were regarded as rough.¹⁵⁷

Minister Abrahamsen unconvincingly argued that “unemployment amongst Africans ... is extremely difficult to determine. It is a problem of deployment rather than employment to a very great degree the majority of those in employment, even in the urban areas, are still migratory...”¹⁵⁸ He therefore refused to increase African wages as recommended by the Plewman Commission indicating that the minimum wage was “adequate” and no great increase could be absorbed by industry at that stage. He argued that a large wage increment without relation to increased production would be inflationary and accused urban Africans of putting a high valuation on leisure, suggesting that they should learn the connection between earnings and productivity.¹⁵⁹ This impasse hit most African workers hard, severely affecting their ability to pay rents and setting the stage for confrontation.

African workers earned far less than European workers. In 1959 for example, the average African earnings per annum were £80 for the higher earning sector of the African population. For Europeans in Southern Rhodesia the figure stood at £1,055. The minimum subsistence wage for a married African was £14 per month. African workers in the manufacturing industry, however, still earned, on average only 63% of the £14. Industrialist Mr J. de Haas argued that to safeguard unskilled Europeans in Southern

¹⁵⁶ *The African Daily News*, Friday, July 18, 1958, “Government’s First duty is to Southern Rhodesian Africans—Premier.”

¹⁵⁷ For reasons why the Native Land Husbandry Act failed in Matabeleland areas of Nkayi and Lupane, see Jocelyn Alexander *et al*, *Violence and Memory*, p. 77.

¹⁵⁸ *The African Daily News*, Saturday July 12, 1958, “Three-day week no answer to any Industrial Problem.”

¹⁵⁹ Minister quoted in *The Daily News*, Saturday, August 9, 1958, “Govt Not Keen to Raise Minimum Wage.”

Rhodesia “we must establish a wage level at which the unskilled, black or white, can live as a useful member of society.”¹⁶⁰ Benefits of increasing wages for Africans included greater prospects for political stability, enlarged market for industrialists and increased productivity. While Minister Abrahamsen agreed that a fundamental problem was the wide wages gap, he stated that to close this, “I do not intend to create a poor white class. The Africans must be brought up to the level of the white man.”¹⁶¹ However, it was clear that there was no policy to raise the Africans to the level of the white man.

Abrahamsen’s stance augured well for the new Whitehead government’s desire to correct the “wrongs” committed by Todd who was said to be too liberal towards Africans and this was in line with the racist attitudes exhibited by some white residents in the country. One “40 Years Resident” Bulawayo correspondent for example, argued in the *Chronicle* that:

It was time the authorities became aware of ...the futility of the attempts by residents [white] to show the African his place “in our social order”, “which is, and must be, that of a hewer of wood and drawer of water.” ...The average native today is lazy, dirty, disobedient and above all insolent, as witness the obstruction on our sidewalks any day, when our white women are frequently compelled to give way while native swagger idle along giving place to none. My blood boils at the way they jostle our women folk and failing the proper control of authority, it will not be surprising if some Europeans take action themselves.¹⁶²

The predicament of foreign migrant workers was even worse as they faced increased sanction since the late 1950s.

Colonial rule dramatically altered the pattern of host-stranger relations in Africa. In some cities like in Nigeria, colonial authorities went to extremes of institutionalising divisions between the so called “natives and “non-natives”, enclosing strangers in specific areas and dividing urban space according to race and religion.¹⁶³ Foreign workers in Bulawayo lived in bachelor accommodation in the city, a number established

¹⁶⁰ *Chronicle*, Saturday, September 10, 1960, “Conference on Increasing Productivity Vital, ARNI votes; Benefits from narrowing wages gap, advancing Africans outlined.”

¹⁶¹ Minister quoted in *The Daily News*, Saturday, August 9, 1958, “Govt Not Keen to Raise Minimum Wage.”

¹⁶² *Chronicle*, Friday, March 3, 1950, “Pro-African Bias in Courts is Alleged”-by “40 Years Resident.”

¹⁶³ Laurent Fourchard, “Dealing with “Strangers’: Allocating urban space to Migrants in Nigeria and French West Africa, End of the Nineteenth Century to 1960”, in Francesca Locatelli and Paul Nugent (eds), *African Cities: Competing Claims on Urban Spaces*, pp. 187, 188 and 199-200. See also Francesca Locatelli, “Beyond the Campo Cintano”, in the same book, pp. 219-240.

homes on the peri-urban area of Hyde Park in Bulawayo where they built cheap accommodation using pole and dagga and thatched with grass. Juma Maseko Phiri, a foreign migrant worker originally from Malawi, indicated that in 1952 foreign migrants in Bulawayo were ordered to find stands and built homes in Hyde Park by an official known as Van de Beer who accused them of squandering their money on local women and then remaining stranded in the city without any accommodation.¹⁶⁴ Charlton Ngcebetsa, assistant to the director of housing and community services, highlighted that their community was still “as poor as church mice... and has always been one of the poorest in the history of Bulawayo.”¹⁶⁵

In the late 1950s when unemployment in urban areas of colonial Zimbabwe was increasing, black foreign immigrants, known as *Abezizweni* (those from other nations) in Bulawayo, easily became scapegoats for both the state and unemployed local Africans. In July 1958, Prime Minister Whitehead emphasized that the duty of the government was to look after the interests of the indigenous Africans in regard to employment and proper housing first before considering those of foreign African workers, noting that the government was going to control the influx of alien labour and take only those who could find employment in the farms and mines. Whitehead blamed the unemployment problem in towns on the mal-distribution of labour and accused foreign workers for causing unemployment for locals out of jobs.¹⁶⁶

Local Africans accused foreign migrants of contributing to low wages in Southern Rhodesia by accepting extremely low wages. However, Mr J. F. da Chunga, a Portuguese African leader in Bulawayo refuted the allegations that foreigners were responsible for low wages earned as foreign migrants worked all sorts of odd jobs that locals shunned because they traditionally carried low wages.¹⁶⁷ Such jobs included municipal manual labour that consisted of the dirtiest, most physically exerting and worst paying jobs in the urban area, including road building and repairing, stone breaking and carrying of the

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Juma Maseko-Phiri. I was, however not able to confirm this claim during the course of my research.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Charlton Ngcebetsa Jnr, Bulawayo Tower Block, Bulawayo, Wednesday 7 January 2009.

¹⁶⁶ *The African Daily News*, Friday, July 18, 1958, “Government’s First duty is to Southern Rhodesian Africans—Premier.”

¹⁶⁷ *The African Daily News*, Friday, August 15, 1958, “P. E. A. Africans not Responsible for Low Wages.”

quarry and other manual jobs around town. All tasks were essentially “pick and shovel.”¹⁶⁸

As a result, the national government’s 1958 Foreign Migratory Labour Act closed the cities of Bulawayo and Salisbury to entry by foreign migrants and only allowed them to seek work in mines, farms and logging companies, jobs that were shunned by locals and paid low wages when compared to urban jobs.¹⁶⁹ Welcoming the 1958 Foreign Labour Migratory Act, Samsom Mdladla argued that:

In 1955 I wrote to the African press complaining about the unrestricted control of foreign migrants from the Portuguese territories, who came to take jobs from our mouths here, not because they work better than us, but because they accept any wages, even very low. Nobody listened to the good complaints I put forward because I am a poor, simple boy, who can not speak much English...by controlling these people our PM, Sir Edgar has shown to be a man of vision-Long Live Edgar. But I must tell him that he should have done this to... Nyasalanders with their children... youths for P.E.A and ...Congo...Europeans from South Africa, Italy, Mozambique, excepting (sic) those from England and America...¹⁷⁰

Africans’ struggle against low wages in Bulawayo was not only waged against white employers, but also against African businessmen, most of them members of the African Advisory Boards. In the 1940s, Percy Ibbotson of the Welfare Society observed cases “of Africans paying very low wages to other Africans in their employ; in certain cases the wages paid were disgracefully low.”¹⁷¹ Defending the payment of low wages in 1957, Z. T. Chigumira, chairman of the Bulawayo Chamber of African Commerce argued that though “ill paid at times” workers in the employment of African capitalists had no reason to complain, since they were mere rejects who could not find jobs elsewhere.¹⁷²

This arrogant view that Africans should not complain when oppressed by fellow Africans continued to resonate among the former nationalists who assumed power in 1980 in Zimbabwe. At least in 1960 African workers could openly defy leading African

¹⁶⁸ Stephen Thornton, “Municipal Employment in Bulawayo, 1895-1935: An Assessment of Differing Forms of Proletarianisation” in *Southern African Research in Progress, Collected Papers*, 4, 1979, pp. 133-5. While Thornton’s paper focused on the period before 1935, the stigma associated with manual jobs in the city endured for most of the colonial period.

¹⁶⁹ Bill Paton, *Labour Export Policy in the Development of Southern Africa*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with the Institute of Social Studies, 1995), p. 124.

¹⁷⁰ *The African Daily News*, Thursday, August 14, 1958, “Mdladla Welcomes Influx Control Measures.”

¹⁷¹ Michael O. West, “Pan-Africanism, Capitalism and Racial Uplift: The Rhetoric of African Business Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe”, in *African Affairs* (1993), 92, p. 279.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, p. 280.

politicians without sanction. For example, according to Michael West, a well known trade unionist in Bulawayo went to a factory to address a group of striking workers. However, the workers forced him to leave “quicker than he had come”, driving him away by shouting “Go away misleading politician. We only want more pay here, not politics.”¹⁷³ Therefore, as West rightly observed, African nationalist politics seemed to be the exclusive province of “political men” who regarded workers as pawns in their high stakes game.¹⁷⁴

As it was extremely difficult for Africans not employed in formal jobs to access housing, it is appropriate to explore complications that related to the provision of African housing before 1960.

1.2 Struggles over the Provision of Housing to Africans before 1960.

In colonial Zimbabwe, “nowhere was the strain in African urban resources more apparent than in the sphere of accommodation.”¹⁷⁵ Visiting the British colonies in the late 1930s for example, Lord Bailey observed that many members of the colonial services desired to prevent or postpone urbanisation or the stabilisation of labour and were reluctant to extend state expenditure for the advantage of Africans living in towns. This anti-urbanism was most evident in settler colonies like Kenya and the Rhodesias, worse in South Africa but was also present in some shape or form in other colonies throughout the region.¹⁷⁶

In the 1940s, Donald Macintyre, the most vocal Bulawayo councillor believed that it was the responsibility of the government to provide African housing instead of expecting

¹⁷³ Ibid, p. 282.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. Phimister and Raftopolous pointed out how earlier political organizations in Bulawayo like The Federation of Bulawayo African Workers Union, The Bulawayo African Workers Trade Union, The African Workers Voice Association tended to be organized on exclusionist tendencies, with meetings and membership confined to the “rich” businessmen of the middle class who considered themselves as ‘long term residents’ of the city as opposed to the rest who were regarded as temporary migrants. The leaders tended to pursue interests that related to their trade like the removal of Indian shops from African areas. It was only around mid 1947 when the economy was overheating and prices were surging (because of inflation) that some black leaders began to associate themselves with the rising tide of the urban workers’ militancy, see Ian Phimister and Brian Raftopolous, “Kana sora ratswa ngaritswe”: African Nationalists and Black Workers-The 1948 General Strike in Colonial Zimbabwe”, in *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol. 13, No. 3 August 2000.

¹⁷⁵ D. Johnson, *World War II and the Scramble for Labour*, p. 143.

¹⁷⁶ Richard Gray, *The Two Nations: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland*, (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 24-25.

the Council and white ratepayers to shoulder that burden. Giving evidence to the Howman Commission in November 1943, Macintyre attacked “the selfish view of the industrialist” that was demanding “a steady labour force” and accommodation for African wives in town and argued that only temporal bachelor workers were good for the city.¹⁷⁷

Since Macintyre became the most powerful and famous city councillor in Rhodesia, rabidly opposed to council provision of housing to Africans, Prime Minister Godfrey Huggins believed that there was no hope for the Bulawayo Location as long as Macintyre had any influence there.¹⁷⁸ In 1945 Huggins told Parliament:

When I walked round the Bulawayo Location with a town councillor (Macintyre) shortly after I had become Minister of Native Affairs, I saw a few nice houses and I saw many not too nice houses and I said to the town councillor: “When are you going to build some more of these modern houses and get rid of these filthy places”, and he said: “When the natives drink more beer.” That was my introduction to Municipal native housing ... It was an odd remark by an odd person, and it should never have been made, but it illustrates the outlook of these people when they suggest that housing should be built out of beer-hall profits.¹⁷⁹

This kind of bickering between the central and local governments during the 1940s over the provision of services to urban Africans characterised the post colonial relations between the two and impacted on the provision of amenities to low income earners in Bulawayo.

In the 1940s, Prime Minister Huggins, who was determined to change policy, initially towards a more rational and complete system of segregation and subsequently towards recognition of a permanent black working class in the towns, finally got his way through the N(UA)ARA of 1946. The Act basically gave full responsibility to local government authorities for providing housing to Africans but without control over the necessary financial resources. According to Terence Ranger, the N(UA)ARA was arguably the most important state intervention in Rhodesia’s urban areas in the whole period of colonial rule because although it was belatedly implemented in Bulawayo, it partly stimulated and partly coincided with an extraordinary transformation of the city’s African areas during the 1950s.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ T. Ranger, “City Versus State in Zimbabwe”, p. 175.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 177.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Terence Ranger, “City, State and the Struggle over African Housing.”

Huggins' intervention with N(UA)ARA was however, perhaps a case of too little, too late. The damage had already been done. Forcing councils to provide African housing without financial support could be interpreted as a way of evading responsibility on part of the national government. Worse still, parts of N(UA)ARA were ambiguous and could be used by authorities to disqualify Africans from council accommodation. For example, Clause 37 provided for an African to remain in occupation of premises in an African residential area during a period of employment if he was "good in character"¹⁸¹ and had a valid reason for doing so.¹⁸²

After the passing of N(UA)ARA in 1946, the Bulawayo Council dragged its feet in implementing its provisions. One crucial condition to be implemented was the setting up of the African Administration Department which was finally done in 1949 to spearhead the provision of African housing and Dr. Hugh E. Ashton, an anthropologist, was appointed Director of this department and served until his retirement in 1976. This was after the recommendations of the 1948 McNamee Report. J. P. McNamee had been appointed by the council (as a one-man commission) to report on African township conditions. He exposed that in compounds provided by the city council for its African employees:

the habitations and sanitary arrangements were primitive in the extreme" and that large numbers of Africans were residing in industrial settlements that could be best regarded as shanty and further stressed the urgent and inevitable need to improve living conditions for Africans in townships.¹⁸³

The national government applied more force to push the intransigent Bulawayo municipality into providing accommodation for Africans. The government held up the city's industrial development by forbidding the sale of industrial sites until it had received a satisfactory housing scheme for employed Africans. The Minister of Native

¹⁸¹ "Good character" in colonial thinking probably referred to the opposite of being ill-mannered and not insolent, insolent Africans here described as those men who shouted, threw notes to the ground, made a scene outside government offices, and expressed their anger. See Allison Shutt, "The Natives Are Getting Out of Hand": Legislating Manners, Insolence and Contemptuous Behaviour in Southern Rhodesia, c1910-1963' in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33: 3, pp. 653-672.

¹⁸² NAZ S482/163/41 Native Urban Areas, Housing Regulations, Telegram from Governor's Deputy, Salisbury to Secretary of State, London, 16th February, 1946 and Memorandum, Natives (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Bill (1945) in the same file. Also see Koni Benson and J. Chadya, "Gender and Sexual Violence in Bulawayo", pp. 590-591.

¹⁸³ The *Mc Namee Report* on the Native Administration in the City of Bulawayo and the Implementation of N(UA)ARA, 1946, Bulawayo, 2nd December 1948, pp. 4, 6 and 2.

Affairs also wanted the industrialists to exert pressure on the Bulawayo Council to provide housing to Africans. He argued that:

I have the feeling that the matter of Native housing is going to advance pretty rapidly in the near future... I have advised industrialists, etc that I will put every possible obstacle in the way of future building and the alienation of further industrial sites until the position has progressed far beyond its present stage. How far I can carry this threat remains to be seen, but the main object in making it is to "wake them up." As a body they have done absolutely nothing, I have told them that it is in their interests to appoint a strong delegation to call upon the city council and get a future programme planned. I want the pressure to come from present and future employers; I want to bring them into the fight instead of it being between the council and ourselves. I am letting you know the position as the bubble is now sure to burst, and if you disapprove of my tactics, let me know before it is too late and I can retract.¹⁸⁴

When the Minister of Native Affairs made this threat in November 1949, the national government had already stopped approving of any sale of industrial land. There were 39 applications in the hands of the government; while a further 28 applicants were negotiating with the council. The capital involved in the 39 applications which the Government was holding up was £750,000. In many instances the money had been raised and was lying idle and in others credit had been mortgaged while about £30,464 had already been paid to the council as purchase price.¹⁸⁵

Bulawayo councillors were alarmed and upset by the government's action. Councillor S. H. Millar noted the matter was tied up with finance, and neither the municipality nor rate payers (white) could afford to subsidise African housing for the industrialist. He argued that the national government should make the money available at "very reasonable interest," that African housing was a domestic issue that should entirely be the council's affair and protested that the national government intervened in a domestic issue, but left the council to foot the bill, highlighting that:

The Government must be told it was beyond the capacity of the council or its rate payers to provide enormous amount of accommodation outstanding. While the council got little from the industrialist, the Government got a lot from taxes. A council by-law which compelled householders to house their servants was sufficient burden of ratepayers.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ NAZ S482/145/49 Native Urban Areas, Housing Policies, Letter from the Minister of Native Affairs to the Prime Minister, Salisbury, 23rd November 1949.

¹⁸⁵ *Chronicle*, Thursday, March 2, 1950, "Sale of Sites for Industry Held Up in City: No Native Housing...No Permits...Cabinet Action."

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Councillor J. H. Bailey believed that the government was well aware that it must provide the money. The most vocal of the Bulawayo councillors, Donald Macintyre argued that the ban on the sale of industrial stands was “so stupid that I could hardly credit it that it emanated from a Government...It was an unjustified threat, but the Minister indicated that it was intended for Salisbury...It was never intended for Bulawayo at all...Someone has blundered.”¹⁸⁷ He added that the Government could not escape its responsibility and it could not expect a municipality to accomplish in two years what it had failed to accomplish in fifty and thus argued that “the Government was merely passing the buck.”¹⁸⁸ Councillor Colonel Newman argued that never in his “recollection of council affairs had so serious a situation arisen” and he feared that news that “Bulawayo was not allowed to sell land” would do irreparable damage to the city’s development as 349, 121, and 2,225 Europeans, Coloureds and Africans respectively were expected to be employed in these industries that the government was refusing to approve.¹⁸⁹

The temporary banning of sales of industrial sites in Bulawayo therefore arrested the industrial expansion of the city, though the long term impact of this was not clear. However, the naming of Salisbury (now Harare) as the seat of the federal government in 1953 may have convinced prospective industrialists that the industrial future of the country no longer lay in Bulawayo but in Salisbury, hence Bulawayo gradually lost its position as the industrial capital of Southern Rhodesia and never recovered it.

When the African Administration department was set up in 1949, the accommodation crisis was already at its peak. Residents complained about high rents, overcrowding and lack of privacy in bachelor accommodation.¹⁹⁰ On top of this, residents were raided by council authorities to ease overcrowding tendencies. Initially, some township residents accepted municipal police raids as they were afraid that loafers and loiters would steal their property but raiding was eventually resented because of the lack of alternative accommodation.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ T. O. Ranger, “City versus State in Zimbabwe”, p. 166.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p. 164.

In the 1940s, police frequently raided No. 2 Railway compound (the most crowded of the compounds) in search of illicit beer, prostitutes and other unauthorised guests.¹⁹² This was a very difficult scenario for the generally sexually starved male workers who faced eviction for harbouring any unauthorised guests. In 1958 raids were detested in townships because of the absence of alternative accommodation for many employees in industry and commerce. Residents argued that as long as the causes of overcrowding existed, the “nocturnal police raids” were not going to be a remedy.¹⁹³

Despite a strong call by the national government in the 1940s to prioritise family accommodation, the African Administration department built more bachelor accommodation like the Burombo, Sidojiwe, and Vundu hostels in the 1950s. Calling for the building of family accommodation, Prime Minister Huggins had stressed the importance of “decent living conditions for married natives ... to get away from the unnatural life of males living together without their wives ... We have to realise that a permanent urban class is arising.”¹⁹⁴ This was also despite the fact that the number of black women in Bulawayo was estimated to have expanded three times faster than the male population between 1944 and 1949 even though precise figures do not exist.¹⁹⁵

The Southern Rhodesia Christian Conference President Reverend H. H. Morley Wright highlighted that “The erection of large hostels for single men often creates far more problems than it solves...” and referred to them as barracks that would never be a success in any part of the world, a palliative that was to be dispensed with in urban areas.¹⁹⁶ This was reiterated by the Plewman Commission that recommended more emphasis on married accommodation, highlighting that:

An African housing policy that tends to concentrate so largely on the construction of accommodation (mainly hostels) for single persons in an urban community cannot be healthy, socially and economically, for the community as a whole. ...To make provision for a stable urban population implies having an urban community in which married and single persons, old and young, can seek to

¹⁹² D. Johnson, *World War II and the Scramble for Labour*, p. 147. The compound housed Railway employees, many of whom had brought in their wives and children.

¹⁹³ *The African Daily News*, Wednesday, July 23, 1958, “The Municipal Police Raids.”

¹⁹⁴ T. Ranger, “City versus State in Zimbabwe”, p. 180. Also see *City of Bulawayo, Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health*, 1946, p. 28.

¹⁹⁵ Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe*, p. 259.

¹⁹⁶ *The African Daily News*, Saturday, August 30, 1958, “Good Homes, Not Hostels, Required in Towns--- Church Leader.”

establish themselves in homes and in a way best suited to meet the changing requirements as individuals, families and community groups.¹⁹⁷

However, other colonial officials supported the building of hostels. Writing in 1958, G. H. Hartley strongly called for the building of hostels for Africans indicating that this was suitable for their migrant worker status. Hartley noted that many of the illiterate poor migrants only worked for any average of 5.3 months before leaving for greener pastures and argued that the greatest problem therefore, which had to be faced was how and where and what kind of accommodation was to be provided for this portion of the city's labour force. Migrants from other countries only arrived with a few rags and a pot with which to prepare food. Being wholly unskilled and generally inexperienced, Hartley argued that they commanded the lowest rates of wages and so, on arrival in the city they were certainly not in a position to purchase bicycles or to pay daily bus fares to travel between their living accommodation and places of employment and worse still, land nearer to the Central Business District was of high market value which "most poor migrants could not afford staying on."¹⁹⁸ Hartley therefore called for more dense multi-storied hostels as the answer for the poor migrants and that because it was not feasible to predict an end to African labour migration for the foreseeable future, "no fears needed to be entertained concerning the wisdom of building hostels for the accommodation of migrant males" in the city.¹⁹⁹

Other single men failed to pay rents in bachelor accommodation. In 1956 for example, sixty-six single men were evicted from the Bulawayo townships for failing to pay their rents.²⁰⁰ Bachelor workers resorted to lodging, where they paid relatively lower rents and where they could accommodate their wives, thus contributing to serious overcrowding and near slum conditions that caused serious disease outbreaks. In his annual reports in 1953 and 1954 the Medical Officer for example, lamented the high deaths rate of Africans from diseases that were preventable, reflecting the existence of two unsatisfactory conditions, that is, overcrowding and "a lack of a reasonable standard

¹⁹⁷ The Plewman Commission quoted in *The African Daily News*, Wednesday, July 2, 1958, "Hostels Opposed in Urban Affairs Report."

¹⁹⁸ G. Hartley, "The Development of an Urban African Community", *NADA*, Volume 35, 1958, p. 93.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ Minutes of African Townships Advisory Boards Meeting, Thursday 29 March 1956, p. 1.

of hygiene for the African population.”²⁰¹ Blaming Africans for poor hygiene standards was reminiscent of the “sanitation syndrome” that many colonial officials were obsessed with. The tendency to regard the proximity of Africans (the “dirty” races) as a source of contagion in colonial Africa was referred to by Maynard Swanson as the “sanitation syndrome” under which “overcrowding, slums, public health and safety... were...perceived largely in terms of colour differences.”²⁰²

1.3 Increasing African Demands for Security of Tenure in Urban Areas.

Since the 1930s, members of the African middle class concentrated their efforts on winning the right to live permanently in urban areas.²⁰³ Calls for security of tenure in African housing intensified in the 1950s. In home ownership schemes, disabilities of rented areas were reduced, over-crowding was more strictly controlled; the houses were detached or semi-detached on larger plots; and “the poorest and most shiftless people have been excluded,”²⁰⁴ much to the delight of middle class Africans. However, whereas the national government was more concerned with the political expediency of providing security of tenure for Africans with the hope of lessening the threat or chances of political unrest, local authorities were more anxious about issues of control, supervision and health conditions. Municipalities were still concerned about the bigger task of housing the African majority that was supposedly “not keen” on accommodation that provided security of tenure.²⁰⁵ In 1953, the mayor of Bulawayo supported African access to freehold tenure but underscored that it was “not so much the economics of freehold and leasehold as the political aspect of it, and that [it] would certainly go a long way to removing at least one of the grouses that these people have.”²⁰⁶

Middle class Africans questioned the wisdom of treating all Africans alike, arguing that “there were some Africans with integrity, moral courage, who were educated and

²⁰¹ City of Bulawayo, Annual Reports of the Medical Officer for the years 1953, p. 9 and 1954, p.11.

Venereal diseases also ravaged the African population.

²⁰² M. Swanson, cited in Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanli-ness in Modern Zimbabwe*, (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), pp. 35-36.

²⁰³ Ian Phimister and Brian Raftopolous, “African Nationalists and Black Workers”, p. 297.

²⁰⁴ E. S. Gargett, *The Administration of Transition*, pp. 54-5.

²⁰⁵ Ennie Chipembere, *MPhil Thesis Draft*, chapter 3, p. 43.

²⁰⁶ Conference on Native Housing, 21st May 1953, p. 21.

cultured.”²⁰⁷ They noted that Africans with the means to afford their own houses on freehold tenure wanted have access to such a facility. Without this, according to M. Hove, Member of Parliament for Matabeleland in the Federal Assembly:

...the African must continue to have one leg in the reserve and the other in town – a policy the Government disapproves. It [was] ethically wrong to expect the African to put his best into his working in urban areas when he [had] no freehold neither there nor in the reserves.²⁰⁸

The Plewman Commission, like the middle classes, warned that Africans could no longer be viewed as “one undifferentiated and homogenous mass of people, all unskilled or semi-skilled, all having interests in rural life, all with no real aspirations to have a stake in urban settlement and in the intellectual and economic progress that goes with a settled way of life in cities and towns.”²⁰⁹ This view discriminated against and disqualified low income Africans from any eligibility for security of tenure in urban areas.

Other whites were however, adamant that “any opening to the door of property rights in African residential areas might lead to large-scale migration to towns with the resultant evils that go with overcrowding in dwellings and in residential areas.”²¹⁰ G. H. Hartley dismissed most urban workers as migrants not deserving of serious provision of amenities. He for example, argued that the great mass of Africans employed in the city belonged to the class of “the illiterate migrant” whose members were usually content to reside in quarters provided upon employers’ premises or in hostels in the Native Urban Areas, noting that:

...in reality, they should not be classified as urban Africans at all for their roots remain in the native reserves and in the case of the non-indigenous their hearts are at their homes in neighbouring territories. They are essentially migrant in character. ...this migrant habit has been the rule for decades, if not centuries. This is a social phenomenon which has little, if any, connection with local living conditions and its roots lie deep in the history of Africa as a whole.²¹¹

Hartley accused migrants in urban areas of continuing to follow a traditional custom which had been modified and adapted to meet new conditions, now “manifesting itself in

²⁰⁷ *Bantu Mirror*, 15 May 1954, “African Opinion on Freehold land Tenure in Urban Areas.”

²⁰⁸ *Bantu Mirror*, 22 May 1954, “Bulawayo Leaders on Freehold Land Tenure.”

²⁰⁹ Report of the Urban African Affairs [Plewman] Commission, Salisbury, 1958, p. 36.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 96.

²¹¹ G. H. Hartley, “The Development of an Urban African Community”, p. 89.

the form of wandering from town to town and from job to job, but still satisfying the ingrained urge to roam.”²¹² He thus encouraged urban authorities never to trouble themselves with the welfare of such Africans of low class. Racist ideas were brought into discourse in situations of crises or when the social structure of the white settler community seemed to be under threat. Black stereotypes could be used in allegations of black peril or in labour crises to strengthen the case against the administration, which was under attack from the settlers for failing to produce either safety or a steady supply of labour, in which situation the Africans could be depicted as either lazy or sexually out of control according to the situation.²¹³

For African workers themselves “the question was not how urban they proposed to become but how to access the resources of the town in a way that enabled their lives to be improved.”²¹⁴ Hartley and other colonial officials failed to understand this problem. According to Freund, urbanisation as a process was something that came second to this and workers were inclined to struggle to maintain their situations at both ends rather than be defined by the state as either peasants or proletarians. Because poor urban migrants had themselves valued the necessity of a transient and ambulant existence, there was some collusion between their self-defined needs and the systematic tendency of colonial rulers to minimise spending on urban planning and infrastructure.²¹⁵

White residents in Bulawayo resented the presence of Africans’ wives in the city and blamed them for the disease outbreaks. “Hygiene” for example, a correspondent in the *Chronicle*, argued that:

The presence of fly nuisance, and typhoid threat, might be caused by the now large number of native women who, with their families, live with their houseboy husbands in the backyards, causing overcrowding. A lot of our immigrants (whites) are spoiling their houseboys by allowing them to have their so called wives and families living on the property, but possibly they do not know the law. It is said the only time native women are permitted to stay on the premises is when they are employed. It is difficult to explain how they can cook or look after European children when they have a young family of their own down the backyard in the kia to attend to. The piccanins are seldom taught hygiene, and usually make use of the backyard as a latrine just as they do at their kraal. The practice of allowing

²¹² Ibid, p. 95.

²¹³ T. Ranger, cited in Lene Bull-Christiansen, *Tales of the Nation*, pp. 46-47.

²¹⁴ B. Freund, *The African City*, p. 96

²¹⁵ Ibid.

boys to house their families in town also causes dissatisfaction among those whose employers know and keep the law.²¹⁶

“1903 Bulawayo”, another correspondent in the *Chronicle*, claimed that Africans in the city were suffering from “hygiene bar”, not colour bar, highlighting that:

The Monckton Commissioners have singled Southern Rhodesia out on the question of colour bar. I suggest they should live in the location and reserves and they will then realise that what is operating out here is a HYGIENE BAR, and not colour bar. My domestics were given new premises and needless to say their quarters are now filthy. They can not expect the owner to clean for them. They also get two kinds of soap per week and I found one of them hoarding the soap to send to his pals.²¹⁷

This was the typical thinking during the heyday of colonial rule when administrators and some white residents took it for granted that the African was naturally a rural inhabitant whose urban experience was in danger to the integrity of African society as well as to the colonial authority. Dame Margery Perham, an influential colonial ideologue, argued that “this situation subjects them [Africans] to an increase in social strain.”²¹⁸

This negative European public opinion that called for the discriminatory segregation of Africans was castigated by the Plewman Commission. For example, the Commission stated that the siting of African urban residential areas should be such as would still give the worker easy access to his place of work and pointed out that wherever African townships have been placed far from the place of work, European public sentiment had been responsible. It stated that:

Threats of encroachment of African settlement on European settlement and fear of possible damage both to amenities and property values in the later areas of settlement tend to reflect themselves in the European desire not only for separation but in some cases also for long distance urban separation...the tendency to erect African housing in residential areas many miles away from the occupants place of work is seen to be an undesirable one as it imposes burdens, in time and money, on all sections of the community.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ *Chronicle*, Friday, January 20, 1950, “Native Families in Town”, Letter to the Editor by “Hygiene”, Bulawayo.

²¹⁷ *Chronicle*, Friday, October 28, 1960, “Hygiene, not colour bar in colony”, Letter to the Editor by “1903 Bulawayo.”

²¹⁸ Dame Margery Perham, cited in Bill Freund, *The African City*, p. 83.

²¹⁹ *The African Daily News*, Wednesday, July 2, 1958, “Commission Stresses Need for Housing near Places of Work.”

The report noted that these prejudices were not necessarily based on right reasoning or on a fair appraisal of facts. “Nor are they necessarily a safe guide as to the course that should be followed if the interests of the community as a whole are to be truly served.”²²⁰

1.4 Conclusion

In 1959, the official national government policy was to encourage a permanent settled African urban community to provide a stable labour force for industry and commerce and also to accommodate the growing number of landless Africans. However, this policy suffered from contradictions that arose from the divergent interests between the government, capital, white labour and unemployed local Africans. Martin Loney argued that for one to understand white politics in Southern Rhodesia, “analysis has to be based on an appreciation of the conflicting interests of the different groups in white society and their relative historical strength. The crucial issue [being] the attitude of the different white social classes towards the African population.”²²¹ White wage workers were opposed to any policy that might result in competition from Africans, while farmers opposed any policy that would result in an increase of African wages or reduce the supply of cheap African labour. On the other hand, the interests of the manufacturing sector lay in measures that increased the African market, the African’s buying power and productivity in industry.²²² Local Africans did not want to work in rural areas but flocked to urban areas where the government preferred to have employed Africans only.

At local authority level, in practice, this policy was still hampered by a number of restrictions imposed upon urban residence by Africans. Local authorities still had power to banish any African they deemed undesirable, which meant, among other things, being unemployed for more than a month. In 1959, sixteen such persons were ordered out of Bulawayo.²²³ Single men still shared housing with families under conditions Ashton described as “proving even more unsatisfactory than had been anticipated.”²²⁴ The disadvantage of such accommodation was “...the inevitable accumulation of wives,

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Martin Loney, *Rhodesia-White Racism and Imperial Response*, (London: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 77.

²²² Ibid, p. 77-78.

²²³ F. Nehwati, “The Social and Communal Background to ‘Zhi’”, pp. 261-262.

²²⁴ Report of the Director of the African Administration Dept, 1958-59, Annexure 9, quoted in Nehwati, “The Social and Communal Background to *Zhi*”, p. 262.

sweethearts and prostitutes which is difficult to control and which leads to the overloading of social services, overcrowding and lawlessness.”²²⁵

African housing in Bulawayo was still exclusively a municipal responsibility. The occupation of municipal houses was on a monthly tenancy and it was on a long lease agreement in Luveve Native Village Settlement built on Crown Land and where the national government was the landlord. The municipality reserved the right to evict the tenant or terminate the lease any time under a host of circumstances from which the African leaseholders were not legally protected. Under the N(UA)ARA unemployed Africans were allowed only a limited period to seek work, and risked prosecution for contravening the pass laws if they attempted to seek work wherever they wished. The African Affairs Act and the African (Registration and Identification) Act of 1957 restricted freedom of movement and entry to (white) industrial areas.²²⁶

The reasons for the existence of poor housing conditions experienced by the majority of African workers in Bulawayo are not very hard to find. In colonial Zimbabwe, the growth of a settled African urban population was not anticipated, nor was it acknowledged by Europeans when it occurred. It was until the 1950s that the public policy entailed anything but manifest reluctance to accept or facilitate permanent African settlement in town. Gargett aptly observed that “The provision of urban housing got off to a late start, against an accumulated backlog, and under a persistent belief that Africans were essentially rural dwellers whose adaptation to urban life could at best be only partial.”²²⁷ That backlog continued to widen. Therefore in Bulawayo, just as was the case in Mombasa, Kenya, the urban working class in general came into being before its place in the city had been blessed by the colonial state.²²⁸

The following chapter analyses the state’s response to increasing unemployment and poverty in Bulawayo between 1960 and 1980.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Reginald Austin, *Racism and Apartheid in South Africa*, (Paris: The UNESCO Press, 1975), p. 66.

²²⁷ E. Gargett, *The Administration of Transition*, p. 40.

²²⁸ F. Cooper, *On the African Waterfront*, p. 248.

Chapter 2.

State Response to Unemployment and Poverty during the “Turbulent Years”, 1960-1980.

This chapter analyses the state response to struggles made by various groups of the urban poor to remain in Bulawayo in the face of increasing unemployment and job insecurity during the “turbulent” years when national politics began to seriously affect local governments and became an important background to the councils’ administration of African affairs.²²⁹ It is argued that the state was more concerned about its political and economic survival and thus promoted policies that sought to exclude undesirable unemployed Africans from the city, restricting the entry of foreign black workers to the city, intensifying efforts to keep rural Africans away from urban areas and condoning clandestine labour migration to South Africa. Radicalising African nationalist activities and riots in urban areas unsettled the ruling white national government which responded by introducing draconian legislation to stabilise the African labour and also to force undesirable Africans out of urban areas. The contradiction was that while rural employers wanted labour, they did not prefer workers of local origins who could walk away anytime. Local workers were also not attracted to farm and mine work, they preferred looking for jobs in the city where jobs were increasingly becoming scarce. Tensions also mounted between different groups of Africans in the city over competition for scarce jobs.

2.1 Radicalising African Nationalism and the Unsettled White Politics.

Mass nationalism emerged in colonial Zimbabwe in the 1950s partly as response to the 1951 Land Husbandry Act that left many Africans landless and drove some into urban areas to look for jobs²³⁰ and also due to opposition to the Federation of Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland between 1953 and 1963. In an effort to please all races

²²⁹ David Pasteur, “From Frontier Town to Modern Municipality” in H. Hamilton and M Ndubiwa (eds) *Bulawayo-A Century of Development 1894-1994*, (Harare :The Argosy Press, 1994), p. 13.

²³⁰ Minutes of the African Advisory Boards, Bulawayo, Monday 13 November 1961, p.1 and Friday 1 September, 1961, p. 1. The implementation of the 1959 Land Apportionment Act in rural areas also led to large numbers of Africans to be evicted from white properties, see H. Ashton, “Housing Policy and Practice, 1894-1994” in M. Hamilton and M. Ndubiwa (eds) *Bulawayo: A Century of Development*, p. 59.

at the same time, Prime Minister Garfield Todd's rule from 1953 to 1958 became contradictory and this led to his downfall. Turbulent events unsettled white politics in Southern Rhodesia from 1958 to 1965 as three more prime ministers succeeded Todd with surprising rapidity.

Todd's successor, Sir Edgar Whitehead, attempted to improve African conditions and promote the African middle class as part of his political strategy but also increasingly resorted to repressive security legislation like the Unlawful Organisations Act of 1959, Preventive Detention Act of 1959 and the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) in 1960 to silence radicalising African nationalist activities. The year 1960 was generally widely heralded as the "African Year" in reference to the unprecedented number of African countries that achieved formal independence. Such momentous events inevitably had repercussions in stimulating African political activity and the desire for greater representation and participation in all public spheres,²³¹ including the local authority in Bulawayo but the national government retaliated with stern action because it regarded itself as being under attack.²³²

Mounting dissatisfaction and the growth of nationalist activities helped to bring to the fore new debates about urban African social policy, bringing out more hitherto unknown perceptions and prejudices. In 1962 for example, the ruling Rhodesian Front (RF) party adopted Community Development as official policy, with the aim of developing rural areas and discouraging Africans from migrating to urban areas seeking jobs.²³³ The government hoped that African problems (including unemployment in urban areas) would be resolved by themselves through the centrally controlled "Community Development."²³⁴ This failed to materialise. In the districts of Matabeleland around Bulawayo, there was strong resistance to the policy as rural living standards had been

²³¹ Annual Report of the Director of the African Administration Dept, 1959/60, p. 2.

²³² Lene Bull-Christiansen, *Tales of the Nation: Feminist Nationalism or Patriotic History? Defining National History and Identity in Zimbabwe*, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2004), pp. 46-47.

²³³ Michael Bratton, *Beyond Community Development: The Political Economy of Rural Administration in Zimbabwe*, (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1978).

²³⁴ D. G. Clarke, *The Unemployment Crisis*, ((London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1978), pp. 7-8.

adversely affected by several years of severe drought,²³⁵ a factor which promoted rural urban migration.

Whitehead was defeated in the December 1962 elections by Winston Field of the radical RF party. Field was replaced by the yet more radical Ian Smith in 1964, who remained as Prime Minister until 1979. In 1965, the Smith-led RF government issued an Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). Smith and his radical white RF party had a macho sense that they could succeed in doing what soft colonial officials failed to do, that is, keeping Africans down.²³⁶ The UDI attracted international economic sanctions and there was inadequate expansion of the economy to meet the worsening African unemployment situation.

The unsettled white politics were due to intensifying pressure of African nationalists' politics within and outside Southern Rhodesia and the desire of different communities of white settlers to safeguard their interests to forestall any competition from Africans. The period 1960 to 1980 was therefore labelled the "turbulent years" in the history of local government authorities in Southern Rhodesia because nationalist politics in urban areas seriously impinged on local governments' administration of African affairs.²³⁷ The persistence of unemployment problems, coupled with low wages and radicalising nationalist activities proved a fertile ground for breeding worker discontent that eventually led to the passing of draconian legislation.

2.2 The Build-up to the Enactment of the Vagrancy Act and its Operation in Bulawayo.

In July 1960, there were massive African demonstrations popularly known as *Zhii*²³⁸ in Bulawayo following the banning of a meeting of the nationalist National Democratic

²³⁵ Michael Bratton, *Beyond Community Development*, p. 22. Also see *Minutes* of the Joint African Advisory Boards Meeting, Bulawayo, 14 November, 1960, p. 2. The 1959/60 planting season was a failure and rural districts affected by drought included Ntabazinduna and Nkayi, driving many desperate villagers into Bulawayo to look for jobs.

²³⁶ Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past and the Present*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 136.

²³⁷ Annual Report of the Director of the African Administration Dept, 1959/60, p. 2.

²³⁸ According to Francis Nehwati, *Zhii* means 'devastating action', 'destroy completely'; 'reduce to rubble'. This was the feeling among Africans in Bulawayo as they sought to destroy everything that had anything to do with the central or local government. Only schools and churches were not attacked. See. F. Nehwati,

Party (NDP) that was formed in 1959. Months before the riots, the *Bantu Mirror* ran a series of articles on deplorable living conditions in Makokoba. It once reported that:

Here three to four families live in rooms no bigger than ten square feet. Children sleep under beds or amongst pots and pans on the floor...there is absolutely no question of family privacy ... everywhere from Fourth Street to Eighth Street were bundles of human beings wrapped up in flimsy blankets sleeping outside in the biting weather.²³⁹

In a letter to Hugh Ashton, the African Administration director, editor of the *African Home News* Charlton Ngcebetsa described “a large group of Africans packed like sardines, living, more or less, like wild animals with no sense of moral decency at all” especially those who lived in block rooms and houses in the Old Location.²⁴⁰

One participant in a meeting before the riots, Dhlamanzi, argued that complaints during the march from Makokoba towards the city centred on low wages, poor living conditions and unemployment.²⁴¹ Rioting broke out in the city on Sunday, the 23rd of July and continued sporadically for two days. Offices, shops, beer gardens and houses lining the rioters’ routes in African Townships were attacked and destroyed. Rioters threatened and sometimes attacked leading African figures. Shops owned by African businessmen in the townships were also destroyed. The economic recession, rising unemployment and dreadful living conditions were blamed for causing the *Zhii* riots.²⁴²

Class tensions between the African middle class and low income Africans surfaced strongly during and after the riots in Bulawayo. When police and troops moved into townships during riots they found that “well kept and trim houses and gardens had been damaged and looted, hovels and badly-kept houses were not damaged and many contained loot.”²⁴³ Poor Africans regarded most employers as “blood suckers” or exploiters of African workers and official police records indicated that twelve African rioters died and several hundred others were injured.²⁴⁴ There was unprecedented looting

“The Social and Communal Background to “Zhii”: The African Riots in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia in 1960” in *African Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 276, July 1970, pp. 251-252.

²³⁹Terence Ranger, “Urban Violence and the Colonial Experience: Bulawayo, Rhodesia, 1893-1960” (not dated), p. 35.

²⁴⁰*African Home News*, 27 February 1960, “An Open Letter to Dr. Ashton”, p. 4.

²⁴¹ Terence Ranger, “Urban Violence in Bulawayo”, p. 35.

²⁴² Annual Report of the Director of the African Administration Dept, 1959/60, p. 2.

²⁴³ Terence Ranger, “Urban Violence in Bulawayo”, p. 35.

²⁴⁴ F. Nehwati, “The Social and Communal Background to ‘Zhii’”, pp. 252-53.

of meat and other foodstuffs from shops during the course of the demonstrations and the Bulawayo Council paid out nearly fifty thousand pounds as compensation to business men who lost their property during the riots.²⁴⁵

More terrifying incidents followed in September and early October 1960 in Bulawayo as the high cost of living and unemployment in the Old Location drove Africans “wild and uncontrollable.”²⁴⁶ In September 1960, the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare Mr. Abrahamsen was heckled by Africans for more than two hours at MacDonald Hall in Mzilikazi Township. During the commotion in the hall, a very old pair of shoes, full of holes, was thrown onto the platform and lay there throughout the meeting. Abrahamsen promised to form eight boards to investigate African working conditions in 36 catering, textile, dairy and transport operating industries in the city. This investigation was to be carried out within the next eight months, after which the boards were to make recommendations. The restless African crowd refused even to be addressed by a white lady Member of Parliament as they walked out when she tried to address them.²⁴⁷ There were even more threatening activities at workplaces in the city.

During the first week of October, the Bulawayo African Municipal employees presented a memo to the Bulawayo Municipal Industrial Board asking for more wages. The association suggested that the minimum starting wage for the lowest paid grade should be £15 a month, rising to £18.10s over 8 years. The monthly wage for the lowest grade had been increased from £6.17s 7d (rising to £8.4d) to £7.18s 2d (rising to £10.18.10d in a recent increase.²⁴⁸ An urban budget survey in Bulawayo had shown that 82 percent of the city’s African workers earned wages below subsistence level and highlighted that:

The need for a rise ...needs no emphasis...A contented labour force is more productive and reliable. The worker must be paid a reasonable wage which should enable him to maintain accepted standards of decency. The present wage level is grossly inadequate. It breeds discontent and ill feelings in the mind of the worker...²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ Minutes of the Joint African Advisory Boards Meeting, Bulawayo, 14 November, 1960, p. 2.

²⁴⁶ *Chronicle*, Monday, 19 September, 1960, “36 Industries to be probed in the next 8 months.”

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ *Chronicle*, Thursday, October 6, 1960, “Council Africans call for £15 a month minimum.”

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

In the second week of October, police reservists were called out when 2,000 African industrial and transport workers went on strike for higher wages in Bulawayo. Night shifts also refused to work. In another incident, the entire labour force of 100 Africans working for the city's bag company went on strike. Labour protests spread like bush fire in industries. Several hundred workers abandoned work in nine factories on the morning of Tuesday, October 11. Tension mounted in townships early in the morning when large crowds milled around bus stops waiting for buses to take them to work. Buses never came, crowds dispersed quietly and streamed to work on foot.²⁵⁰

The next day, more than 350 workers were involved in stoppages at F. Issels and Sons Engineering Company. Two hundred Africans stopped work at Fox and Bookless transport contractors and 200 workers also stopped work at the Rhodesia Sugar Refinery. Fearing the worst, the Bulawayo Chamber of Industries (BCI) continued to pressure Minister Abrahamsen for emergency action on the African wages issue. The President of the BCI Colonel Brian Adams called for emergency national government measures to settle African wage claims and suggested a minimum wage Act to guarantee minimum earnings for unskilled workers.²⁵¹

Towards the end of the second week of October, more African men had returned to work but about 1,500 out of 4,000 were still on strike. While some employers expressed sympathy with Africans, others adopted a "get tough" attitude towards their workers. For example, Palte and Koonin Limited, a parquet flooring manufacturing company sacked all their 185 workers who went on strike for two days. The following day the company was reported to be operating at full capacity after engaging new workers.²⁵² As a result of the strikes, which also occurred in other urban areas, the government initiated substantial wage increases in several industries.²⁵³

Africans in Gwelo (Gweru) rioted on the 9th of October 1960 following a NDP meeting in the Gwelo Township and set alight 3 bakeries, Bata shoes factory and the Gwelo Location superintendent's house. All these properties were completely gutted by

²⁵⁰ *Chronicle*, Tuesday, October 11, 1960, "Reservists out as 2,000 City Africans strike."

²⁵¹ *Chronicle*, Wednesday, October 12, 1960, "City Industrialists call for rapid action on Wage Claims."

²⁵² *Chronicle*, October 13, 1960, "Strikes continue in City, but more men are back at work", and *Chronicle*, Friday, October 14, 1960, "Industrial strikes in City now fading-750 workers still out."

²⁵³ T. H. Mothibe, "Zimbabwe: African Working Class Nationalism, 1957-1963", in *Zambezia* (1996), XXIII (ii), p. 174.

the fire. Africans in Salisbury (Harare) also rioted, seven of them were shot dead and about 60 to 70 were wounded by gun shots fired by security forces. In Salisbury, rioters looted and destroyed the township's two African beer halls, and also did the same to shops owned by Indian and Coloured people in African areas. The Highfields African Township Cocktail bar lounge was stoned because an African had been denied admission because he did not meet the required dress code or standard.²⁵⁴

The riots in Gwelo and Salisbury (Harare) were the catalyst for the promulgation of a Vagrancy Bill. The Minister of Irrigation and Lands, Mr Stumbles told the Gwelo industrialists whose properties were destroyed by African rioters of measures to rush more stringent legislation before the territorial assembly, seeking punishment equivalent to that of murder for those convicted of stoning offences.²⁵⁵

The violence that broke out in Gwelo and Salisbury in October 1960 gave impetus to justify the colonial thinking that regarded urban African workers as posing a serious threat to authorities. Writing in 1958 for example, G. H. Hartley had argued that the great body of the "illiterate migrant class" of Africans in urban areas still required administrative control, guidance and above all, discipline in the interests of law and order.²⁵⁶ He highlighted that the administration must always recognise that these people formed:

in our midst a volatile mob of primitive and undisciplined beings, whose actions in time of unrest are quite unpredictable and whose attitude to the emotional stimulations are so naïve that inevitably they constitute a potential menace in what are generally peaceful family communities. When they do lose control of themselves, they wreak indiscriminate damage chiefly upon the persons of their own people.²⁵⁷

Following the July and October 1960 riots in Bulawayo, Gwelo and Salisbury respectively, white residents in Bulawayo encouraged authorities to become tough with urban Africans. In a letter to the *Chronicle* one correspondent in Bulawayo argued that:

²⁵⁴ *Chronicle*, Monday, October 10, 1960, "Arson, stoning in Gwelo as Rioting follows NDP meeting: Looting mob fires factories-police reserves called out" and "70 wounded in Harare riot-100 Arrested."

²⁵⁵ *Chronicle*, Tuesday, October 11, 1960, "Rush Southern Rhodesia Legislation to deal with Rioting: Report."

²⁵⁶ G. Hartley, "The Development of an Urban African Community" in *NADA*, Volume 35, 1958, p. 91.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

After the July African riots in Southern Rhodesia's urban centres, a national fund was started to pay for damage. This has not helped the Africans to realise their mistakes. The damages should now be collected from the Africans in the locations. The innocent among the guilty to pay £5 per head, then the innocent would not let the hooligans run amok and cause damage. The hooligans would also think twice if they knew such fines were imposed. Lets face it, the African does not understand the "soft ways of the European, but he would appreciate a bit of "Lobengula" treatment. Lobengula (former and last King of the Ndebele people) would probably have had all the rioters put to death; they laugh at our own weaknesses.²⁵⁸

Anticipating more trouble, a week before the passing of the Vagrancy Act, Prime Minister Sir Whitehead moved European troops into African townships in Salisbury, Bulawayo and Gwelo and proposed drastic steps to control lawlessness that included powers to deport undesirable Africans from outside Southern Rhodesia, extending police powers including powers to impose a curfew, considering stoning of cars tantamount to attempted murder liable to a minimum of five years in jail, powers to send African hooligans, spivs and loafers to rehabilitation centres and banned all public meetings.²⁵⁹

The Vagrancy Bill and Emergency Powers Bill meant to facilitate the campaign to root out hooligans, loafers and spivs from the townships were ready for the first time in the assembly on Wednesday 19 October, 1960. This was despite evidence that it was workers and not spivs who were heavily involved in riots. For example, the July 1960 African riots in Bulawayo showed that over seventy percent of those arrested were workers.²⁶⁰ The Vagrancy Bill defined a vagrant as:

any person who is unable to show that he is living by honest means and has a settled way of honest living" and this included beggars, people living in places such as parks, unoccupied buildings or vehicles without the permission of the owner and people professing to tell fortunes or using any subtle craft by palmistry or otherwise, or playing any game of chance to cheat, deceive and impose upon any person.²⁶¹

Generally, vagrancy laws were mainly about the apprehension of those regarded as a threat to the social order, to force them out of the cities, imprison them, or implement

²⁵⁸ *Chronicle*, Monday, October 17, 1960, Letter to the Editor By FIX'EM Bulawayo, "African does not appreciate 'soft' ways."

²⁵⁹ *Chronicle*, Friday October 14, 1960, "Army to set up posts in Townships-Sir Edgar proposes drastic steps to control lawlessness."

²⁶⁰ T. M. Mothibe, "Zimbabwe: African Working Class Nationalism", p. 172. See also F. Nehwati, "The Social and Communal Background to Zhi", p. 254.

²⁶¹ *Chronicle*, Wednesday, October 19, 1960, "Two Bills give teeth to campaign against hooligans, Spivs: More power for police to check Vagrancy: New emergency rules."

anti-poverty measures and programmes of rehabilitation.²⁶² In Africa, the study of vagrancy has highlighted ways in which colonial states among other actors have sought to police the city, make good citizens, discipline or emancipate black labour, and define and control social categories deemed a moral menace.”²⁶³ In Southern Rhodesia, under the Bill, police were entitled to arrest anyone who appeared to be a vagrant without warrant, but were required to take him before a magistrate within 24 hours of arrest. The Vagrancy Bill laid down a maximum penalty of £25 for vagrants and allowed policemen to enter premises where they suspected to find vagrants. Vagrants were to be sent to reception centres, then to re-establishment centres to receive training designed to “influence them to lead a more settled life with a view to their entry into or return to regular employment.”²⁶⁴

The Assembly initially refused to rush the Bill through. Minister Abrahamsen was however, in an uncompromising mood when introducing the Bill. He noted that the government realised that the Bill was not the final answer but:

We have got to try and remedy overcrowding and poverty which in themselves breed vagrants and we are trying to do this urgently with all our power and resources. But one would never entirely eliminate loafers and work dodgers as these were to be found among all races.²⁶⁵

To justify his actions, Minister Abrahamsen indicated that the problem of unemployables was greater than the unemployment problem, noting that for example, it was once decided to build roads in African areas to absorb some unemployed Africans. For the three hundred vacancies advertised, there were only fifty four applicants and only thirty four men turned up for work. He thus argued that:

We have found that there are many who have no settled employment and no intention of seeking it, who batten on the community they live in, who make a livelihood by gambling, cheating and threats or sponging on their unfortunate relatives... It has come to the stage where we have hooligans

²⁶² Jocelyn Alexander, “Hooligans, Spivs and Loafers’?: The Politics of Vagrancy in the 1960s Southern Rhodesia”, *Unpublished Manuscript*, pp. 1-2.

²⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 1.

²⁶⁴ *Chronicle*, Wednesday, October 19, 1960, “Two Bills give teeth to campaign against hooligans, Spivs: More power for police to check Vagrancy: New emergency rules.”

²⁶⁵ *Chronicle*, Thursday, October 20, 1960, “Assembly Rejects bid to rush through Vagrancy Bill: European, Coloured Loafers to be affected, says Minister.”

operating in gangs, making life a misery for the great majority of responsible citizens in the African townships and those who drive through or past them.²⁶⁶

The Bill did not apply to those people under the age of 16, “nor to the genuinely unemployed.”²⁶⁷ The Rhodesian authorities were clearly concerned by the danger posed by the unemployed and unemployables in urban areas but did not realise that making these dangerous classes less dangerous could not be separated from making them less poor.²⁶⁸ Abrahamsen remained adamant that the new law would remove a certain amount of “dry tinder” that created riots, and would assist in preserving law and order.²⁶⁹

The Vagrancy Bill was opposed by some members in the Assembly who aptly argued that vagrancy law could only be effective if enacted along other measures to deal with problems of African unemployment and housing in urban areas. Mr MacLean noted that lawlessness could not be attributed entirely to hooligan, vagrant and other irresponsible elements, “particularly the African population”, “but these were ignorant and unwitting instruments directed from a much more intelligent and organised plane.”²⁷⁰ MacLean blamed leading African nationalists for pushing other Africans into violence. The Bill was also criticised for its failure to differentiate between the genuinely unemployed and loafers. Any suspicious policeman could apprehend a person without a job, even though he might be looking for one and have him detained for up to 28 days. Dr. Palley believed that one or other of the various definitions of a vagrant could practically apply to every African woman in the country’s urban areas. He argued that it was no use having this type of law unless other measures went along with, measures to deal with unemployment and housing.²⁷¹

The Vagrancy Bill became law within 24 hours of its enactment by the territorial Assembly, in a speed believed to be a record for peacetime.²⁷² On the first day of its operation, 54 vagrants were arrested in the African townships in Bulawayo. Most

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ *Chronicle*, Thursday, October 20, 1960, “Assembly Rejects bid to rush through Vagrancy Bill: European, Coloured Loafers to be affected, says Minister.”

²⁶⁸ Phrase borrowed from Frederick Cooper, *On the Waterfront-Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 3-6.

²⁶⁹ *Chronicle*, Thursday, October 20, 1960, “Assembly Rejects bid to rush through Vagrancy Bill: European, Coloured Loafers to be affected, says Minister.”

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² *Chronicle*, Saturday, October 22, 1960, “Vagrancy Bill has now been gazetted.”

Africans arrested were locals. A few were from Nyasaland (Malawi). Those who volunteered to return to their home countries were not brought before the court. Police justified the small number of arrests in Bulawayo by suggesting that many vagrants and hooligans fled from the townships when troops moved in a week before the passing of the Act while most were thought to have disappeared into the bush, special hiding places or to their rural homes. Regular police started their sweep at six in the morning. Patrols were on the lookout for beggars, wanderers unable to show that they had legitimate jobs or means of subsistence, people sleeping rough and professional gamblers.

The government controlled *Chronicle* reported that most Africans were “grateful” for the action taken and that European troops in African townships were gaining the confidence of Africans. For example, middle class residents in Pelandaba Township were reported to have started a collection to build permanent accommodation for troops in their township and they also formed their own “defence force” to keep out rioters during the July 1960 violence.²⁷³ Only middle class Africans who regarded other Africans as a menace and threat to their property could have done such a thing.

Three days after the passing of the Act, police made 115 arrests in Bulawayo. Twenty one suspects of foreign origins sought voluntary repatriation and twenty two were sent to rehabilitation centres; the only European arrested in Bulawayo was released. Arrested Africans were referred to as “subjects”, not “accused.” Questions asked in court were to establish when the subject last worked, how long they had been unemployed, where they slept, who they stayed with and if they had any means of survival. Africans handed over to the Social Welfare Department by police, on the orders of the vagrancy court, were to be kept at Ntabazinduna Reception centre, some 30 kilometres outside Bulawayo.²⁷⁴

Six days after the passing of the Vagrancy Act, special vagrancy courts in Bulawayo had interviewed 108 subjects. Sixty four were committed to re-establishment centres. Most subjects were reported to be loafers out of work for at least three months, some up to two years and a few for five to ten years. Their method of living was to “sponge” on relatives or friends, living as non paying lodgers in their houses or quarters.

²⁷³ *Chronicle*, Monday, October 24, 1960, “54 Arrested as City’s Police step up move against “Spivs”: No Incidents: Many Hooligans have fled already.”

²⁷⁴ *Chronicle*, Tuesday, October 25, 1960, “Swoops on vagrants: Number held rises to 550.”

Many lived in the quarters of domestic servants employed in white suburbs such as Hillside and Khumalo. About half of these protested strongly against the evidence that suggested their vagrancy, demanding to call witnesses to prove that they were working, had worked recently or, although out of work, were not destitute. The *Chronicle* reported that most were poorly dressed, shoeless and with only a few copper coins in their pockets. About one in five was able to produce more than £1 in cash when stopped in the street and it was argued that the most common excuse of the loafer was that he had just arrived in the city from the reserves to buy farm tools, clothes and food. It was also reported that about a dozen well to do professional gamblers were caught in the dragnet, all of them well dressed, self assured and freely confessed to their source of income. These were picked up under sections D and E of the Vagrancy Act which covered those who played games of chance (gambling) to cheat and were not living by honest means. Most of the subjects were aged between twenty and thirty years, though a few were over forty.²⁷⁵

During the same week of the vagrancy swoop, Colonel Adams challenged the government to find a livelihood and a place to live for thousands of Africans:

who must be regarded as permanent city dwellers...I leave you to assess the effect on this country today, particularly in helping to solve the problem that is facing us today of men whom the reserves cannot support drifting aimlessly and dangerously to the towns, and having to be removed by force.²⁷⁶

The Southern Rhodesia African Unemployment Association sent a letter to Abrahamsen protesting against the Vagrancy Act for “adding to the country’s misery.”²⁷⁷

In October 1960 the *African Home News* carried a celebratory message that “The police seem to be doing their new work of catching...vagrants, very well indeed. The African townships are being slowly and surely cleaned up of undesirables who live on

²⁷⁵ *Chronicle*, Thursday, October 27, 1960, “Vagrancy Courts hear 108 Cases.”

²⁷⁶ President of Bulawayo Chamber of Industries, Colonel Brian Adams quoted in *Chronicle*, Wednesday, October 26, 1960, “Find Jobs for City Africans.”

²⁷⁷ *Chronicle*, Saturday, October 29, 1960, “Vagrancy Act arrests now almost 700-No NDP members are among those held and MPs applaud.”

other people.”²⁷⁸ This was a clear indication of the resentment of unemployed Africans in townships. The *African Home News* asserted that:

evidently most of the men who crowded the Bulawayo African drinking places must have been vagrants who, like leaches, lived on those who for some reason, had no alternatives but to feed and clothe them, whilst, in many cases, the vagrants earned money for drinks and smokes by underworld ways.²⁷⁹

The Vagrancy Act did not solve the problem of increasing unemployment and low wages faced by the African population in Bulawayo.

In 1962, European residents in general and the police wanted to institute “wholesale raids” in African townships to flush out more unemployed African men. Their crime was that “nationalists are finding the unemployed Africans in the townships a class from which they find willing recruits...”²⁸⁰ R. O. Digby argued that it was “not unwelcome and indeed politically expedient to either detain these idles if authorities cannot find alternatives for them.”²⁸¹

Calls to arrest vagrant Africans became more pronounced after the banning of the nationalist Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) party in 1962. The Deputy Commissioner (Crime and Security) argued that “The banning of the Zimbabwe African People’s Union has made it urgently necessary for some action to be taken against youthful loafers in the African townships...”²⁸² He thus called for the institution of “vagrancy checks even though the final counts of vagrancy proved through courts is likely to be small” but the solace was that “it would at least give 28 +2 days during which period undesirables could be sifted” and asked that this be done “as early as possible.”²⁸³ Police in Bulawayo believed that lack of a reception centre in the city was the main hindrance towards arresting African vagrants. Superintendent (Staff officer) J. W. G. Cannon argued that the vital need for the establishment of a centre in Bulawayo increased daily and the general security situation was going to greatly improve “if wholesale raids

²⁷⁸ *African Home News*, Saturday 29th October 1960, “Vagrants.”

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁰ *Chronicle*, 12 February 1962, “Letter from R. O. Digby to the editor.”

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*

²⁸² NAZ S3330/T1/35/23/2/1 Vagrancy Act-Establishment of Bulawayo Reception Centre, “Letter from Deputy Commissioner (Crime and Security) to Secretary for law and Order A. M. Bruce Brand. ZAPU was formed in 1960 after the banning of the NDP by the national government.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

could be made in the African Townships to curb the activities of youth who may be connected with recent sabotage activities.”²⁸⁴ The police explained that unless a reception centre was re-established at or near Bulawayo, the “urban command was unable to make full use of the Act which was considered to be very desirable.”²⁸⁵

Sanctions against foreign migrants in urban areas were also intensified. The 1958 Foreign Migratory Labour Act that had closed the cities of Bulawayo and Salisbury to entry by foreign migrants and only allowed them to seek work in mines, farms and logging companies was extended to cover all municipalities and their surrounding areas in 1960, and by 1961 it was extended to cover the whole south west of the country. Only mining areas were exempted.²⁸⁶ The 1960 Vagrancy Act was not even “kind” to them because, as Jocelyn Alexander rightly argued, it did not offer them a promise or re-establishment or rehabilitation. They faced being deported en masse because Minister Abrahamsen singled them out as forming the majority of the worst group of “hooligan bachelor unemployables.”²⁸⁷

The urban areas of Southern Rhodesia were therefore closed to the new entrants from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland from the 1st of May 1964, in the hope that this would improve the employment prospects of locals in urban areas.²⁸⁸ After the announcement of UDI by Smith’s government, Britain threatened to impose economic sanctions on the rebel regime. Smith responded by threatening to expel foreign migrant workers if locals lost jobs under sanctions. The 1966 Closed Labour Areas Order was also used as a tool to seal off Bulawayo, Salisbury and other areas from new foreign workers.²⁸⁹ Restricting foreign migrant workers to rural areas was akin to attacking symptoms of a disease, not addressing the root causes of unemployment which intensified after 1960.

²⁸⁴ NAZ S3330/T1/35/23/2/1 Vagrancy Act Establishment of Bulawayo Reception Centre, “Letter from J. W. G. Cannon, Superintendent (Staff Officer) to Secretary for Law and Order, 24/11/1962.

²⁸⁵ NAZ S3330/T1/35/23/2/1 Vagrancy Act Establishment of Bulawayo Reception Centre, Letter from H. B. Flowers (Senior Assistant Commissioner, Officer Commanding police(Matabeleland province) to the Commissioner of BSAP Police Saliosbury-8/02/1962.

²⁸⁶ Bill Paton, *Labour Export Policy in the Development of Southern Africa*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan in association with the Institute of Social Studies, 1995), p. 124.

²⁸⁷ Jocelyn Alexander, “Hooligans, Spivs and Loafers”, p. 9.

²⁸⁸ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June, 1964, p. 4.

²⁸⁹ Bill Paton, *Labour Export Policy in the Development of Southern Africa*, p. 126.

2.3 Unemployment, Low Wages, Poverty and the Failure of Influx Control Measures in Bulawayo after 1960.

From 1960 to 1980, influx control measures in urban areas were negated by the failure of national government policies to develop rural areas and by prejudices and preferences of rural employers, and local work seekers who preferred seeking employment in the city. The Southern Rhodesian government's belief that standards of living for the majority of Africans could be improved by developing African agriculture became increasingly problematic after the declaration of UDI because main government efforts and resources were directed at supporting European farmers, either by guaranteed prices for their tobacco or by loans to promote diversification.²⁹⁰ This became worse from 1972 when the nationalist parties escalated their armed struggle against the Rhodesian state, forcing it to allocate more than half of its national budget to the cost of war and related programmes for the ailing economy.²⁹¹ Government efforts at keeping unemployed Africans out of urban areas were also negated by employers in farms and mines who were not keen on employing local labour because they could desert anytime they wanted. According to Juma Maseko-Phiri:

many employers regarded local Ndebele people as undependable because they could just leave work and return to their homes whenever they wanted. That irritated many employers who preferred foreign migrant labourers especially from Malawi and Zambia who were very loyal and could not just leave, partly because it was very far to go back to their countries on a regular basis. That's why the majority of workers in farms, mines and logging companies were foreigners.²⁹²

S. Lunga believed that:

the Ndebele people used to consider themselves very "smart" for rural work. They were proud of themselves. Ask anyone here they will tell you that most Ndebeles shunned mine, farm and logging work but nowadays we scramble with them for most of these low jobs even here in the city where they also did not want to do low paying council jobs. They wanted to come and work in the city which carried a lot of status back in their rural homes.²⁹³

²⁹⁰ T. R. Curtin, "Rhodesian Economic Development Under Sanctions and 'The Long Haul'" in *African Affairs*, Volume 67, No. 267, April, 1968", p. 106.

²⁹¹ Michael Bratton, *Beyond Community Development*, pp. 34-35.

²⁹² Interview with Juma Maseko-Phiri, Makhumalo Beer Hall, Makokoba, Bulawayo, Sunday 4 January, 2009.

²⁹³ Interview with Mr. S. Lunga, Makhumalo Beer Hall, Makokoba, Bulawayo, Sunday 4 January, 2009.

Pressure for jobs in Bulawayo was due to the general high wage levels when compared to the other sectors of the economy. Five categories of blacks were looking for employment in urban areas, the unemployed, those engaged in informal trading activities (hawking, basket weaving, vegetable selling, car washing and so on, employees in agriculture, mining and domestic service not satisfied with the low wages they were getting, the unemployed in African Reserves and females in the urban areas who faced even more limited employment options than their male counter parts.²⁹⁴

Unemployment worsened in Bulawayo in 1960. This was partly because of the economic recession being experienced in the whole country. Unemployment peaked in 1960 when 637,000 Africans were reported unemployed. The government accepted that there was indeed a problem. Instead of making efforts to solve it, it appointed a Labour advisor G. E. Stint to examine the problem and make recommendations but the government rejected his recommendations to establish an unemployment insurance fund for urban Africans on the grounds that it was too expensive. In 1962, it was estimated that 80,000 more workers lost their jobs.²⁹⁵

African women employed in Bulawayo faced even harder conditions and were confronted by unemployed African men. In June 1960 for example, the African Administration Offices at Khami were swarmed by male work seekers who demanded that African women employed in industries be discharged so that all their jobs could be given to them.²⁹⁶

The unemployment problem co-existed with the problem of low wages. In 1962, the average African annual wage was £68.8s while that of the European workers was £1,034. An estimated half of the African labour force of 612,593 earned less than £5 a month. A year later, it was estimated that less than five percent of African workers in the country earned a living cash wage. African workers earned about an average of £101 annually while European workers averaged £1,171.²⁹⁷ This situation was not helped by European employers who took advantage of the African unemployment situation to threaten African employees with dismissal if they complained against low wages, making

²⁹⁴ P. Harris, *Black Industrial Workers in Rhodesia: The General Problem of Low Pay*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1974), p. 21.

²⁹⁵ T. H. Mothibe, "Zimbabwe: African Working Class Nationalism", p. 168.

²⁹⁶ *The African Home News*, 11 June 1960, "African Unemployment Position Deteriorates."

²⁹⁷ T. H. Mothibe, "Zimbabwe: African Working Class Nationalism", p. 168.

it possible for such employers to pay very low wages so as to cut down their expenses to the barest minimum.²⁹⁸

George Honour, a resident in Bulawayo, viewed serious overcrowding and unemployment conditions in urban areas as a sign of the “Huggins chickens coming home to roost” that is, a result of the short sighted policies of former Prime Minister Huggins in relation to Africans that included building accommodation for single workers instead of family accommodation while at the same time dispossessing Africans of their land in rural areas (through the 1951 Native Land Husbandry Act). Africans dispossessed of their land flocked to urban areas to look for employment even though wages were very low. Honour argued that:

When Sir Godfrey Huggins introduced his “two-pronged policy” which permitted a rural African to move into a city or town location and become urbanised with the loss of his right to return again to his reserve, I wrote and asked him what plan he had for the time when these locations become saturated, viz, when the labour force outstripped available jobs. I also pointed to him that he was creating centres of communism and unrest unless he made this policy of his more elastic and only allowed Africans into these locations when jobs became available-remember the swarms of Africans that left their reserves and their jobs on farms for the city lights and amenities of these allocations at the time. Huggins replied “I can not see this happening for many years to come, if at all. But should these locations become top heavy, then it will be the job of the respective councils and municipalities to deal with it.” A desperate situation exists today; it becomes increasingly more desperate month by month. Government must have known for years these locations have housed thousands of unemployed, those that work as well as the loafers and ducktail types. Government must have known jobs could not be found for all that wanted work. It is now quite evident that government has no plan at all for the thousands of school going and school leaving Africans in these locations. To create a few camps under the emergency scheme just introduced is a pathetic reply to the problem except for the ducktail, loafer trouble maker types. Such a scheme is cold comfort indeed for the thousands of decent Africans who daily do the soul destroying round of job seeking. Two ways of tackling this; firstly, as 51% of all Africans employed in our towns and cities is of foreign origin, these should be immediately repatriated. This would immediately solve the unemployment problem. Secondly, all unemployed, able bodied unmarried Africans in the locations, together with those married Africans whose wives are living elsewhere, should be de-urbanised and sent to road mending and road building.²⁹⁹

This lengthy quotation highlighted how colonial rule choked on the narrowness of the pathways it had created. As Freund observed, by trying to confine Africans to tribal cages, seeking to extract labour without treating them as “workers”, “townsmen”, “citizens”, “colonial regimes discovered that Africans would not stay in the limited roles

²⁹⁸ *The African Home News*, 11 June 1960, “African Unemployment Position Deteriorates.”

²⁹⁹ *Chronicle*, Friday, October 28, 1960, Letter to the Editor by George Honour, “Now the Huggins Chickens are Home to Roost.”

assigned to them.”³⁰⁰ It also revealed the undesirability of black foreign workers, unemployed and single African men and married men whose wives remained in rural areas.

High unemployment contributed to poverty in most urban homes for Africans in Bulawayo. One case worker³⁰¹ in the early 1960s noted that:

In the process of doing our work, we have the privilege of visiting homes, seeing families in their homes and observing their household essential possessions, the way they dress, the blankets they have among the family members, and see what they eat. It is shocking to see that many families are poor and we do not understand how they manage to be alive the next day.³⁰²

In townships, poverty meant lack of the barest necessities to keep alive. One caseworker, discussing financial problems of her caseload argued that “It never ceases to amaze that so many low income families not only somehow pay rent and school fees, clothe themselves, have one *sadza* (thick maize porridge) meal a day, but manage to retain their sanity and cheer-fullness.”³⁰³ Eric Gargett argued that this was the absolute poverty of a wage economy.

“NO WORK, AKULAMSEBENZI; HAPANA BASA”-This notice hung on the gates of many factories in Bulawayo, written in English, Ndebele and Shona languages respectively and served to turn away hundreds of job seekers daily. The notice scared off all job seekers and anyone who “strayed” into a company’s premises could easily be accused of trespassing. However, illiterate job seekers never knew what the notice meant. Literate job seekers sometimes deliberately ignored it, preferring to be verbally told by the manager that for sure there was no job. Bhoqo Mpala for example, after being tipped by a neighbour in Makokoba Township that five employees from Nyasaland left work to return to their home country, stormed into a factory the next morning at eight when they

³⁰⁰ Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past and the Present*, p. 20.

³⁰¹ A case worker was a Council social worker stationed in each of the council’s housing office. Case workers worked hand in hand with housing officers, made follow ups on houses with rent arrears and encouraged residents in financial difficulties to go and meet their area housing officer to arrange for a moratorium when they failed to pay for rent. Each case worker was assisted by a Case Worker Assistant and they worked under the Council Welfare Officer.

³⁰² A caseworker quoted in Eric Stanley Gargett, *PhD Thesis* “Welfare Services in an Urban African Area”, University of London, 1971, pp. 112-4.

³⁰³ E. Gargett, “Welfare Services in an Urban African Area”, pp. 112-4.

opened their gate. Despite being told by the foreman that there was no work, he asked to see the white “Baas”, the owner of the company. Mpala indicated that:

I think he was a nice man. He asked me what I wanted in his poor Ndebele language. I replied, “Job Baas”. He said there was no job. I said “I am hungry Baas, I need a job and waited there staring at him. I think I was luck because that was the day I was employed; he took me and I worked for that company until my retirement a few years ago.”³⁰⁴

This was the kind of struggle that many African job seekers went through in the 1960s in Bulawayo.

In November 1961 and early 1962, industrial sites in Bulawayo were hit by several sporadic strikes by workers calling for increased wages. In January 1962 three hundred and twenty workers were fired from the Dairy Marketing Board for striking for higher wages. Almost at the same time, four hundred shift workers downed their tools at Monarch Steel factory and all of them were dismissed.³⁰⁵ Despite the prevalence of low wages, increasing numbers of unemployed Africans desperately sought work in industries daily as wages were higher than in farming and mining concerns. The contradictions of comparatively high urban wages and high urban unemployment central to the African city of the 1960s and 1970s emerged in large part from the contradictions of underemployment in the 1940s and 1950s, and the quest to isolate and develop a respectable working class.³⁰⁶

The unemployed in Bulawayo strongly viewed unemployment as the main cause of their poverty. For example, just a few days after the sacking of over seven hundred workers from the two factories, police details with tracker dogs stood by the two factories controlling huge crowds of job seekers. At the Dairy Marketing Board factory for example, an estimated crowd of over one thousand job seekers had congregated.³⁰⁷ In other parts of the industrial sites “bands of job seekers roamed from factory to factory

³⁰⁴ Interview with Bhoqo Mpala, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Saturday 19 January 2008.

³⁰⁵ *The Central African Daily News*, Friday 26 January 1962, “Two unofficial strikes in Bulawayo: 300 milkmen are dismissed.”

³⁰⁶ F. Cooper, *On the African Waterfront*, p. 180.

³⁰⁷ *The Central African Daily News*, Friday 26 January 1962, “Two unofficial strikes in Bulawayo: 300 milkmen are dismissed.”

looking for jobs” but the employed could not embark on strikes immediately after the dismissal of the seven hundred because they were “scared stiff” of losing their jobs.³⁰⁸

In 1962, the Bulawayo Municipal African Workers Union had the wages of its members reduced because of a newly introduced payment system based on hours worked. The system effectively meant that municipal workers were paid for only twenty three days a month instead of a whole month. Workers blamed their leadership for failing to fight for their cause; hence they demanded an increment of their wages from £15 to £25 a month. Other municipal workers however, viewed the demand for higher wages as a double-edged sword for them since the country’s economy was in the “intensive care unit”³⁰⁹, a serious economic stagnation that had affected the growth of African employment in urban areas since the 1950s.³¹⁰

Other Bulawayo council workers therefore urged their leaders to be content with the “half a loaf” they got because it was clear that they would never get a full loaf. They had two harsh options to choose from; that is, to accept low wages or resort to a strike and risk being fired as their employers threatened them openly saying “I will sack you on the spot. There are many boys round the corner looking for work.”³¹¹

Numbers of Africans seeking employment in Bulawayo increased yearly, yet the number of those who found work shrunk. In 1961/62 for example 181,758 Africans made job enquiries in the Employment Exchange in the city but only 10,737 placements were made.³¹² In January 1963 about seventy youths who claimed to be children of Bulawayo African railwaymen marched to the Railway African Workers Union (RAWU) offices protesting against their failure to find work at the railway department despite being registered as unemployed.³¹³ The table below shows the total number of African workers registered for work and those who were able to find employment during the first four weekly periods in 1963.

Table 2.

³⁰⁸ *The Central African Daily News*, Monday 29 January 1962, “Police with Dogs watch job seekers.”

³⁰⁹ *African Home News*, July 21, 1962, “Municipal African workers want 25 pounds a month.”

³¹⁰ T. R. C. Curtin, “Rhodesian Economic Development under Sanctions”, pp. 107-109.

³¹¹ *The African Daily News*, Wednesday 21 February 1962, p. 1.

³¹² *Chronicle*, 19 December 1962, “No Rejoicing for some City Africans.”

³¹³ *The Central African Daily News*, Wednesday, January 9, 1963, “70 Jobless Youth March to RAWU.”

African Registrations	19,783	24,527	31,446
Vacancies Notified	11,078	12,771	10,942
Placings	7,891	8,737	7,846

Source: N2/37-Relief of Distress among Africans-Note on Unemployment Situation and Need for Relief of Distress, 16th May, 1963.

To push them out of Bulawayo, the city's Employment Exchange sent out some unskilled work seekers to Triangle and Hippo Valley Sugar estates in Masvingo district and other farming areas. Contrary to the popular belief among national government authorities that there were large numbers of vacancies in the agricultural sector, it was discovered that job openings in rural areas were also limited. Labour and family stabilization pursued in the post second world war era meant that those in jobs were more likely to remain than before. This resulted in a small turnover of vacancies. If one lost their job, it became very difficult to get another job. If another job was obtained, very often it was at a much lower rate of pay. Unemployment was worsened by some firms relocating to Salisbury.³¹⁴

In May of 1963, within five hours of an appeal launched by the BCI, industrialists donated over a ton of maize meal, over 100 shirts and 250 blankets to help hungry and poorly clothed Africans. Some donated goods were given direct to the unemployed while others were sold and the cash proceeds used to buy food for starving Africans. The president of the BCI, R. Johnson highlighted that "there is no need to point out to industrialists how serious the problem has become, or to point out the thousands registered as unemployed. One look outside the gates of your factories is quite sufficient."³¹⁵ Unemployment was rising fast at a time when industrial growth of the city and the economy in general was static.

Effects of African family stabilisation in urban centres were still resented by city authorities who argued that it bred another "tolerated" but not wanted group of unemployables, that is, older people with little education who found it very difficult to obtain a job in the city. This group had severed connections with rural areas and had become permanent townspeople with no other home. It was this group, together with the rest of the unemployed that was accused of a tendency to "sponge" on friends and

³¹⁴ BMRL N2/37- Relief of Distress Amongst Africans-Note on Unemployment Situation and need for Relief of Distress, 16th May 1963.

³¹⁵ *The Rhodesian Herald*, 21 May, 1963, "Industrialists rally aid for hungry Africans."

relations in employment. Owing to longer periods of unemployment between jobs, some Africans entered employment carrying a heavy burden of accumulated debts. Their ability to repay these loans was not helped by the low rates of pay in their new jobs. This pushed them and their relations down to a level where they used all their resources and needed public relief to continue surviving. The unemployed suffered most, but even those in employment needed help to keep their heads above water.³¹⁶

The class of the working poor was hit hard by economic hardships as many of them were dependent on wages and could no longer rely on the agricultural produce grown at “home” in the rural areas to cushion the problems of unemployment. The absence of effective trade unions, except in a few cases such as the railways, Municipality and Textiles, which could bargain for better wages, did not help to reduce the gap between wages and higher living costs. At the same time, the static or declining economy made it difficult for employees to press employers to pay higher wages.³¹⁷

In June 1964, the Bulawayo Council complained that many Africans in the city had reached a stage when their physical strength was declining to the extent that they were no longer able to hold down jobs as unskilled labourers. These were referred to as a “floating/surplus population”, regarded as excess garbage or undesirable elements. In the past such people used to return “home” to their land in the Reserves, “but now so many have no such land and have become urbanised; as they have nothing but their declining physique to offer an employer, they are practically unemployable.”³¹⁸ This led Ashton to argue that there was an increasing need to plan for the needs of a large number of the socially handicapped people who included the unemployed and unemployables, the old and the misfits of urban life unable to participate fully in the developing society.³¹⁹

In 1966, the Regional Welfare officer in Bulawayo Mr Quinn called for the prevention of the growth of unemployables in the city that lived on public assistance without any prospect of rehabilitation there and recommended that since Bulawayo was a closed labour area for foreigners, repatriation of foreigners should be favoured over offering them public assistance. Quinn accepted that a person with a substantiated claim

³¹⁶ BMRL N2/37 Relief of Distress Amongst Africans-Note on Unemployment Situation and need for Relief of Distress, 16th May 1963.

³¹⁷ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June, 1964, p. 2.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June, 1965, p. 6.

for public assistance should continue receiving help as long as their circumstances remained unaltered. He however, indicated that where the applicant was unemployed for a lengthy period, despite genuine attempts to find work, the question must naturally arise of resettling him in rural areas.³²⁰ Quinn cited the case of one Mr Matalaza of Mabutweni Township who was to be granted public assistance for one month only. He had two acres of land in Tsholotsho reserves and his wife lived there from time to time. “There seemed to be no reason why he should not join her as there was no question of him obtaining work here” [in Bulawayo].³²¹ This question of settling undesirable urban people on the land continued to resonate among authorities in post colonial Zimbabwe.

Around 1964 the population drift from the country to town temporarily slowed down due to the knowledge that urban jobs were becoming practically unobtainable and that the African urban brethren was becoming increasingly unwilling or unable to observe traditional rules of hospitality to support unemployed or idle country kinsmen.³²² In 1965, some work seekers migrated from Bulawayo to work in Lowveld sugar irrigation schemes and at Wankie Colliery (coal mining company). Some disillusioned work seekers travelled back to rural areas. Some foreign workers returned to their home countries following the independence of Zambia and Malawi in 1964 and the employment ban of their workers in urban areas of Southern Rhodesia.³²³

To counter great difficulties arising out of unemployment, the Bulawayo Council established soup kitchens to distribute food to the needy. The council provided a daily issue of one third pint of skimmed milk per child to about 15,000 African school children. The union of Jewish women provided extra food for school children from the poorest homes in townships. These efforts were only directed towards supplementing the diet of school children. The only scheme which assisted unemployed and destitute adults was the Council run African Welfare Society’s Distress Fund operated through the welfare officers. In 1963 it assisted 450 families with a five kilogramme maize meal packet per family per month, barely enough to last even three days for an average African

³²⁰ BMRL N2/37 Relief of Distress amongst Africans, Discussion on Public Assistance held with the Regional Officer on 10th June 1966.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June, 1964, p. 1.

³²³ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June, 1965, p. 4.

family of five.³²⁴ The Welfare Society concentrated its efforts on the chronically ill, tuberculosis patients, widows, divorcees, orphans, the mentally and physically handicapped and other destitute. The council's grant-in-aid to the African Welfare Society had a limited effect in alleviating poverty. Curtailed governmental poor relief services only commenced when destitution had already struck.³²⁵

The spectacle of thousands of young men and women with their school certificates roaming about in search of employment or turning to hooliganism like destroying municipality beer mugs as a means of dulling the pain of their apparent rejection was striking deep in Bulawayo in June 1968. There was hardly any African family in the city that did not have a personal experience of this and it affected family life and the occupation of houses as it could and did lead to poverty.³²⁶

2.4 African Wages and Productivity Debate: How to Stabilise the Urban African Community.

Generally, even urbanisation accompanied by industrialization in the industrialised world left many casualties in its wake as the industrial revolution created the most debilitating and demoralising poverty. A. Toynbee presented the revolution as:

a period as disastrous and as terrible as any through which a nation ever passed, disastrous and terrible because side by side with a great increase of wealth was seen an enormous increase in pauperism, and production on a vast scale, the result of free competition, led to a rapid alienation of classes and the denigration of a large body of producers.³²⁷

The situation in the Third World where urbanisation occurred with very little industrialisation was worse. In colonial Zimbabwe, employers justified paying Africans low wages by arguing that they worked badly. Contrary to this, an "African Labour Efficiency" survey report showed that in every case where the productivity of African

³²⁴ BMRL N2/37 Relief of Distress amongst Africans, Extracts from Minutes of Finance Committee, 4 April 1963-"Unemployment Assistance"

³²⁵ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June, 1968, p. 2.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ A. Toynbee quoted in R. M. Hartwell, "The Consequences of the Industrial Revolution in England for the Poor" in The Institute of Economic affairs, *The Long Debate on Poverty*, (Surrey: The Unwin Brothers Ltd, 1972)", p. 8.

workers was found to be significantly below standard, the cause was traced to malnutrition. Simply put, low wages meant poor diet and poor output.³²⁸

Employers argued that African employees were unreliable, unpunctual, dishonest, and if they could get away with it, were unable to maintain output at required levels, and lacked “feeling” for mechanical equipment. They highlighted that Africans were unsatisfactory employees and that Europeans had more integrity and were able to accept greater responsibility. The attitude of many white employers was that they had been let down several times by African employees and thus became reluctant to place themselves in the position of being let down again. Their conclusion was that the African had proved himself his own worst enemy because of his reputation for unreliability. For Africans, this “lack of productivity” argument was only used by employers as an excuse for racial discrimination when it came to increasing wages as commerce and industry regarded them as a source of cheap labour.³²⁹ For example, average wages for European employees went up from \$2,112 per annum in 1957 to \$3,108 in 1970, as compared with \$164 to \$312 for African employees. The gap between them widened from \$1,948 in 1957 to \$2,896 in 1970.³³⁰

Wages for urban Africans therefore remained pegged to that of a migrant worker, and thus inadequate. An inescapable conclusion was that about 70 percent of all industrial workers lived under a regime of constant want, in which their incomes did not enable them to rise above a poverty stricken state. In 1973, Eric Gargett, a very liberal minded Senior Welfare officer in Bulawayo highlighted that more than 70 percent of the black families living in Bulawayo were “real hardship cases.”³³¹ Families went without home furnishings, sitting on boxes and sleeping on the floor, and cut down on food in order to conserve their incomes. The inability to afford school fees caused some families to send each child to school in alternate years, thereby hoping to obtain a modicum of education for all of the family. Some families accepted lodgers in order to supplement wage

³²⁸ T. H. Mothibe, “Zimbabwe: African Working Class Nationalism”, p. 170.

³²⁹ Submission of a Private Education Institution in to the Commission of Inquiry into Racial Discrimination, 23rd April 1976, pp. 61-2.

³³⁰ BMRL N6A/56 Unemployment, Confidential Letter on African Unemployment the Town Clerk (E. S. White) to His Worship The Mayor and City Councillors, 10th September 1971, p. 3.

³³¹ Eric Gargett, cited in P. Harris, *Black Industrial Workers in Rhodesia*, pp. 27-28.

incomes, thus compromising their privacy in relatively small houses in which they lived.³³²

National government authorities believed that unemployment pressure in urban areas could be reduced if the unemployed moved to rural areas and those in rural areas stayed there but rural areas were not developed enough to discourage rural-urban migration that increased in the 1960s and 1970s. Gargett argued that there was need to first stabilise the urban African community before thinking of developing rural areas to bring them into the modern economy. Taking average incomes compared with the poverty datum line, about seventy five percent of urban African families, where the breadwinner was employed, had incomes below subsistence levels.³³³ Gargett noted that:

Because these families are not self supporting, there is a drain on rural areas, which prevents their development. ...It has also been stressed that the solutions to problems of African unemployment and underemployment must lie in developing the economy of the rural areas... There is no hope of succeeding in this until urban workers get a living wage.³³⁴

There was need for payment of a living wage to urban African workers, part of which some of them could use to develop their rural areas. This view was similar to Clive Kileff's findings in Harari Township in the 1970s whereby men believed that their work in town should prosper them so that they could support their family in rural areas.³³⁵ On average, Europeans earned about eleven times as much as Africans. Gargett argued that:

A situation in which most of the population lives in poverty, while extremes of income are maintained and magnified, is not conducive to contentment, or social stability. Yet it seems to be accepted, by most Europeans at least, as part of the natural order of things... I firmly believe that it is both desirable and possible to change this situation, if we have the will to do so.... The first step is a fair wages policy...³³⁶

A fair wage policy was needed for urban African workers but some employers argued that they could not afford to pay more. While noting that this could have been true of a

³³² P. Harris, *Black Industrial Workers in Rhodesia*, pp. 27-28.

³³³ Eric Gargett quoted in *Chronicle*, 24 July 1974, "Key to Rural Areas Development: Give Urban Africans a living wage, urges Gargett."

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Clive Kileff, *Research Report*, University of Rhodesia, undated, p. 79.

³³⁶ Eric Gargett quoted in *Chronicle*, 24 July 1974, "Key to Rural Areas Development: Give Urban Africans a living wage, urges Gargett."

few employers, Gargett highlighted that on the whole profits advanced faster than African wages. Experience had shown that rising wages were met by increasing output. Productivity was low because employers pursued a cheap labour policy, they did not pursue a cheap labour policy because productivity was low. Budget surveys showed that Africans spent any extra money on more food, clothing, furniture and education, not on drink. Gargett thus concluded that:

We cannot under develop, under employ, and underpay 95% of the population while the remainder lives happily ever after. With a fair wages policy must go the training of Rhodesian Africans to meet our skilled manpower requirement, in place of reliance on (white) immigrants; the removal of artificial barriers, and the encouragement of effective trade unions.³³⁷

The absorption of Africans into the modern Rhodesian economy was not happening at a pace or in a way that would create a stable economy and a contented society. According to Gargett; “If we remain divided as we are, between affluence and poverty, if we perpetuate a dual economy of market and subsistence, we will put strains on our society which it can not bear for long.”³³⁸

Officials from the Union of South Africa also supported ideas that justified payment of low wages to urban Africans. In July 1970 for example, the Bantu Wage and Productivity Association (BWPA) of South Africa newsletter stated that in the past it strongly emphasized the need for “feeding schemes for Bantu workers.”³³⁹ While feeding schemes answered physical malnutrition, the BWPA argued that they were now faced with what Dr. J. C. De Ridder called “sociological malnutrition,” which could have two forms:

- (a). The lack of mental stimulus in a conservative and static tribal society which retarded mental development, and consequently when the Bantu came to work in industry, they could only give a fraction of their real intelligence potential.
- (b). Stimulus of the wrong kind or what may be described as getting a wrong mental diet. According to De Ridder, this occurred in the townships and produced the clever sharp-witted *tsotsi* (criminal), an individual intellectually stimulated but his development

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ BMRL N2/31 Bantu Wage and Productivity Ass, E. R. Silberbauer, BWPA Newsletter, July 1970.

potential took a form that made him a poor worker and a disruptive influence in the labour force. “Very often his distorted mental development occurred more by default than intention; wrong stimuli are around him, good stimuli are just not there.”³⁴⁰

Therefore, after 1960, despite the payment of low wages to a majority of African workers, increasing numbers of unemployed Africans desperately sought work daily in industries that were suffocating from an economic recession. The ability of employers to replace large numbers of established staff with virtually no time lag, and with a minimal disruptive impact on productivity, severely limited the bargaining power of organised black labour. This increased job insecurity for many unskilled African workers. As far as the individual worker was concerned, a job was of overriding importance, and workers tended not to take any action (such as joining a trade union or complaining about conditions of employment) that could alienate them from their employers and increase the chance of summary dismissal. Even the most industrious and obedient of workers faced the constant threat of dismissal through redundancy. There was no single strategy (through collective job action or through personal submissiveness) that was available to workers to increase basic job security to a level where this ceased to be a major issue of concern to them. It was very difficult for many to acquire a security of skill that was not easily replaceable.³⁴¹

Workers were thus forced to rely on traditional links with the social security system of peasant farming communities because of the prevailing atmosphere of job insecurity. Peter Harris argued that:

The prevailing atmosphere of job insecurity has created a regime of temporary urbanisation within the black urban community. Workers may identify in a very permanent manner with an urban industrial life style during the period of their employment, but they constantly have to bear in mind an ultimate return to a rural area in the event of their being dismissed, being declared redundant or on retirement.³⁴²

Where fears of loss of employment and consequently of loss of accommodation were a constant feature of life, it was inevitable for a community to lack stability.³⁴³ A general

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Peter S. Harris, *Black Industrial Workers in Rhodesia*, p. 22.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ I. R. N Cormack, *Towards Self-Reliance: Urban Social Development in Zimbabwe*, (Gweru: Mambo Press, 1983), p. 109.

feeling of insecurity among urban Africans in Bulawayo contributed to the desire to have rural links because as Michael Ndubiwa noted, extended link or family helped in times of retirement, old age, sickness and unemployment.³⁴⁴ Migrant workers going to the city not only aspired to wages, but also wanted other forms of security such as residence, health, employment and personal freedom. Where these were lacking in town, the worker would try to keep his lines of retreat to the country open.³⁴⁵

The threat of loss of employment was therefore a constant and overpowering one for most African industrial workers mainly because of the existing degree of unemployment and the fact that relatively very few workers had specific technical skills. Economic surveys of Rhodesia published annually by the Ministry of Finance tended to reflect an alarmist and defeatist reaction to the problem of creating sufficient employment for the growing black population. In 1968 the survey observed that “there is a wide disparity between the growth rate of the African population and the potential of the country to provide employment.”³⁴⁶ The economic survey conducted in 1970 restated this view in a less equivocal manner, that is: “The imbalance of African children in relation to the size of the economy underlines the insuperable problem of creating sufficient employment opportunities in the money economy, however favourable external conditions become.”³⁴⁷ The debate on the African “population explosion” is discussed below.

2.5 Poverty and the African Population Explosion Debate.

The government and white community at large blamed Africans for the increasing urban unemployment problem. J. A. Newington, RF Member of Parliament (MP), for Hillcrest, ranked “population explosion” as one of the top three causes of unemployment in Southern Rhodesia in 1968. He argued that “Unemployment in Rhodesia is largely

³⁴⁴ BMRL N6A/103B, M. Ndubiwa, Urban Community Study, 6 June, 1974, p. 24.

³⁴⁵ Eric Gargett, *The Administration of Transition: African Urban Settlement in Rhodesia*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1977), p. 20.

³⁴⁶ Peter S. Harris: *Black Industrial Workers in Rhodesia*, p. 21.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

attributable to three factors: one which we have dealt with, sanctions; secondly, the fact that we still import labour... and thirdly, population explosion.”³⁴⁸

R. B. Hall, Rhodesian Front MP for Highlands (Salisbury) argued that “Without family planning these people, [the Africans] will never be able to get the education and the employment they require.”³⁴⁹ In 1969 Rhodesian Minister of Finance J. J. Wrathal noted that “...in the final analysis, it is the rapid increase in the (African) population which is the root cause of our problem. If we are to progress and succeed in raising the standard of living of our people in the long term, there must be some restraint on population growth.”³⁵⁰

In 1971, the *Rhodesia Herald* carried an article by John Borrell in which he noted that in India the time for tackling the population problem had run out, while Rhodesia was left with only “five more minutes” to attend to the problem. Borrell argued that Rhodesia’s population growth was like a time bomb ticking remorselessly towards self destruction and warned that “If Rhodesia is not to find herself in the same position as India within a few decades, a concerted effort must be made now.”³⁵¹

In Bulawayo, Ashton indicated that not much could be done locally to solve the unemployment problem except to give all possible support to publicising the need to slow population increase and to improving economic and educational advantages so that these become “greater than the desire for many children.”³⁵² This was unrealistic like in Kenya and Senegal where, according to Freund, attempting to deal with African urban inhabitants as though they were inscribed in European nuclear families proved too unrealistic.³⁵³

³⁴⁸ Rhodesia, Parliamentary Debates, 4th Session, Eleventh Parliament, 16 May to 9 August 1968, 24 July 1968, Column 1059 cited in Glen Ncube, *MA Thesis*, “African Population Dynamics and the rise of the neo-Malthusianism and State Demographic Politics in late Colonial Zimbabwe, 1960s-1970s”, University of Zimbabwe, 2005.

³⁴⁹ R. B. Hall, Rhodesian Front MP for Highlands (Salisbury) quoted in *The Rhodesian Herald*, Salisbury, 25/05/1968.

³⁵⁰ Rhodesia, Parliamentary Debates, 5th Session, Eleventh Parliament, 25 June 1969 to 4 July 1969, 17 July 1969 to 20 August 1969, Col. 486. See Glen Ncube, “African Population Dynamics and the rise of the neo-Malthusianism and State Demographic Politics in late Colonial Zimbabwe.”

³⁵¹ NAZ, S3285/45/126, Prime Minister’s File: Family Planning; (1) Population Control; (2) Assessment of Progress. *The Rhodesian Herald* cutting, John Borell, “Five Minutes To Go.”

³⁵² Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June, 1971, p. 2. See also *Chronicle*, Saturday, 27 May, 1972, “Open Doors to Africans”- Ashton.”

³⁵³ B. Freund, *The African City*, p. 99.

While it is true that having many unplanned children could be a cause of poverty, in this instance, the African was being asked to practice birth control in a vacuum. Because of this, the *African Home News* aptly argued that the African, like any other member of the human race, cherished his security and the security of his children. Since there was no provision for his old age retirement, there was a vital need to have children as a means of making provisions for social security during old age. It was vital, too, that one did not only have children, but that one should have an appreciable number of them so that in their depressed financial conditions, they can share the load. After spending a life-time in the service of industry an African workman was retired from his work without financial cover to cushion him for the rest of his life. The African was expected to go back to the rural areas or become the responsibility of his urban relatives. African wages were so little that one could not afford to take out an insurance policy for himself or for his family. Efforts to improve African wages through trade unions had proved futile because of more unemployment, which was depressing wages.³⁵⁴ For this reason, Gargett aptly concluded that “Only when they can raise their living standards does the size of their families begin to decline. The average African cannot afford to limit his family: children are his insurance.”³⁵⁵ Nheti. Nkomo argued that:

that debate about we (Africans) being poor because of having too many children was disrespect on part of the white people. I remember that talk because I had just come back from South Africa in early 1970s. Surely how could someone prevent you from having sex with your wife because they say you are poor to take care of them? That was simply not possible. It was not fair. Were they giving us little money in industries so that we will remain poor and then be expected not to have children? May be they should have employed more policemen and posted them in all homes of African people to prevent us from having sex with our wives. If that was ever going to be done, rest assured then that even our wives were going get impregnated by their policemen guarding the houses.³⁵⁶

Senzeni Dlodlo highlighted that:

In Ndebele society, there is a proverb that can be translated to mean “being many is only detested by witches”. A person says this when thanking another one who would have offered them some great

³⁵⁴ *African Home News*, Volume 1, No. 3, 1973, “Editorial.”

³⁵⁵ Eric Gargett quoted in *Chronicle*, 24 July 1974, “Key to Rural Areas Development: Give Urban Africans a living wage, urges Gargett.” See also Amy Kaler, “A Threat to the Nation and a Threat to the Men: the Banning of Depo-Provera in Zimbabwe in 1981”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 24, Number 2, June 1998, pp. 348, 354. See also R. Weiss, *The Women of Zimbabwe*, (London, Kesho, 1986), p. 90.

³⁵⁶ Interview with Nheti Nkomo, Makokoba Market, Bulawayo, Saturday 12 April 2008.

help or gift. But that proverb also extols the virtues of being many, not only in society but even in a family. If you have many children, you can hope that at least one of them would grow to become a very successful person who would help you at your old age. Having only one or two children was a rare thing in our Ndebele society. So those white people wanted us to change our proverb to “being many is now detested by contraceptives or family planners.” That was not good at all.³⁵⁷

The attempt by Prime Minister Smith’s government to promote birth control among Africans was actually motivated by a compound of paternalistic urges to “modernise” Africans, and racial fears of becoming a white island swamped by a rising tide of black population.³⁵⁸ A similar situation transpired a few years after independence when the new central government officials began to voice concern over the effects of fast population growth on development.³⁵⁹ While the national government blamed African unemployment on the effects of population explosion, it tended to increasingly deny the existence of unemployment in the 1970s.

2.6 The 1970s: A Decade of Denial of the Existence of African Unemployment in Rhodesia.

In the 1970s, Southern Rhodesia clearly condoned clandestine labour migration into South Africa hoping that this would reduce unemployment problems in its urban areas. While in 1950 the number of Southern Rhodesian workers in South Africa was about 25,000, it rose to about 75,000 in 1966. Despite the increase the government became far less concerned about labour emigration and even refused to control clandestine labour migrants to South Africa, a policy which it had historically pursued especially during times before achieving a surplus in its labour requirements. The Rhodesian Labour Department panicked at the implications of the rapidly growing unemployment during the liberation war in the 1970s. Official figures and statements on the employment situation became wildly misrepresentative, full of “astonishing contradictions” in an attempt to hide the truth.³⁶⁰ According to Clarke, the build-up in exports of labour,

³⁵⁷ Interview with Senzeni Dlodlo, Mzilikazi Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 17 January 2008.

³⁵⁸ M. West cited in Amy Kaler, “A Threat to the Nation and a Threat to the Men”, p. 349.

³⁵⁹ Michael O. West, “Nationalism, Race, and Gender: The Politics of Family Planning in Zimbabwe, 1957-1990”, in *Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1994, pp. 447-471.

³⁶⁰ Bill Paton, *Labour Export Policy in the Development of Southern Africa*, see chapter 4 on Zimbabwe.

especially in 1976 certainly provided relief against the growing unemployment in Southern Rhodesia³⁶¹

Duncan Clarke aptly argued that the statistical acrobatics which took place in the early 1970s in an attempt to “de-scale” estimates of unemployment were essentially the penultimate phase of a bankrupt ideology and policy that sought the solution to urban unemployment in “population control” and rural sector “absorption.”³⁶² Influx control measures were indirectly used to curtail the African unemployment problem in urban areas. Africans were proclaimed to be “tribesman” all with “traditional” access to land and with a place in rural areas.³⁶³

As the war intensified in the 1970s, some rural people lost their homes, property and their land and some migrated to towns in search of safety and work. The Rhodesian government found that its long time policy (that successfully forced wages below the value of labour power) of forcing urban African workers to remain dependent on rural areas for food was being severely undermined by the war. In the late 1970s, Prime Minister Smith admitted that a hundred blacks were being thrown out of work each day as a result of war, sanctions and world recession. By 1979, it was estimated that at least 500,000 Africans were living in the squatter camps in Bulawayo and Salisbury (Harare).³⁶⁴

Despite the long term persistence of African unemployment in the post 1945 period, successive administrations persistently denied its scope and importance and at times its very existence. This denial reached alarming heights during the 1970s. To divert attention, the colonial government, as per its official ideology, argued that there was actually a “shortage of labour”, especially on plantations and (some) mines.³⁶⁵ In 1972 for example, R. Dawson, the Secretary for Labour and Social Welfare asserted that:

the incidence of African unemployment in the money sector of the Rhodesian economy has been generally exaggerated. The unemployment rates of 3, 7 percent and 3, 9 percent for African males and females respectively revealed by the 1969 Censuses were not excessive. More over, contrary to common belief, the incidence of African unemployment has declined since the Censuses.³⁶⁶

³⁶¹ D. G. Clarke, *The Unemployment Crisis*, p. 24.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Andre Astrow, *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way?* (London: Zed Books, 1983), p. 66.

³⁶⁵ Duncan G. Clarke, *The Unemployment Crisis*, p. 6.

³⁶⁶ P. Harris, *Black Industrial Workers in Rhodesia*, p. 21.

Dawson's analysis was heavily attacked by A. M. Hawkins especially his definition of an "unemployed person" that was highly restrictive and basically irrelevant as it looked at labour supply without considering the wages paid for labour.³⁶⁷

While figures on African unemployment were confusing, one incontrovertible fact was that there was increasing unemployment, that jobs were not growing as fast as demand for them. In 1971 the Bulawayo Council highlighted that whereas the number of Africans in paid employment rose from 602,000 in 1956 to 726,100 in 1970, the proportion of Africans without jobs rose from 81 to about 85 percent. While the economic instability was worldwide, this problem had a racial aspect which was peculiar to Rhodesia, which problem by and large, identified the "haves" and the fully employed with the European sector of the community, and the "have nots", the lowly paid and the unemployed, with the African sector.³⁶⁸ After 1960 right through the 1970s there was no white person in Southern Rhodesia who could be effectively classified as poor as there was hardly any unemployment among white labour.³⁶⁹

In 1971, the Bulawayo Town Clerk was advised of unemployment that existed in the city by H. N. Kalshovin, a white resident who highlighted that:

I carried out a check along the Mafeking Road between 10.30 and 11am on Tuesday 13 April, 1971 (and found):
-40-50 Africans hanging about outside National Dye House in Burnley Road just off 15th Avenue Island.
-60-70 lying or sitting on grass and another 25 odd standing in the triangle boundary by Darlington Road, Bellevue Road and the Bristol Canal (opposite Halstead's).
-70-80 sitting or standing about in 23rd Avenue West outside new factories near the bank opposite Matabeleland Clothing Company.
-Many individuals and small groups of 2-6 walking or sitting along both sides of the Mafeking Road between the canal and Stourbridge Road.
-Beyond Stourbridge Road as far as Dunlop there were very few, mostly males but with a good sprinkling of the females.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ BMRL N6A/56 Unemployment, Confidential Letter on African Unemployment for the Town Clerk (E.S. White) to His Worship the Mayor and City Councillors, 10th September, 1971, pp. 2-3.

³⁶⁹ Mkhululi Ncube, "Employment, Unemployment and the Evolution of Labour Policy in Zimbabwe", *Zambezia* (2000), XXVII (ii), p. 162.

³⁷⁰ BMRL N6A/56 Unemployment, "Note to: The Town Clerk by H. N. Kalshovin", 13th April, 1971.

Despite this overwhelming evidence, the Minister of Labour completely denied the existence of African unemployment. For example, in 1974 the Minister claimed that “There is no unemployment problem in Rhodesia.”³⁷¹

African unemployment in Bulawayo worsened. Between June 1970 and June 1971, 19,195 more men registered as work seekers at Khami Road Employment Bureau. Two thirds of the jobseekers were from rural areas. Like the national government, the Bulawayo Council blamed the African population explosion as the cause of problems. Hugh Ashton encouraged improvement in living and working conditions in agriculture and mining so as to attract African labour from urban areas, and thus engineer the much desired rural absorption process. Only in the field of domestic service in Bulawayo was there a shortage of labour, but this was an unpopular field because of low wages, long working hours and accommodation restrictions among other problems.³⁷²

The period from 1976 through to 1978 wreaked a terrible toll on the urban poor of Zimbabwe and the spectre of joblessness rose dramatically. In 1978, Finance Minister David Smith made a statement which no such minister had ever said publicly, that is; “Economically we are in bad shape. There is high unemployment in the country. This affects more blacks than whites. This worries me. Unless we can come up with something that stops the war and gives confidence to big business, we are in trouble.”³⁷³ This was at a time when there was no Unemployment Insurance Fund for Africans. Official government expectations were that unemployed Africans would somehow find alternative means of subsistence in the rural economy. No statutory Old Age Pension scheme for Africans existed as the government refused and was unwilling to establish a pension scheme on a non-racial basis.

Conditions of life had become more restrictive and repressive since 1965. Onerous legislative and administrative controls determined the daily existence of Africans in such a way that individual freedoms were severely eroded.³⁷⁴ More important laws in this regard were the African (Registration and Identification) Amendment Act of

³⁷¹ Minister of Labour, cited in D. G. Clarke, *The Unemployment Crisis*, p. 8.

³⁷² *Chronicle*, Wednesday, November 17 1971, “Government and Councils urged to give land-African Unemployment Grows.”

³⁷³ D. G. Clarke, *The Unemployment Crisis*, pp. 6 and 9.

³⁷⁴ International Labour Office, *Labour Conditions and Discrimination in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)*, (Geneva: ILO Publications, 1978), pp. 122-3.

1973 and the Vagrancy Amendment Act of 1973 which made it extremely difficult for blacks to work in town unless they had both legal residence and evidence of a job, which usually meant a formal sector job.³⁷⁵ In 1975 for example, the Bulawayo municipality estimated that about 30,693 unauthorised residents resided in the city.³⁷⁶

2.7 Conclusion.

Efforts to meet the needs of low income Africans in urban areas were bedevilled by the authorities' refusal to acknowledge their permanent residency as they remained subjected to special controls, provided for separately, said to be living on another race's land, excluded from the city's finances and from its government.³⁷⁷ The general economic recession, low wages and high unemployment rates directly affected low income earners' continued residency in Bulawayo as urban residency was predicated on success in securing the daily needs of food, clothing and housing through formal jobs which were dwindling in the 1960s.

The next chapter explores the poor's response to worsening unemployment in Bulawayo during the turbulent years.

³⁷⁵ Rob Davies, *The Informal Sector: A Solution to Unemployment*, (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1978), p. 11. See also Elaine Windrich, *The Rhodesian Problem: A Documentary Record, 1923-1973*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1975), p. 198. The Vagrancy Amendment Bill was gazetted on 24 November 1972. The Bill empowered the District Commissioner to prohibit "Vagrants" from entering urban areas and defined a vagrant as (a) any person found in an urban area who is not lawfully resident in that area or who is not employed by that person, (b) any person who is idle or disorderly and (c) any person who lives on the earnings of prostitution.

³⁷⁶ E. Gargett, *The Administration of Transition*, p. 22.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 14.

Chapter 3

Increasing Unemployment, Poverty and Informality during the Turbulent Years.

Increasing rural-urban migration in the face of a general economic recession and a lack of industrial expansion around the 1960s exacerbated unemployment rates and low wages which forced poor urban residents to resort to informal economic activities for survival. This chapter thus explores the hostile conditions that African residents who resorted to informal economic activities for survival faced in Bulawayo between 1960 and 1980 as state laws continued to criminalise residents involved in non-formal employment. It is argued that women were the worst affected as they suffered from both colonial and gender discrimination. In the second section, I study relations between African Advisory boards, composed of middle class Africans who purported to represent all urban Africans, and the majority of low income urban Africans. This allows me to highlight the class and gender dynamics in the perpetuation of poverty among Africans in Bulawayo, as well as the broader national political question that rendered the African Advisory Boards ineffective in engineering any meaningful political concessions or policies that could lead to improvement in the welfare of all Africans.

3.1 Problems Associated with Urban Informality and the Poor in Bulawayo.

Any discussion of informality must begin with the emergence of the “informal sector” as a concept in the early 1970s.³⁷⁸ Generally, in the 1960s, in most cities, what was growing rapidly was what colonial regimes had once feared and labelled as detribalised or flouting populations. By the 1970s it was officially known as the urban informal sector and basically referred to economic activities outside state regulation, consisting of small and often transitory workshops, of traders working in the streets, and of illegal activities.³⁷⁹ The Rhodesian government and the Bulawayo City Council pursued policies aimed at

³⁷⁸ Nezar AlSayyad, “Urban Informality as a “New” Way of Life” in Ananya Roy and Nezar Alsayyad (eds), *Urban Informality: Transitional Perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), p. 10.

³⁷⁹ Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past and the Present*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 121-123. Also see Keith Hart, “Informal Income Opportunities and Employment in Ghana”, *The Journal Of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, March 1973, pp. 61-89.

keeping out a floating population of African loafers and self employed persons and to restrict the population in the city to those in wage employment who underwent medical examinations and were issued with registration certificates.³⁸⁰ The informal sector was never legalised in colonial Zimbabwe.³⁸¹

In the late 1950s, “an explosive combination of social and economic factors came into play” in Southern Rhodesia.³⁸² These included high levels on unemployment, drought and severe dislocations as a result of the 1951 Land Husbandry Act that had left many rural people landless and trekked to towns in search of livelihoods. At the same time, towns were increasingly depicted as besieged by vice and criminality, with the police waging constant battles against urban Africans regarded as undesirable. As a result, illegal traders became serious targets, a “war” was waged against informal vendors, “loose women” were raided. Some of those charged with being vagrants or *tsotsis* (criminals) were rounded up and there were “clean ups” of thieves.³⁸³ The 1960 Vagrancy Act also affected those whose livelihoods depended on the informal economy in Bulawayo.³⁸⁴

The maintenance of racist repressive influx control measures in urban areas failed to prevent the expansion of informal trading which, according to Ndlovu, functioned as a refuge and livelihood for the majority of urban poor dwellers by providing an alternative employment and income to those who failed to break into the formal sector.³⁸⁵ Repressive laws generally prevented the growth of large shanty towns or informal housing and other informal activities. The low rate of urbanisation among Africans therefore prevented the convergence of a large body of the unemployed and particularly

³⁸⁰ P. Kaarsholm, “Si ye pambili-Which Way Forward? Urban Development, Culture and Politics in Bulawayo”, in B. Raftopoulos and Tsuneo Yoshikuni (eds), *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe’s Urban History*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 1999), p. 229.

³⁸¹ B. Ndlovu, *BA Honours Dissertation*, “The Informal Manufacturing Sector in Bulawayo: A Case Study”, University of Zimbabwe, 1989”, pp. 17-9.

³⁸² Jocelyn Alexander, “Hooligans, Spivs and Loafers’?: The Politics of Vagrancy in the 1960s Southern Rhodesia”, *Unpublished Manuscript*, p. 3.

³⁸³ *Ibid.* Also see M. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class: Colonial Zimbabwe 1898-1965*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), especially chapter 4.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³⁸⁵ B. Ndlovu, “The Informal Manufacturing Sector in Bulawayo”, p. 3.

more women in Bulawayo and other urban areas as most women were expected to remain in rural areas.³⁸⁶

Since rural African incomes lagged behind urban wages, Africans from rural areas migrated to towns in search of work or other ways of making a living or simply in order to join their families. This was given an impetus by the relaxation of pass laws in 1961 after urban authorities and employers pleaded for the lifting of the controls since they caused “considerable wastage of time and [did not] justify the cost of administration.”³⁸⁷ As a result thousands of Africans set up themselves in unregistered urban self employment.³⁸⁸

Life in urban areas was even difficult for formally employed men. According to Richard Gray, many men found odd jobs outside working hours such as haircutting, carpentry, teaching, photography, tailoring, portering and newspaper selling. Some men practiced as traditional doctors while other households took in lodgers. Unmarried girls and young women supported themselves by some form of marriages of convenience and other types of paid sexual relationships.³⁸⁹ A similar situation persisted in Bulawayo after 1960. However in doing so, they were bound to clash with authorities who resented informal activities.

An array of labels were coined and used to describe the activities encompassing the informal sector. Sometimes it was regarded as synonymous with the urban poor or with people living in slums or squatter settlements, or with the immigrant population of cities. Sometimes the informal sector was thought to consist of illegal, criminal or marginal activities and hence parasitic but at times it has been regarded as representing productive, small scale self-employed activities and hence served as a source for promoting growth, employment and equity objectives.³⁹⁰ The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defined the informal sector as a labour market of the last resort for

³⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 13.

³⁸⁷ V. Wild, “An Outline of African Business history in colonial Zimbabwe”, *Zambezia*, (1992), XIX (i), p. 43. Wild argues that the amendment of the African Registration Act (Chapter 76) and the African Urban Areas (Accommodation and Registration) Act (No. 20 of 1951) in 1961 by the Pass Laws (Repeal) Act (No. 50 of 1960) stirred up considerable controversy among the European population who wanted maintenance of pass laws to restrict Africans from urban areas.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Richard Gray, *The Two Nations: Aspects of the Development of Race Relations in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 222-224.

³⁹⁰ B. Ndlovu, “The Informal Manufacturing Sector in Bulawayo”, pp. 7-8.

those who could not obtain jobs in the modern formal sector³⁹¹ but even some of the urban working poor employed in the formal sector also participated in informal activities to supplement their income.

Not all people participating in informal economic activities can be regarded as the urban poor. Writing in 1972, the ILO argued that the popular view of the informal sector activities was that they were primarily those of petty traders, street hawkers, shoeshine boys and other groups “underemployed” on the streets of the big towns, unproductive with low incomes, “stagnant, non-dynamic..., net for the unemployed and for the thinly veiled idleness into which those who can not find formal jobs must fall”, but there was evidence that some informal activities were profitable.³⁹² King highlighted that there is a distinction between subsistence self employment and entrepreneurial self employment. Informal enterprise activities can and do move between these different “types” over the course of the enterprise life-cycle.³⁹³ This work focuses on urban residents engaged on what King termed subsistence self employment because most of the poor, who are the subjects in this study, participated in it for survival.

The conceptualisation of the informal sector was problematised by Frederick Cooper who argued that it was neither informal nor a sector, but its designation represented the urgent desire of social engineers to separate an economic arena where legal regulations and official categories prevailed and an arena where they did not. Cooper aptly argued that it showed that people could survive without jobs that showed up on state records, and in surviving they provided cheap services for others, which of course was a negation of the kind of the city and order that the colonial state expected.³⁹⁴ This meant that it is not possible in any city to have all residents subsisting through formal economic ways. In Bulawayo at least, there is evidence that Africans had survived through informal economic activities and lived in informal housing since the beginning of

³⁹¹ The ILO, cited in B. Ndlovu, “The Informal Manufacturing Sector in Bulawayo”, p. 9.

³⁹² The ILO, cited Robert Palmer, “The Informal Economy in Sub-Saharan Africa: Unresolved issues of Concept, Character and Measurement”, *Occasional Paper*, No. 98, (Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh University, 2004.), p. 16.

³⁹³ King, cited in Robert Palmer, *The Informal Economy in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 27.

³⁹⁴ F. Cooper, *On the African Waterfront-Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 182.

colonial rule.³⁹⁵ African states' attempt to "formalise" everyone in terms of wanting them to subsist through formal jobs and formal housing but without providing resources to do so was scandalous.

Many types of African business people emerged after the Second World War in Southern Rhodesia. On the top of the African business hierarchy were the "tycoons", bigger bus operators and substantial general dealers. Below them were small shopkeepers, the grocers, butchers and barbers, followed by skilled artisans and tradesman like builders, carpenters and motor mechanics. At the bottom of the pyramid were prostitutes, shebeen queens, illegal beer (*skokiaan*) brewers and small hawkers and vendors.³⁹⁶ This bottom group was the most numerous and most resented by colonial authorities. As V. Wild observed, Africans initially tended to use the term "businessman" in a very wide sense, comprising not only the African business elite, the prominent and rich African business people, but virtually any African who was self employed in one way or another, including those in the bottom group like vegetable hawkers. The term businessman or businesswoman carried a sense of pride, and a notion of independence and achievement. It was only in the later decades of colonial rule that the number of self employed grew and the economic and social differences among them widened that the term gradually became limited to the upper echelons of the African business community.³⁹⁷ But the majority of other self employed Africans were determined to make their own living because of limited opportunities in formal employment.

Hawkers had been found throughout Bulawayo since the 1940s, trading illegally and continually on the move.³⁹⁸ A survey of self-employed Africans in Bulawayo in July 1957 established that there was a total of 54 women informal traders operating as baby clothes sellers, fruit and vegetable hawkers, groundnut and newspaper sellers, needlework and wood sellers.³⁹⁹ There was also a massive total of 703 African men informal traders who operated as basket makers, barbers, builders, carpenters, curio sellers, cycle repairers, fruit and vegetable hawkers, furniture polishers, hedge cutters,

³⁹⁵ Hugh Ashton, "Housing Policy and Practice 1894-1994" in M. Hamilton and M. Ndubiwa (eds) *Bulawayo: A Century of Development 1894-1994*, (Harare: Argosy Press, 1994), p. 54. Illicit beer brewing and shebeens, accompanied by much drunkenness, already existed in the Location (Makokoba) in 1895.

³⁹⁶ V. Wild, "An Outline of African Business History", p. 38.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 19-20.

³⁹⁸ B. W. Gussman, cited in V. Wild, "An Outline of African Business History", p. 37.

³⁹⁹ City of Bulawayo, *African Administration in Bulawayo*, p. 34.

mattress makers, cleaners, old clothing hawkers, painters, photographers, shoe polishers, tailors, tinsmiths, upholsters, well sinkers, watch repairers, wood sellers and other miscellaneous.⁴⁰⁰ Many of these traders were operating illegally.

Official figures of self employed people given by the Bulawayo Council in 1957 did not include the number of women who engaged on prostitution, *shebeening* and the sale of the illegal beer brew (*skokiaan*) which was very rampant in the Old Location. Kethiwe Fuyane indicated that:

We used to hear of a lot of stories about people running through thorny bushes in the township trying to escape arrest by policeman patrolling the townships. Those people who hid the illicit *skokiaan* brew in the bushes always had serious encounters with the police over that beer...⁴⁰¹

In June 1960, Mkambo, a resident from the Old Location (Makokoba) complained to the *African Home News* of the presence of vendors who sold bread, vegetables and fruits at Outspan near the Roman Catholic Church in the Old Location. Mkambo complained that “All of them have no licences to sell bread. Others sell for themselves. They go to the bakeries and buy bread there at wholesale prices and then go to the Outspan and sell it at a good profit.”⁴⁰² He also complained that some vendors were agents of Indian traders who operated stores in the city. Without providing figures, Mkambo indicated that there were too many illegal vendors, and wondered why they were not being arrested. Mkambo was an African business man who felt cheated by the presence of the illegal vendors. He argued that “this is not fair to us who have grocers in the Old Location, who pay a lot of money to the council for rents.”⁴⁰³ He also wanted the vegetable and fruit vendors to be arrested because they were disadvantaging the legal vendors operating from the vending market in the Old Location.

During the same year the Bulawayo City Council Medical Officer recommended that the Revenue Officer and the British South Africa Police be asked to take the strongest possible action (including more intensive and extensive checks and propose any appropriate amendments to the existing law) to reduce illegal hawking to a minimum.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Interview with Kethiwe Fuyane, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 05 December 2008.

⁴⁰² *African Home News*, Saturday 11 June 1960, “Letter from Mkambo to the Editor.”

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

The Medical Officer proposed a joint operation by both the police and health inspectors to prosecute Africans without self employment certificates as the only way of reducing illegal hawking.⁴⁰⁴

Since the late 1950s, the Bulawayo Council re-embarked on a policy of evicting all residents convicted of illicit African beer (*skokiaan*) brewing activities in African townships. Africans strongly resented eviction on the grounds that it was tantamount to double punishment for them since the culprits would already have paid fines for their offences.⁴⁰⁵ The other reason why city authorities clamped down on illicit beer brewing was because it affected profits in the council run beer halls. Bulawayo established an African beer (opaque beer) brewery in 1913 which was replaced by a much bigger one in 1950. Profits generated from beer sales were used to finance projects in African areas “without the ratepayers [white] being called upon for any contribution whatever.”⁴⁰⁶ This was done to generate revenue for building townships infrastructure in the name of African welfare. Africans who patronised council beer halls were therefore the goose that laid the golden egg⁴⁰⁷ (beer hall profits). The banning of local illicit brews in most of Southern Africa, together with the periodic campaigns of harassing women brewers was part of a strategy by colonial governments to ensure a market for the officially authorised “state” brews.⁴⁰⁸

Women in Makokoba Township sold the potent *skokiaan* (*skokiyane*) beer during ceremonies they hosted as parties. The brew was stored buried underground to hide it from the police on patrol. One day, when they saw police approaching, they started

⁴⁰⁴ NAZ S2413/400/78/8 Health Rules and Malaria Control, Bulawayo Council Meetings. Report of the Public Health Committee Meeting held on 11th January 1960. For similar problems in Salisbury see *African Daily News*, Tuesday, September 23, 1958, “106 Illegal Traders Arrested in Harare early morning swoop.”

⁴⁰⁵ M. Ndubiwa, *M. A Thesis*, “African Participation in Housing and Management in Rhodesia, The Bulawayo African Advisory Board”, 1972, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁰⁶ Hugh Ashton, “Housing Policy and Practice”, p. 54. See also David Pasteur, “From Frontier Town Board to a Modern Municipality” in M. Hamilton and M. Ndubiwa (eds), *Bulawayo: A Century of Development*, pp. 10 and 12.

⁴⁰⁷ Michael O. West, “Liquor and Libido: “Joint Drinking” and the Politics of Sexual Control in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1920s-1950s” in *Journal of Social History*, Volume 30, No. 3, 1997, pp. 654-655. In the 1940s, the Bulawayo Council went to the extent of using spotter aircraft and armoured cars to patrol illicit brewing trouble spots see Hugh Ashton, “Housing Policy and Practice”, p. 54.

⁴⁰⁸ Deborah Bryceson, “Alcohol in Africa: Substance, Stimulus, and Society” in Deborah F. Bryceson (ed), *Alcohol in Africa: Mixing Business, Pleasure and Politics*, (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002), p. 26.

singing church songs and pretended to be praying for a sick member of their family.⁴⁰⁹ In 1967, Morisby, a correspondent in the *Chronicle* highlighted that “It is my opinion that the local authorities and the police should go out of their way to arrest the common practice of illegal liquor sells in the townships.”⁴¹⁰ He argued that this had ripple effects on African employees at work and attributed the high rates of accidents at work to working under the influence of alcohol which would have been taken “to the wee hours of morning.”⁴¹¹ However, as Richard Gray once argued, in an environment characterised by low wages, malnutrition and disease, all of which contributed to inefficiency, the beer hall and *skokiaan* session, like the gin palace in early industrial England, offered the commonest means of escape.⁴¹²

The criminalisation of urban residents who engaged in informal activities for survival, including the harassing of squatters, beer brewers and prostitutes underlined the legitimate hegemony of the dominant class while lower class illegitimacy was rubbed in by the humiliation of police raids.⁴¹³ The colonial and even post colonial states in Africa at best took an ambiguous stance towards the “informal sector” of the economy and those working within it. State and local authorities reluctantly focused on industrialisation and its consequences in an urban context or the development of a prosperous peasantry in a rural one. According to Freund “The world of shanty towns, of corner stalls and makeshift sweat shops, of women selling little packets of flavouring for stew, individual cigarettes and bars of soap did not belong to the structures that it proposed and planned.”⁴¹⁴ Thus on the relationship between the informal sector and governments in general, the ILO aptly argued that it was simply ignored, “rarely supported, often regulated and sometimes actively discouraged.”⁴¹⁵

A positive new look on the informal economy was adopted in the 1970s by some African countries that became independent much earlier than Zimbabwe, especially after

⁴⁰⁹ Interview between Ma Ndlela and Hlonophani, cited in T. Ranger, “Myth and Legend in Urban Oral Memory, Bulawayo, 1930-60”, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, Volume 44, No. 1, March 2008, p. 84.

⁴¹⁰ *Chronicle*, March 27, 1967, “Open Letter to the Editor” by Morisby.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴¹² R. Gray, *The Two Nations*, pp. 238 and 250.

⁴¹³ See Frederick Cooper, “Urban Space, Industrial Time, and Wage Labour in Africa” in Frederick Cooper (ed) *Struggle for the City: Migrant Labour, Capital and the State in Urban Africa*, (Beverly Hills/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1983), pp. 7-50.

⁴¹⁴ Bill Freund, *The African Worker*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 75.

⁴¹⁵ The ILO cited in Robert Palmer, *The Informal Economy in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 18.

the failure of their formal economies to produce the much needed jobs. “Parasites”, shack dwellers, and unemployed women, instead of being seen as dragging down health forms of development in the city, began to be viewed as the authentic builders of the African cities, as part of a process of development from below. Andrew Hake’s study of Nairobi city in 1974 argued that far from being parasites, such poor dwellers in the city were there for a reason, to make themselves and their families a better life. They performed important services, created their own employment (that the state failed to provide) and made useful contributions to the economy. As such those people, far from dragging the economy, were actually engaged in building it up.⁴¹⁶ This view was never adopted by authorities in Southern Rhodesia. Governments therefore appeared to have accepted informal economic activities reluctantly. Ray Bromely rightly observed that the informal sector gained widespread popularity due to its “embodied policy implications, which were convenient for international organizations and politically middle-of-the-road governments” and more specifically, the informal sector appeared to offer the possibility of “helping the poor without any major threat to the rich.”⁴¹⁷

In 1968, the African Administration officials in Salisbury warned urban councils that “a “Black Flood” was endangering the peace, administration and prosperity of cities.”⁴¹⁸ This “Black Flood” was the growing numbers of Africans engaged in informal economic activities. Authorities pleaded for the reintroduction of old pass laws and for firm influx control measures and they accused hawkers of working with petty criminals by passing on information about the absence of residents in houses or block of flats to facilitate burglaries. The informal sector was already getting out of control in the late 1960s and it continued to grow in all urban centres.⁴¹⁹

In 1971, the Bulawayo Council reported that youths in the city “haunt the streets” mainly because of joblessness. Some resorted to pilfering, pick pocketing, gambling, vegetable hawking and other illegal activities as ways of raising income because they failed to find formal jobs and many youths confessed that they felt useless because of

⁴¹⁶ Andrew Hake cited in Bill Freund, *The African City: A History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 155.

⁴¹⁷ Ray Bromley quoted in Nezar AlSayyad, “Urban Informality as a “New” Way of Life”, p. 11.

⁴¹⁸ V. Wild, “An Outline of African Business History”, p. 43.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

failure to find formal jobs.⁴²⁰ Unemployed young men resorted to cheeky survival mechanisms.

William Phiri noted that when they grew up in the townships, they used to raise money for football bets and gambling from collecting and selling scrap metals and bones. Some township bullies used to force innocent-looking youngsters to add stones into their collection bags so that the bags would weigh more and they would get more money. A big green lorry ferried bone and scrap metal collectors from townships like Pumula, Magwegwe, Njube, Matshobana to Scrapper Industry in the Thorngrove industrial areas where the company weighed the scrap metal before paying out the young men money worth the collected material.⁴²¹ Phiri noted that:

As soon as we got our monies, we would dash to a bakery few blocks away and buy hot bread and cream doughnuts. Others simply went back to the truck and started gambling (*uski*). It was the same with selling bones *emakaratini* (Coloured (mixed race) people). Some of us would stuff the roller meal plastic bags with bricks before filling it up with bones. One day our trick went awry. Our buyer called his vicious dogs and ordered all of us to empty our bags. Besides the embarrassment that gripped most of us, that day the chaps selling bread recorded little business. It was the same for gambling and football bets.⁴²²

Gambling has always been part of township life in Bulawayo and gamblers were some of the undesirables that were targeted through the vagrancy swoops after 1960 as the colonial state did not appreciate that fortuitous gains are usually attractive to poor people who have little prospect of overcoming their poverty, and hence gambling was, not surprisingly, popular even amongst black industrial workers.⁴²³

Some township thieves thrived on stealing bicycle pumps and lamps for sale as bicycles were jealously guarded assets. Their owners used to employ young men outside beer halls to guard their bicycles while they downed opaque beer inside. One of William Phiri's uncles used to earn his money from guarding bicycles at Big Bhawa (Makhumalo Beer hall in Makokoba Township). One day a pump was stolen from one of the bicycles that the uncle had been paid to look after. The irate owner of the bicycle reported the

⁴²⁰ *Sunday News*, January 5, 1975, "Rejected Youths seek outlets on streets."

⁴²¹ William Phiri, "Transport Emalokishini", Here and there with William Phiri, 4 June 2005, see http://www.inkundla.com/forum/ubbthreads.php/topics/30358/ibhave_yemalokitshini

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ P. Harris, *Black Industrial Workers in Rhodesia: The General Problem of Low Pay*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1974), p. 11.

matter to the uncle's parents. The next day, Phiri's uncle stole a pump from another bicycle to replace the stolen one but the owner refused to take it after realising that Phiri's uncle had stolen it.⁴²⁴ This was one of the many ways that some townships residents survived.

The attitude of city authorities and the government in Southern Rhodesia towards the sector often meant that informal workers were subjected to constant police harassment and restrictive by-laws which were often enforced erratically from the point of view of those in the sector. Like in colonial Dar es Salaam city where the informal economy had no place in the orderly town colonial administrators endeavoured to shape, participating in the informal sector was risky⁴²⁵ as participants could be arrested and fined or jailed. Unlicensed street traders were one group among other undesirables who were vulnerable to arrest in the name of colonial order.⁴²⁶ However, to the majority of the residents in the city, the informal economy was legitimate lawlessness as a trader selling foodstuffs once argued, "We are not trading because we want to, our problem is there is no work for residents of Dar es Salaam...we are dependent on this business to pay our rent and tax."⁴²⁷ Women in the informal sector in Bulawayo experienced more hostility mainly because the city was highly androcentric during the colonial period.⁴²⁸

Colonial authorities and men in Southern Rhodesia generally expected women to remain in the rural areas under the patriarchal authority of their fathers, husbands or other male guardians.⁴²⁹ When women "strayed" into the city, they encountered various restrictions in accessing formal jobs and accommodation. Municipalities carried out large scale raids to find, arrest, and prosecute women living "illegally" in the township when implementing the provisions of 1946 N(UA)ARA as very few women in the townships were "properly married wives" as was defined by the N(UA)ARA and not many of them

⁴²⁴ William Phiri, "The Importance of Bicycles", Here and there with William Phiri, 3 October 2005, see http://www.inkundla.com/forum/ubbthreads.php/topics/30358/ibhave_yemalokitshini

⁴²⁵ Rob Davies, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, The Informal Sector: A Solution to Unemployment*, (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 1978), p. 9.

⁴²⁶ A. Burton, *African Underclass: Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam* (Nairobi: The British Institute in Eastern Africa, 2005), pp. 163 and 158.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 160.

⁴²⁸ Koni Benson and Joyce M. Chadya, "Ukubhinya: Gender and Sexual Violence in Bulawayo, Colonial Zimbabwe, 1946-56" in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 31, No. 3, 2005, p. 591.

⁴²⁹ Michael O. West, "Liquor and Libido", p. 647.

were formally employed by the state which was a precondition to access housing.⁴³⁰ As a result, since then, most women and children increasingly resorted to informal economic activities as coping mechanisms since those activities did not require very restrictive pre-entry conditions. While under Part I of N(UA)ARA, the employer was required to provide suitable accommodation for his employees and under certain circumstances for the employee's wife without cost to the employee, for African women, the most challenging condition was that it was necessary for such a wife to be recognised as an approved wife under that Act, approved by a competent authority as explained in clauses 7-12.⁴³¹ This disqualified all women married under traditional laws that were not recognised under N(UA)ARA.

More women and children found their way into the urban areas in the 1970s partly because influx control measures in Bulawayo and other urban areas broke down due to the escalating war of liberation in the rural areas. Food production in rural areas was disrupted, making it difficult to supplement meagre urban incomes. In urban areas, some firms closed down especially in the manufacturing sector as the Rhodesian economy began to gradually erode after 1974 because of the effects of sanctions. The resulting overcrowding and lack of formal employment increased poverty in urban areas and pushed women and children into informal vending activities.⁴³²

Growing numbers of unauthorised vendors, mainly children who sold various items such as vegetables and fruit moving from house to house were observed in Bulawayo townships in the 1970s. These undersold licensed fruit and vegetable dealers by providing a door to door service at reasonable prices. In many ways, the temptation to become a door to door unlicensed vendor emanated from want. When a family was starving, queuing to register for a vending licence was too complicated as it was a process that involved a lot of waiting time. The growing numbers of the unauthorised vendors

⁴³⁰ T. Scarnecchia, "Poor Women and Nationalist Politics: Alliances and Fissures in the Formation of Nationalist Movements in Salisbury, Rhodesia, 1950-56" in *Journal of African History*, Volume 37, 1996, p. 286.

⁴³¹ NAZ S482/163/41 Native Urban Areas, Housing Regulations, Telegram from Governor's Deputy, Salisbury to Secretary of state, London, 16th February, 1946. See also Memorandum, Natives (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Bill (1945) in the same file. For more information on this see N. D. Makanyire, *MA Thesis*, Urban African Living Conditions in Colonial Zimbabwe: with Special Reference to Housing in Fort Victoria-1940-1970", 1977, pp. 23 and 24. Also see Koni Benson and J. Chadya, "Gender and Sexual Violence in Bulawayo", pp. 590-591.

⁴³² B. Ndlovu, "The Informal Manufacturing Sector in Bulawayo", pp. 13-15.

and others in the informal sector indicated existence of social problems related to unemployment, poverty and old age in townships. By the end of 1973 there were around 251 women vendors in township beer gardens, 200 women market stall holders, 1000 welfare garden allotment holders (mostly women) and a floating number of clandestine women vendors. A large number of women were also thought to be *shebeening* in the townships as a sideline or as a main means of livelihood.⁴³³

Makokoba vending market was the largest in Bulawayo with 149 registered stalls in 1974. Vegetables, cooked eggs and meat, fruits, second hand clothes, herbs, snuff and caterpillars (nicknamed African sausages) were some of the goods sold by the informal traders. Ninety-two of the Makokoba stalls were run by women vendors comprising widows, deserted wives, divorcees, to many of whom the market provided their only means of livelihood.⁴³⁴ In 1979, informal economic activities had almost grown out of control and Rob Davies warned that “Walk around the urban townships of Rhodesia...and you will find illegal or private tax operators, vegetable hawkers, curio markets, tailors, prostitutes, shebeen queens...people providing services, all of whom are ignored in the official definition of economic activities.”⁴³⁵

Factors behind the growth of the informal economy in Bulawayo were similar to other African cities in the 1970s. It was a response to a significant gap between the shrinking supply of formal sector job opportunities and the increasing demand for formal jobs by Africans in urban areas. That gap continued to expand and the informal sector also continued to expand to fill the need for new jobs and to “replace” the jobs that were continually lost as the economies continued to shrink.⁴³⁶ Resultant poverty conditions were not helped by the limited welfare services in Bulawayo.

It was an exhausting exercise for any African, whether male or female, to obtain help from the council welfare offices. Residents seeking help from the African Welfare Society were subject to a strict vetting system that sought to establish that the applicant’s

⁴³³ BMRL N6A/103B M. Ndubiwa, “Urban Community Study”, 6 June, 1974, p. 24. A shebeen is an illegal drinking establishment usually run by shebeen queens. See Rob Davies, *The Informal Sector: A Solution to Unemployment?*, p. 4.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ Rob Davies quoted in Ndlovu, “The Informal Manufacturing Sector in Bulawayo”, p. 10.

⁴³⁶ Deborah Potts, “The State and the Informal in Sub-Saharan African Urban Economies: Revisiting Debates on Dualism”, *Working Paper No. 18, -Cities and Fragile States-*, King’s College, London, October 2007, p. 7.

family income was nil or negligible, quite destitute, all resources exhausted, a registered tenant, sub tenant or lodger, breadwinner unemployed, or unemployable, called regularly at the employment exchange, had not refused any reasonable offer of employment, was permanently urbanised; had no rural relatives who could take them in and so on and “aliens” were offered repatriation. Five to six hundred families were helped monthly around 1964.⁴³⁷ The situation was even worse for women.

Since women were generally expected to remain in rural areas, authorities were reluctant to assist them in times of need. This was because both colonial authorities and African men regarded African women as perpetual minors, forever under the tutelage of their fathers, husbands or other male guardians. Those who tried to assert their independence were viewed by authorities and men as “loose” and “unattached” both physically and morally.⁴³⁸ Pondo Ncube argued that before women could approach authorities, the attitude was like “after all what do you want in urban areas, you have come here to cause trouble...”⁴³⁹ In 1966 for example, the Regional Welfare Officer in Bulawayo encouraged that a “tougher line” be taken over the young widows who were liable to become “hangers on” at beer gardens, or shebeens or to take to prostitution.⁴⁴⁰ Therefore, as Lynette Jackson aptly argued, throughout most of the colonial period, the condition of African women in the colonial public sphere was akin to that which Gayatri Spivak called the “unaccommodated female body” which, while “displaced from the empire/nation negotiation”, ultimately contested that displacement by imposing itself bodily upon that space, by reinscribing space with itself.⁴⁴¹

Some women and their children were often deserted by “alien” husbands, that is, husbands from Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique who left them without any means of support when they returned to their countries of origin. In some cases, local wives refused to leave the country and the families then split up.⁴⁴² This was partly because in the urban

⁴³⁷ E. Gargett, *The Administration of Transition: African Urban Settlement in Rhodesia*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1977), pp. 66-67.

⁴³⁸ Michael O. West, “Liquor and Libido”, p. 647.

⁴³⁹ Interview with Pondo Ncube, MaKhumalo Beer Hall, Makokoba, Sunday 4 January, 2009.

⁴⁴⁰ BMRL N2/37 Relief of Distress Amongst Africans, “Discussion on Public Assistance held the Bulawayo Council with the Regional Welfare Officer on the 10th of June 1966.

⁴⁴¹ Lynette A. Jackson, “When in White Man’s Town: Zimbabwean Women Remember Chibeura”, in Jean Allman, Susan Geiger and Nakanyike Musisi (eds), *Women in African Colonial Histories*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 2002), p. 192.

⁴⁴² M. Ndubiwa, “Urban Community Study”, pp. 32-33.

areas, “aliens” sometimes became a synonym for the lowest skilled and most poorly paid workers.⁴⁴³ Single women in Bulawayo were driven into marriages of convenience with foreign men so to access housing because of a housing policy that criminalised them. Miss Sibanda, who stayed in Njube Township since the colonial period, argued that:

Surely who would have wanted to be married to *amalubale* and *amazambezi* (local names for migrant workers from Malawi and Zambia respectively). Stranded local women went to them only because they wanted a roof over their heads and to be taken care of when they were finding their feet in the city. Those men from Nyasaland and Zambia occupied a lot of bachelor accommodation in the townships. Most of them stayed with local women in Sizinda Township...⁴⁴⁴

Such women suffered when they were deserted.

A number of women also faced the problem of non-support and family disorganisation resulting from extra marital relationships especially the practice of men having temporary wives. As a result, single mothers were sometimes unable to provide for their children and this contributed to a growing problem of destitute families in Bulawayo in the 1970s. The problem of old people was also beginning to be felt. Destitute women, old people and children were the main culprits in unauthorised vending.⁴⁴⁵

Single women faced restrictions in accessing formal employment in Bulawayo. Most African Advisory Board Members (ABMs) in the city resented the employment of unmarried women in the council’s welfare departments like counselling arguing that such “inexperienced women” with little knowledge of family life could offer no meaningful advice.⁴⁴⁶ The ABMs however, adopted the Liquor Undertaking Committee’s resolution in 1966 to employ women/girls in municipal beer gardens so as to attract male customers. Like in Dar-es Salaam where young female barmaids were employed not only to serve drinks but to attract male customers and encourage them to drink more,⁴⁴⁷ in Bulawayo this was done to counteract *shebeen* trade in townships and increase sales in municipal beer outlets since it was felt that girls were the main attraction in most flourishing

⁴⁴³ Michael O. West, “Liquor and Libido”, p. 657.

⁴⁴⁴ Interview with Miss Sibanda, Njube Township, Bulawayo, Monday 5 January 2009.

⁴⁴⁵ M. Ndubiwa, “Urban Community Study”, pp. 32-3.

⁴⁴⁶ Interview with Mrs. Khumalo, 14 December 2002, Makokoba Township, quoted in Busani Mpfu, “The Dynamics of Providing Social Services in a Colonial Urban Authority”, p. 24.

⁴⁴⁷ D. Bryceson, “Alcohol in Africa”, p. 38.

shebeens where they were employed as servers.⁴⁴⁸ This was however, just an attempt to use women to get more money for the council through increased beer sales. Since the avenue leading to formal jobs was almost closed for women in Bulawayo, besides informal trading, they found other informal activities that helped them access housing and get money to get by in the city. Prostitution was one of those survival mechanisms.

Prostitution (soliciting for money in exchange for sexual services) is one of the survival strategies known to be practised by many women from low income groups in African cities.⁴⁴⁹ Moffat Nkomo argued that “sometimes some men lost almost all of their earnings on Location ladies, I mean those prostitutes.”⁴⁵⁰ Some Ndebele men in Bulawayo still recalled their “exploits” in smuggling prostitutes to their rooms. Kembo Ncube stated that “I also did that you know, I couldn’t afford to ignore that system.”⁴⁵¹ They paid differential rates for prostitutes “previously impregnated” and with children, who got 1/6; and for “night ladies” without a child, (*intombi esagcwele*), who got 2/6 per night. “I will never forget that life. At night I had to put my bicycle on top of the roof because there was no space in the room.”⁴⁵²

Juma Maseko-Phiri, a very popular football player in Bulawayo in the 1950s and 1960s, also claimed that during his “peak days” he slept with about four women on a day and:

of course give them some gifts for that. I used to work for a shoe company in the city, but I also used to get money for my soccer exploits. Sometimes I was given an off-day (or off-half day) at work on a Monday if would have played on a Sunday. My white boss used to like me a lot. Sometimes I would sneak out of work to go and sleep with a woman, especially those who worked as domestics in white suburbs. That would be the first one. During lunch, I sometimes took my bicycle and went to sleep with a second lady. Then after work, I went to sleep with a third woman before finally heading home where I will then sleep with the fourth one that I co-habited with. But Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STDs) wrecked havoc in townships. I don’t think that there were any men who did not suffer from STDs here in the township. You will see big men crying because of pain, lifting up their legs high and failing to pass on urine in the communal toilets because of the pain caused by the STD. Infected men passed on urine that appeared like white tea. The problem was that those Ndebele ladies who used to

⁴⁴⁸ Minutes of the Township Advisory Boards, Tuesday, June 18, 1966, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁹ See for example Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*, (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

⁴⁵⁰ Interview with Moffat Nkomo, Bulawayo City Centre, Bulawayo, Friday 12 December, 2008.

⁴⁵¹ Interview between Busani Mpofu and Kembo Ncube, Thorngrove, 18 July 2000 cited in T. Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning: The Social History of Bulawayo, 1893-1960*, (forthcoming), p. 156.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

work as domestics, we called them *Amanene* (nannies) were just too beautiful. We couldn't resist them...⁴⁵³

Maseko Phiri did not want to call this prostitution though he paid the women for their sexual services. Female domestic servants may have looked attractive to men because they were well fed as the kitchen of the employer “legitimately and illegitimately” provided them with a variety of foodstuffs.⁴⁵⁴

Pondo Ncube, who grew up in Hyde Park, argued that:

There were daring women in Makokoba who were well known prostitutes. That was the reason why Bulawayo was sometimes popularly known in Ndebele language as *Komfaz'utshayindoda*, meaning a place where women beat up men. That was because of the daring Old Location women. Those women were kind of rebels as it was unheard of in Ndebele society that a woman could beat up a man. Those women could easily embarrass men who said negative things about them or their activities...⁴⁵⁵

This also revealed that constant interaction with men had taught women to be tough so that in any transaction they engaged on with men, be it selling beer or sexual services, they would force men to pay up. Ncube argued that such daring women combined prostitution with beer brewing and “some kind” of *shebeening* in their houses for survival and all women who patronised beer halls were labelled prostitutes.⁴⁵⁶

As a result of experiences such as those of Bulawayo women, Freund aptly argued that throughout the southern half of Africa, women were pushed into exercising their rights on the fringes of legality, selling cooked foods and other goods on the streets, offering sexual services along a variety of lines or “forms” and taking in laundry and beer brewing. Rarely were they waged employees except as domestic workers. Their existence in the city was often threatened unless they formed marital (or less formal) alliances with men whose legitimate role in the urban economy was much more secure in the eyes of the authorities. They were part of the early urban fringe that lived on the edge of the colonial law, often acting as “alcohol dealers, gamblers and prostitutes.”⁴⁵⁷ The following section explores the relationship between the African Advisory boards and the majority of low

⁴⁵³ Interview with Juma Maseko-Phiri, MaKhumalo (Big Bhawa) Beer Hall, Sunday 4 January 2009. When talking about the pain of STDs other men seated nearer to us during the interview at the beer hall nodded their heads and said “yes, that’s true... but don’t write that...that was shameful...”

⁴⁵⁴ R. Gray, *The Two Nations*, pp. 222-224.

⁴⁵⁵ Interview with Pondo Ncube.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁷ B. Freund, *The African City*, p. 92.

income Africans in Bulawayo to highlight the class and gender dynamics in the perpetuation of poverty in Bulawayo.

3.2 The African Advisory Board and the Welfare of Africans in Bulawayo.

The Bulawayo Municipality was the first to incorporate African Advisory Board Members (ABMs) into municipal governance in 1940 to contribute in council debates aimed at improving the welfare of the majority of Africans who were not represented in the council and the Board system became mandatory under the N(UA)ARA of 1946. A second board was created in 1953 while a third was created in 1955 and the nominees of the townships boards formed a joint Board to discuss matters affecting Africans in townships.⁴⁵⁸ However, their impact in pushing for municipality decisions that could improve the welfare of the majority of Africans was affected by the larger national political question that excluded the participation of Africans in national and local government on racial grounds. Secondly, since most ABMs were middle class Africans, tensions between them and low income Africans affected the extent to which they could represent the interests of the later.

The division of Africans by class in the city was the direct outcome of the colonial economy. Because of its industrial infrastructure, Bulawayo attracted and raised a generation of young men from different ethnic groups, some of whom, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, became prominent intellectuals in tertiary and government institutions, important trade unionists and leaders of active political associations, recreational organisations and pressure groups. Among them were key figures in the first significant African nationalist political party, the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (ANC) which emerged in 1957. The growing middle class comprised highly qualified teachers, clerks and football referees, social workers, artisans/cabinet makers and shop owners.⁴⁵⁹ They had a very uneasy relationship with low income Africans.

⁴⁵⁸ D. Pasteur, "From Frontier Town Board to a Modern Municipality", p. 12. The Board had 12 members in 1951.

⁴⁵⁹ Enocent Msindo, "Ethnicity and Nationalism in Colonial Urban Zimbabwe: Bulawayo, 1950-1963" in *The Journal of African History*, Volume 48, 2007, pp. 267 and 274.

In 1956, middle class African leaseholders moved into new home ownership villages including Mpopoma South in Bulawayo. Most complaints about these new townships centred on their moral tone and the lodger system. Even though the payment of many mortgages depended on the incomes brought in by lodgers, lodgers were resented by their landlords and other lease holders and were accused of numerous transgressions, including disrespect, theft, desertion, non-payment of rent, showing sexual interest in the lady of the house, holding rowdy parties, and singing and making noise in the streets. J. Wilson Vera, a social worker and member of the Township Advisory Board in Bulawayo argued that the lodger system “might make the whole area a slum.”⁴⁶⁰

In 1960, the *African Home News* reported widespread feeling among the owners of Mpopoma houses that accepting lodgers in their homes was very unsatisfactory and should be done away with. The reason for this displeasure was:

...the inability of the house owners to get the respect which they are fully entitled to from the lodgers. Most of the lodgers have no respect at all...The lodgers seem to think that the places in which they are belong to the municipality and that they are answerable only to the municipality for all they do and not to the owners of the houses...⁴⁶¹

Therefore, as Anthony D. King observed, new urban environments based on income and occupational differentials clearly affected both the construction and self-perception of social classes and categories.⁴⁶² The contradiction was that middle class residents wanted income from lodgers to be able to repay their monthly loans in the home ownership schemes.

During the 1960 *Zhii* riots, four of the men who died were killed by African store keepers in defence of their property. Many nationalists and African trade unionists demanded to be allowed to defend themselves against attacks from low income Africans. Jasper Savanhu for example, argued that the “present situation is a struggle between the haves and have-nots” and demanded that African businessmen, teachers and professional men be allocated a suburb all of their own so that “people with a stake in the country and

⁴⁶⁰ M. O. West, *The Rise of the African Middle Class*, pp. 113-114.

⁴⁶¹ *African Home News*, Saturday, 13 August, 1960, “Lodgers at Mpopoma.” For similar complaints in Salisbury see M. West, *The Rise of the African Middle Class*, p. 114.

⁴⁶² Anthony D. King, *Urbanism, Colonialism, and the World Economy*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 58.

something to defend” could form a Home Guard to protect themselves against the mob.⁴⁶³

R. M. Bango, General Secretary of the Transport Workers Union, went to the extent of demanding that Makokoba be demolished and that “all single men be put into an area of their own.”⁴⁶⁴ The Mpopoma African Advisory Board demanded that all householders be issued with fire-arms to defend themselves, and that all single men should be removed from Iminyela and Mubutweni townships, which lay between Mpopoma and Pelendaba townships. In Pelendaba, the African Advisory Board resolved that it was essential to set up a Pelendaba Home Guard.⁴⁶⁵ Low income Africans were thus regarded as a threat to the households of middle class Africans in townships.

Single men in Bulawayo hit back against the attack by the African middle class. Singleman, a resident of Mabutweni Township argued that:

These Board members are themselves comfortable in their own houses and would like to see some of us walk the streets without any place to put our head. They say we are a danger. They are a greater danger because they seem to have no feelings for others. They seem to regard us as animals.⁴⁶⁶

The African middle class in Bulawayo regarded poor Africans as trespassers and held them responsible for the spread of diseases such as tuberculosis. The *African Home News* argued that:

In the Old Location, it is common knowledge that the frightful overcrowding in block buildings divided into small rooms with three or four tenants in each room, but in actual fact, each room has six, seven or even eight other Africans who are trespassers is mainly responsible for the spread of tuberculosis in Bulawayo.⁴⁶⁷

Middle class Africans blamed the Housing and Amenities Department for being lenient on house owners who harboured illegal occupants. They complained that in Pelandaba for example, some houses had a minimum of seven occupants each with a piece of cloth hanging around the bed as a dividing line and that such overcrowding caused “friction

⁴⁶³Terence Ranger, “Urban Violence in Bulawayo”, p. 37.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 38.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ *African Home News*, Bulawayo, Saturday 16 January, 1960, Volume 7, “TB.”

between single men and healthy daughters of the affluent.”⁴⁶⁸ According to Michael West, good suburbanites that they were, the residents of Pelandaba quickly developed a sense of social exclusiveness about their community, for example, in 1960, they formed a “strong and determined” force of three hundred “souls” to protect their property and community when rioting broke out in the “poor” neighbourhoods in Bulawayo.⁴⁶⁹ West argued that Pelandaba became a place where wealthier Africans competed with one another to build the plushest and most lavishly furnished homes. By 1957, it had already attracted most of the city’s leading [black] businessmen and other leading Africans who were not businessmen who built houses which turned Pelandaba into one of the most beautiful African suburbs in Bulawayo. One couple for example, built a ten-roomed house in Pelandaba.⁴⁷⁰

The physical and verbal exchanges between low income and middle class African men that came to the fore during and after the *Zhii* riots were therefore not surprising given the history of simmering animosity towards each other. Pelandaba residents were even opposed to the construction of beer halls in their township on grounds that it “would bring many undesirables to the Village who would start making mischief.”⁴⁷¹ Since these areas were built some distance away from the “old townships” occupied by many low income Africans, the new middle class townships offered the elite blacks the spatial distance from the majority African working class they wanted.⁴⁷²

Other middle class Africans did not even want to socialise with lower class Africans in public areas in townships. There was for example, a serious debate by the African Advisory Boards about the use of Ikwezi Club in Pelandaba Township that included Joseph Msika, Stephen Nkomo, Leonard Nkala and Mrs S. M. Lesabe, a number of whom became involved in nationalist politics in the 1960s and later on became prominent political leaders in post colonial Zimbabwe. The idea of the Ikwezi Club came up when European liquor was legalised for Africans in 1959. The club was a brainchild of African middleclass city dwellers who wanted “a quiet venue to drink and play games.”⁴⁷³ The

⁴⁶⁸ *African Home News*, Volume 1, Number 2, April 1973, “The Vanished Greatness.”

⁴⁶⁹ M. West, *The Rise of an African Middle Class*, p. 116.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

⁴⁷³ Enocent Msindo, “Ethnicity and Nationalism in Colonial Urban Zimbabwe”, p. 285.

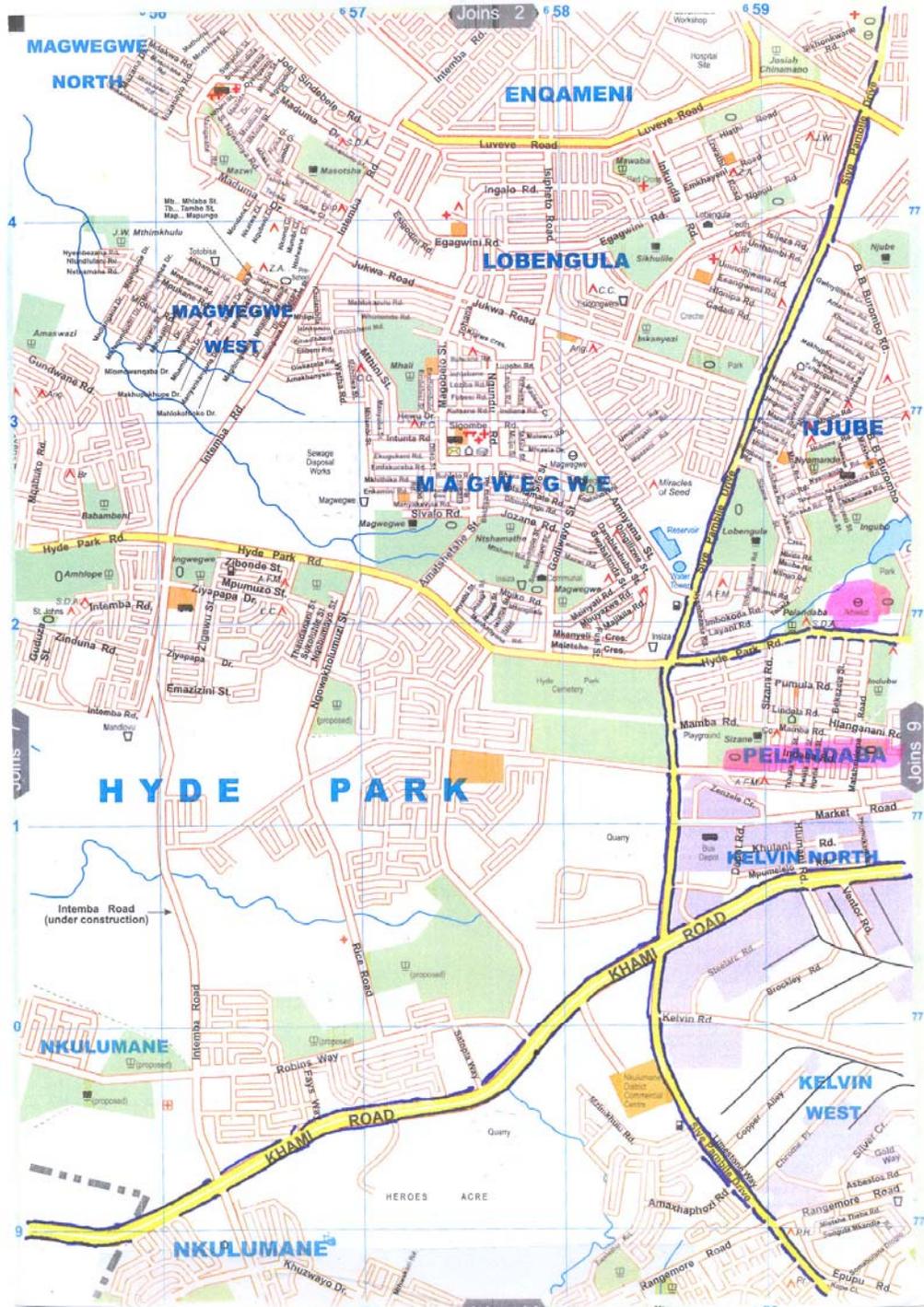
debate underpinned conflicts between rising African bourgeois class interests and popular nationalism whose support base was the African poor. The club was built in the 1950s to cater for “smartly” dressed, rich Africans. All those who failed to dress “respectably” were not admitted. This exclusiveness became a source of conflict.⁴⁷⁴

At the end all Africans were finally allowed to patronise the Ikwezi bar because nationalists also believed that unrestricted access would help their cause by reducing the divide between the middle class and the urban poor. African nationalists, who were part of the middle class, castigated the liberal/moneyed middle class Africans who refused to join the nationalists’ struggle because, according to them, these Africans were trying to be or to live as “half-Whites” and were also criticised for “their moderate policies, their outward White behaviour, their social aloofness, and their reluctance to give nationalists financial support.”⁴⁷⁵ The moneyed blacks themselves had mixed feelings about their position because they viewed themselves as pioneers, setting an example for the rest of the African population to reach higher standards of living, yet they felt isolated.⁴⁷⁶ The map below shows location of Ikhwezi sports club in Pelandaba Township. In the map, the spot highlighted in purple above the area marked Pelandaba represents the Ikwezi bar.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ C. Kileff, “Black Suburbanites: Adaptation to Western Culture in Salisbury, Rhodesia”, Doctor of Philosophy thesis submitted to Rice University, Houston, Texas, USA, 1970, p. 133.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 286.



Source: City of Bulawayo Streets Guide, p. 8.

The impact of ABMs in pushing for municipality decisions that could improve the welfare of the majority of Africans was very limited. First and foremost, the Boards could

only make recommendations to the city council which was not legally bound to accept or implement them.⁴⁷⁷ In 1960, the Bulawayo Council complained about the national government's lack of sense of urgency when considering the question of African participation in local government, the future control and the development of African areas.⁴⁷⁸ Despite frequent reminders and representations at ministerial and official levels, the Minister of Local Government had, by 1960 still not responded to proposals submitted in February 1959 by the Joint Municipal Executive for greater African participation in local affairs.⁴⁷⁹ Lack of national policy vis-a-vis the participation of Africans in local government and the future control and development of African areas impacted negatively on the council's administration of African affairs. For this reason, Eric Gargett aptly argued that a local authority providing a welfare service to Africans, but failing to incorporate them into city government spoke with two voices "one accepting, one rejecting, one granting, one withholding."⁴⁸⁰ If this happened public confidence in that local authority was undermined as the welfare service appeared "superficial, useful, kindly but missing the essentials," and this was true of Bulawayo where African Advisory Boards questioned the council's commitment towards incorporating Africans into mainstream local government.⁴⁸¹

Lack of progress in this matter was partly responsible for the feeling of frustration that was creeping into the Boards in early 1962, leading to numerous abandoned meetings with no quorum present. Board members were also beginning to shirk difficult questions and refer matters back to people⁴⁸² because of their fear of the increasingly popular Tenants Associations and Rent Payers Associations which accused the Boards of failing to solve the accommodation crisis and their members of being "Yes men" of the Europeans.⁴⁸³ For Gargett, the growing absenteeism from meetings, procrastination in

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 286.

⁴⁷⁸ Annual Report of the Director of the African Administration Dept, 1959/60, p. 4.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ E. Gargett, *PhD Thesis*, "Welfare Services in an Urban African Area", University of London, 1971, p. 168.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² Annual Report of the Director of the African Administration Dept, 1961/2, p. 2.

⁴⁸³ Enocent Msindo, "Ethnicity and Nationalism in Colonial Urban Zimbabwe", pp. 287-288. Tenants and Residents Associations were born as alternatives (to Advisory Boards) unofficial platforms to express African urban grievances. This was because from the early 1950s, there was suspicion amongst some Africans that Advisory Boards were tools to serve colonial interests, (p. 286).

discussions, negative attitudes to proposals and unwillingness to take responsibility for decisions by ABMs were due to a number of reasons. Firstly, ABMs increasingly felt that they were being used to rubber stamp departmental and council decisions. Secondly, ABMs were under constant pressure from other township residents because when unpopular decisions were made they were “tackled, disbelieved or derided” if they said a decision was made without their full knowledge or against their recommendations. Thirdly, ABMs began to have an impression that the council also had adopted a more conservative or even reactionary attitude since the accession to power in 1962 by the Rhodesian Front government that was opposed to black majority rule.⁴⁸⁴

In July 1964 the council proposed direct representation of Africans on the council in the form of four councillors. While the principle of direct representation was accepted by the boards, the proposed number of councillors was felt to be too small to adequately represent all Africans hence the Boards proposed having twenty African councillors, a proposal which was not accepted by the council.⁴⁸⁵

When the Bulawayo Council proposed to increase rents in African townships in 1964 and it was becoming clear that it would implement this even against the African Boards’ recommendations, the Boards decided to dissolve themselves rather than to endorse rent increases at a time when most Africans were experiencing a serious economic strain. The rents were to be increased from 20/-d per month to 30/-d.⁴⁸⁶ Board members knew that endorsing rent increases was going to increase their unpopularity among township residents.⁴⁸⁷ ABM Bango argued that it was unbelievable for the council to propose rent increases at that time when, throughout the whole country, there was a general slackening in business, unemployment was worsening and many tenants were in arrears with their rents in townships. ABM Mzira cited examples of ten workers whose employers refused to pay more than 20/- towards housing allowance.⁴⁸⁸

As a result, Hugh Ashton lamented that; “it is pretty hopeless to solve a problem while wider, national problems of which it is part remain unsolved.”⁴⁸⁹ He further argued

⁴⁸⁴ E. Gargett, “Welfare Services in an Urban African Area”, p. 168.

⁴⁸⁵ Annual Report of the Director of the African Administration Dept, 1961/2, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁶ Annual Report of the Director of the Housing and Amenities Dept, 1963/4, p. 4.

⁴⁸⁷ Enocent Msindo, “Ethnicity and Nationalism in Colonial Urban Zimbabwe”, p. 288.

⁴⁸⁸ E. Gargett, “Welfare Services in an Urban African Area”, p. 16.

⁴⁸⁹ Minutes of the African Advisory Boards, Tuesday 28 January 1964, p. 4.

that any resolutions on improvements of Africans depended largely upon government policy on the fundamental problem of race relations and the Africans place in the scheme of things. But still, the government's policy on these issues was not settled and as a result of this, national politics continued to be an important background to the African department's work. The council therefore called for a "clear and decisive statement of government policy on the administration of African townships because lack of such a policy made it difficult to make far reaching plans for the future."⁴⁹⁰ The absence of such a policy imposed a strain on staff who worked in a very difficult situation where they often felt that their best efforts were going for naught.⁴⁹¹

In the financial year 1964/65, for example, there was an increase in damage to municipal property especially the destruction of beer mugs and the breaking of water meters in Mpopoma Township. This was viewed as an attempt by Africans to identify the council and the government as one and the same and to fasten on both the responsibility for the delay in achieving African political aspirations and improvements on their welfare issues.⁴⁹²

The Boards were resuscitated in 1968 and they agreed to operate as a joint board consisting of twenty members instead of six separate local township area boards which consisted of a total of fifty seven members. The Joint African Advisory Board debated all policy issues and made recommendations before such issues were forwarded to the central council⁴⁹³ but still Board members blamed the council for not adopting recommendations which affected the interests of the white population in the city.⁴⁹⁴

Lack of a clear national policy on African representation in local government continued into the 1970s. According to Gargett, the handling of this issue was characterized by "shifts and evasions" on the part of successive national governments and "it was always a story of procrastination and ambivalence at the level of national policy and of the efforts of the Bulawayo local authority to achieve a workable agreement at the

⁴⁹⁰ Annual Report of the Director of the Housing and Amenities Dept, 1963/64, p. 1.

⁴⁹¹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, 1964/65, p. 2.

⁴⁹² Ibid, p. 5

⁴⁹³ Annual Report of the Director of the Housing and Amenities Dept, 1967/8, p. 1. See also D. Pasteur, "From Frontier Town Board to a Modern Municipality", p. 13.

⁴⁹⁴ E. Gargett, "Welfare Services in an Urban African Area", p. 176.

level of administrative activities.”⁴⁹⁵ Therefore, African Advisory Boards just spoke to make recommendations, but had no real power to implement them.⁴⁹⁶

The Minister of Housing and Local Government argued in 1970 that there would never be complete self government or autonomy for African townships.⁴⁹⁷ This was because of the government belief in separate development between races, Africans were expected to develop in “their” rural areas, not in the city meant for white residents. As an alternative, he proposed siting African residential townships in African rural areas or Tribal Trust Areas in which Africans “could dream of complete autonomy.”⁴⁹⁸ The Minister argued that since Africans had no experience in urban living, the powers already bestowed upon the Advisory Boards suited their advisory capacity.⁴⁹⁹ Such decisions affected the council’s ability to formulate clear policies regarding the governance of Africans and the advancement of their interests. This was similar to Dar es Salaam where municipal bodies (the Ward Councils) were established to promote African participation in urban governance but a reluctance to devolve any real responsibility to the councils rendered them useless as vehicles for African political ambitions or as tools for colonial social engineering.⁵⁰⁰

3.4 Conclusion.

While informal activities were never legalised in colonial Zimbabwe, low income earners subsisted through them in Bulawayo. This chapter has also attempted to highlight how the class and gender dynamics within the African urban community perpetuated the discrimination against the poor in Bulawayo. The African Advisory Boards’ efforts were also affected by the class and gender dynamics and by the larger national political question which blocked the representation of Africans in the city’s administration, all of which effectively rendered them powerless to engineer any meaningful improvement in the welfare of the majority of low income Africans. In the 1970s however, the African

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 163.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 14.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 176.

⁴⁹⁸ Ennie Chipembere, *M. Phil Thesis Draft*, “Colonial Policy and Africans in Urban Areas, with Special Focus on Housing, Salisbury, 1939-1964”, University of Zimbabwe, 2002, p. 262.

⁴⁹⁹ M. Ndubiwa, “African Participation in Housing and Management in Rhodesia”, p. 80.

⁵⁰⁰ A. Burton, *The African Underclass*, p. 222.

Advisory Board in Bulawayo acted as a council-in waiting as most of its members went on to become new councillors when Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980.

The next chapter discusses the housing policy during the housing crisis of the turbulent era, which pitted the national and local authorities and middle class Africans against low income earners. It highlights how housing policy discriminated against the permanent residency of low income earners in the city.

Chapter 4.

Low Income Earners and the Housing Crisis during the Turbulent Years; 1960 to 1980.

In colonial Zimbabwe, low income housing was synonymous with housing for (black) Africans.⁵⁰¹ Formally employed lowly paid Africans faced financial problems that made it difficult for them to pay their rent while those without formal jobs performed juggling acts to access accommodation during the turbulent years since a formal job acted as a license that guaranteed one's continued residency in the city. In this chapter, I emphasize the poverty of many urban Africans and limited national and local authorities' financial resources as major factors responsible for the low cost housing crisis. I argue that the national government used housing policy to exclude or discriminate against low income residents in the city mainly because of prioritisation of its political survival in the face of economic sanctions after 1965. As was the case during the 1940s housing crisis when African housing was inevitably low down in the state's priorities because of the "war effort", now African housing was sidelined in favour of the state's political survival. This entailed giving housing concessions (in the form of long leasehold tenure) to the vocal and politically threatening African middle class. In the process, low income housing delivery suffered and women were the worst victims of the housing policy because they suffered a combination of colonial and gender restrictions in their attempt to legally access housing in their capacity as individuals.

4.1 Population Influx and Pressure on Low Income Housing.

The influx of Africans into Bulawayo and other major towns of Southern Rhodesia intensified during the Second World War industrial expansion and continued well into the 1960s as indicated in the first chapter of this work. The provision of African housing in Bulawayo started in earnest around 1950. In 1960 there were 10,006 houses for married couples, while accommodation for single persons totalled 24,522, including the Gertrude Macintyre hostel for 133 single women and 3,000 lodgers in Mpopoma. In addition to

⁵⁰¹ Hugh Ashton, cited in Amin Kamete, "Continuity with Change: A Review of Zimbabwe's Public Sector Urban Low Income Housing Production System", *Development Southern Africa*, Volume 15, 1, 1998, p. 16.

this housing in African townships which accommodated approximately 80,000 people, in private premises, 15,000 were accommodated by the Rhodesia Railways, 6,000 by Industry and 20,000 were in Domestic accommodation.⁵⁰² However, while much effort has been put into housing since then, serious deficiencies persisted and major issues of rights to urban residency remained unresolved for low income earners. As Gargett rightly argued, “houses were urgently needed to avert slums and the evolution of a new society called for skilled social engineering if the houses were to become homes, and migrants, citizens.”⁵⁰³ This proved elusive as only formally employed men could readily access housing in the city.

Between 1960 and 1980 the responsibility of providing low income housing in Bulawayo lay with the municipality but its efforts fell far short of meeting the demand thereby exacerbating the housing crisis characterised by overcrowding, lack of security of tenure and fears of constant police raids and evictions by council officials to rid townships of overcrowding tendencies. Generally, the capital costs of constructing working-class family-based townships on the European model for the majority of the African town dwellers proved too high.⁵⁰⁴ As Frederick Cooper correctly observed, capital in general needed to have workers housed and transported cheaply, but if industrial capitalism could produce all goods, it was less clear that it could produce the housing its workers needed in any part of the world because urban space acquired commercial value unaffordable to those workers whose wages capital in general would like to keep low.⁵⁰⁵

Public sector housing finance institutions in Zimbabwe have been consistently under funded since the colonial period. This was worsened by the higher housing standards that were introduced by the colonial government in the 1930s in a bid to counter squalid houses that were provided by local authorities. In 1960, the national government admitted that the high quality housing was costly and gobbled vast amounts

⁵⁰² Bulawayo Municipality, in *NADA*, Volume 37, 1960, p. 75.

⁵⁰³ Eric Gargett, *The Administration of Transition: African Urban Settlement in Rhodesia*, (Gwelo: Mambo Press, 1977), pp. 5-6.

⁵⁰⁴ Bill Freund, *The African City: A History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 99.

⁵⁰⁵ Frederick Cooper, “Urban Space, Industrial Time, and wage Labour in Africa” in Frederick Cooper (ed) *Struggle for the City: Migrant Labour, Capital and the State in Urban Africa*, (Beverly Hills/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1983) pp. 7-50.

of financial resources in subsidies.⁵⁰⁶ In 1963, the Secretary for Housing admitted that the main problem for housing was an economic one, mainly insufficient capital.⁵⁰⁷

Wages earned by lowly paid workers were insufficient to enable them to afford the minimal accommodation acceptable to the white administered urban community. This meant that the publicly provided housing was heavily subsidized during the 80 years of colonial rule in Zimbabwe and the high quality of housing meant that the poorly paid worker could not afford it.⁵⁰⁸ In the developed world, this problem is usually met by subsidisation by the central exchequer, or by the rate fund, or both, by low interest loans, long term loans and grants-in-aid. This was inconceivable in Southern Rhodesia because Africans were not a significant part of the body politic, had little say in national politics and had no municipal vote. African housing was accounted for by municipalities who were the principal housing authorities in a separate African Revenue Account. This accentuated the division of the town into racial groups and encouraged the attitude that “Africans should pay for themselves” rather than accept the provision of low cost housing for the lowest paid workers as a social responsibility to be shouldered by the community as a whole.⁵⁰⁹

Without government funding, other sources had to be found. One of them was the internal subsidisation of married accommodation by bachelors. This meant that rent paid in both family accommodation and bachelor housing was equal. Rents were then pooled at a figure where “profit” on bachelor accommodation liquidated losses on family housing. This system only worked as long as there was a large preponderance of bachelors in council accommodation. Once the value gap between the two widened greatly, for example in one area the same rent was charged for a 4-roomed cottage as for a bed in a hostel, where the bachelor also paid an extra amount for his locker, the disparity between the supra-economic single rents and sub-economic family rent became unacceptable to bachelors and their employers.⁵¹⁰ Some bachelors deserted the relatively

⁵⁰⁶ Amin Kamete, “Restrictive Control of Urban High-Density Housing in Zimbabwe: Deregulation, Challenges and Implication for Urban Design”, in *Housing, Theory and Society*, 1999, p. 145.

⁵⁰⁷ Amin Kamete, “A Review of Zimbabwe’s Public Sector Urban Low Income Housing Production System”, p. 20.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁵⁰⁹ Hugh Ashton, “The Economics of African Housing”, *The Rhodesian Journal of Economics*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1969, p. 35.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*

expensive bachelor accommodation preferring lodging in family accommodation where they could share the sub-economic rent with their landlord and other lodgers. Non payment of rent by lowly paid workers in urban areas mainly due to inability to pay or as a result of politically orchestrated rent boycotts also contributed to the funding crisis.⁵¹¹

There was some controversy concerning the council's desire to continue maintaining bachelor accommodation that was not conducive to family life. The council wanted to maintain single accommodation for financial purposes at the expense of the welfare of the occupants. From the council revenue point of view, half empty hostels abandoned by single African men in favour of lodging meant loss of revenue. For example, during the 1963/64 financial year, the council reported a loss of £7,000 as a result of vacant units in bachelor accommodation, leaving it contemplating converting vacant hostel blocks to family accommodation so as to attract tenants. Because of vacant bachelor accommodation in Iminyela Township, ten council huts were converted to house four families apiece.⁵¹²

Generally, African housing in Southern Rhodesia fell into four categories, that is: domestic employers, large employers, public bodies and home ownership schemes. The major problem of African housing lay in the category of public bodies which according to Hugh Ashton, was the largest and most controversial. Since it catered for the lowly paid workers who could not afford the sort of housing they ought to have, it faced the problem of making ends meet.⁵¹³ This is not surprising because urban housing for the poorer sections of the urban population has always been a political issue.⁵¹⁴ Housing was also used as an instrument to achieve socio-political aims of the government, that is, for most colonial African governments, housing policy in general "was the means by which the state tried to determine African rights within the city-whether or not Africans could

⁵¹¹ Amin Kamete, "The Practice of Cost Recovery in Urban Low-Income Housing: A Discourse with Experiences from Zimbabwe", *Habitat International* 24 (2000), p. 248.

⁵¹² Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June, 1964, p. 8. In 1964 for example, the difficulty of filling the accommodation with single men especially at Iminyela Township was due to a number of reasons that included the continuing decrease of migrant labour (due to the sealing of Bulawayo and other urban centres by the government from new foreign migrant labour to ease urban unemployment) and the deliberate shunning of single accommodation by single men who preferred moving into other townships as lodgers.

⁵¹³ Hugh Ashton, "The Economics of African Housing", p. 35.

⁵¹⁴ Shildo, cited in Amin Kamete, "A Review of Zimbabwe's Public Sector Urban Low Income Housing Production System", p. 14.

remain there at all, and where, how long, and with whom they could live.”⁵¹⁵ The contradiction in Southern Rhodesia was that inadequate developments in African housing in the 1960s took place against the background of increasing urban population due to the implementation of 1951 Native Land Husbandry Act⁵¹⁶ and the 1959 amendment to the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) in rural areas which had left large numbers of Africans landless after being evicted from white properties.⁵¹⁷

Lack of adequate housing for Africans in townships, coupled with their massive in-migration into cities was responsible for the emergence of the unemployed, accommodation-less class. Some of them slept outside overcrowded rooms in the Old Location. Other work seekers slept in waiting rooms at the Bulawayo Railway Station. Josphat Moyo indicated that other unemployed people stayed at the “House for the unemployed” (*Indlu yamalova*) near the railway station that was used by the municipality to temporarily accommodate newly arrived jobseekers with no relatives or friends to stay with.⁵¹⁸

4.2 Discriminatory African Home Ownership Schemes in Bulawayo

The Bulawayo Municipality pioneered home ownership schemes for Africans in colonial Zimbabwe under the leadership of Hugh Ashton, a very liberal minded official who was a few years ahead of his fellow officials in his thinking about the need to provide better services for urban Africans. The first scheme in Pumula Township was started in 1952 with a thirty year renewable lease, a loan from the African beer profits of £55 worth of building material (excluding bricks) repayable over nine and half years at two percent interest. The second scheme at Pelandaba Township commenced in December 1952, and there were 365 houses in the township in 1960, each with a loan of £250 also from African beer profits at two percent interest enabling the lessee either to build or buy a

⁵¹⁵ Luise White, “A Colonial State and an African Petty Bourgeoisie: Prostitution, Property and Class Struggle in Nairobi, 1936-1940”, in Frederick Cooper, (ed) *Struggle for the City*, p. 167.

⁵¹⁶ Minutes of the African Advisory Boards, Bulawayo, Monday 13 November 1961, p.1 and Friday 1 September, 1961, p. 1.

⁵¹⁷ H. Ashton, “Housing Policy and Practice, 1894-1994” in M. Hamilton and M. Ndubiwa (eds) *Bulawayo: A Century of Development 1894-1994*, (Harare: Argosy Press, 1994), p. 59.

⁵¹⁸ Interview with Mr Josphat Moyo, Manwele Market, Mzilikazi Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Monday 19 November 2007.

three-roomed house. The lease was initially for a period of thirty years, but was later increased to ninety nine years.

The third home ownership scheme in Bulawayo was at Mpopoma South Township where there were 2,580 houses, each of which, together with services, cost about £300. The lease was for ninety nine years and the loan repayable over twenty five years.⁵¹⁹ In these home ownership schemes owners were allowed to accept lodgers so as to get extra income to help them repay loans under the leasehold tenure schemes they held. The other part of Mpopoma was built for low income earners.

As permanent home ownership was illegal for all urban Africans in Zimbabwe until in 1980, rental was the norm. A small category of freehold tenure was introduced in 1978-1979 following a partial relaxation of segregationist period during the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia period.⁵²⁰ Although the 1961 amendment to the LAA permitted free-hold tenure in the townships based on a ninety-nine year lease, this only benefited the African elite since very few Africans could afford to own houses.⁵²¹ Home ownership schemes in Bulawayo were discriminatory at inception. They disqualified ultra low and low income workers. The council actively encouraged home ownership partly to develop a stable community and partly to obviate losses incurred in rented accommodation in the 1960s. According to Ashton, as far as was possible, home owners were chosen from the better paid ranks. For example, of the 513 applicants for home ownership housing in Bulawayo in 1968, 90 percent were turned away because they did not meet the minimum requirement of earning a minimum of £17.10.0d per month.⁵²² This was at a time when the minimum wage for unskilled labour was 30s a week (plus £1 a month extra for rent), rising by about 5s a week at six month intervals.⁵²³ The continued exclusion of low income earners from the council's home ownership scheme put a dent on Ashton's statement in 1964 that "the council had done its utmost to run the African Township not

⁵¹⁹ Bulawayo Municipality in *NADA*, Volume 37, 1960, pp. 75-77.

⁵²⁰ Christopher Mafico, *Urban Low Income Housing in Zimbabwe*, (Aldershot: Avebury, 1991), p. 101.

⁵²¹ M. Grant, "Difficult Debut: Social and Economic Identities of Urban Youth in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe", in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 37, 2-3, 2003, p. 415.

⁵²² H. Ashton, "The Economics of African Housing", pp. 32-33 and 36.

⁵²³ Gerda Siann, *Bulawayo Diary*, Undated, p. 69.

merely as a housing scheme for city labourers, but as a real home and a place where its people can realise the maximum of their human potentiality.”⁵²⁴

Some home ownership schemes were even regarded as too expensive by middle class Africans in Bulawayo. In 1973 for example, African Advisory Board member (ABM) Gadhlula objected to a cash deposit of three hundred dollars required for the purchase of houses to be built at Luveve Township as too high considering that most Africans earned wages that averaged about sixty dollars a month. He was supported by ABMs Mutasa and Simela who proposed that the deposits be reduced to one hundred dollars only more-so because the houses built by the council developed cracks within the first six months and the council always refused to repair them.⁵²⁵ It was for this reason that Gerda Siann rightly argued that some home ownership schemes were a moral fraud because they consisted of match box like houses which were jerry-built and sub economic in cost but were paid for at least twice over. In Mpopoma Township for example, those houses were built at a cost of £330 each. The occupants were required to pay £1 8s. 6d. monthly for services excluding electricity, a minimum monthly repayment of £2 2s. 9d. in redemption and 6% interest or over £630 in all.⁵²⁶

The care and pride bestowed upon home ownership houses clearly showed that home ownership was not a privilege to be restricted to the comparatively well-to-do Africans because it was valued and cherished by a wide range of people, “rich or poor, high or low’.”⁵²⁷ This prompted Africans in rented townships like Njube, Mzilikazi and Nguboyenja among others to demand home ownership status for their townships⁵²⁸ as it guaranteed protection from some humiliation like being raided by council authorities in the middle of a night.

The colonial segregated city gave rise to the development of other “categorical” relationships even within the larger racial divisions. The design and allocation of housing and area according to occupation and economic criteria were significant in structuring

⁵²⁴ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, Bulawayo, June, 1964, p. 6.

⁵²⁵ Minutes of the Joint African Advisory Board, Tuesday 24 July, 1973, p. 3.

⁵²⁶ Gerda Siann, *Bulawayo Diary*, p. 69.

⁵²⁷ Bulawayo Municipal Records Library (BMRL) N6A/103B H. Ashton, “Introduction”, in M. Ndubiwa, “Urban Community Study”, 6 June 1974, p. i.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 13.

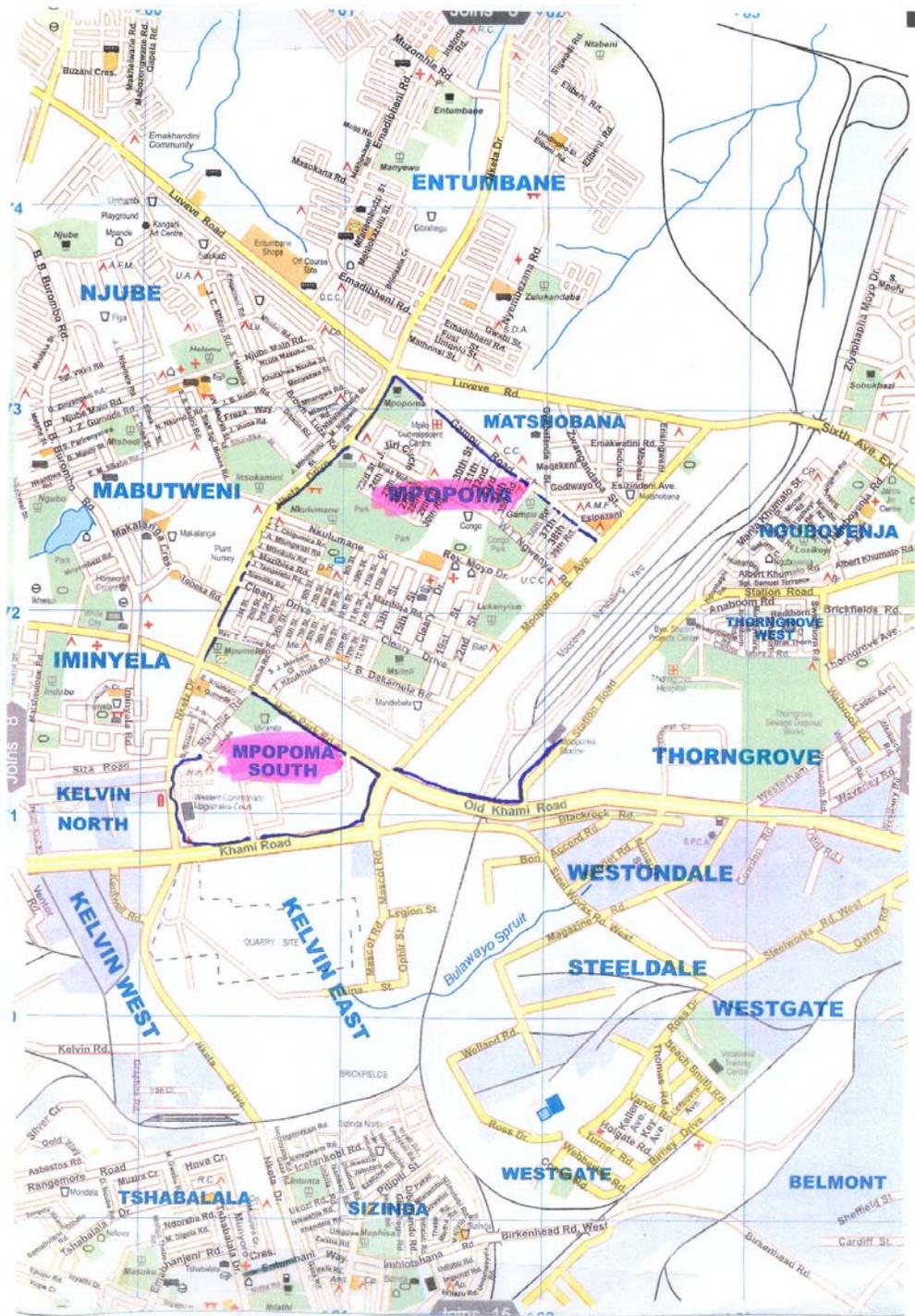
perceptions of social stratification even among Africans.⁵²⁹ In Bulawayo for example, residents of Mpopoma South, Barbourfields, Luveve and Pelandaba self built townships tended to consider themselves more affluent than residents of other low income townships. On many occasions they specified that they did not, for example, live in Mpopoma, but in the semi-low density part of Mpopoma South,⁵³⁰ (see map below) or not just in Luveve, but in the semi-low density housing area of Luveve known to as koHlabangana or Enqotsheni.⁵³¹ The building of housing for “better paid Africans” and not the poor was not unique to Bulawayo or Southern Rhodesia. In the 1940s, municipal projects in the city of Mombasa built successfully for the “better paid workers and civil servants.”⁵³²

⁵²⁹ Anthony D. King, *Urbanism, Colonialism, and the World Economy*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 57.

⁵³⁰ Interview with Charlton Ngcebetsa Jnr, Bulawayo Tower Block, Bulawayo, Wednesday 7 January 2009. Mpopoma South area was only a variation of low income housing built with extra rooms to allow lodging. It was built for the section of low income earners who could afford rents around £4 when other lodgers in Makokoba Township paid rent less than £1 a month. Its residents behaved as members of the African middle class who looked down upon the “poor” low income earners.

⁵³¹ M. Ndubiwa, *Urban Community Study*, p. 9. Bulawayo residents thought that Hlabangana belonged to the African middle class that differentiated itself from the lower class Africans, hence residents named a certain section of Luveve Township (Luveve 4) built for and occupied by some middle class Africans after his name. The section of the township is officially known as Enqameni.

⁵³² R. Harris, “From Trusteeship to Development: How Class and Gender complicated Kenya’s Housing Policy, 1939-1963” in *Journal of Historical Geography* 34 (2008), 311-337, p. 328. Also see Cooper, *Urban Space* (note 6, 30; F. Cooper, *On the African Waterfront:-Urban Disorder and the Transformation of Work in Colonial Mombasa*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), (note 11, 189) Also see pages 187-188 of the same book.



Source: City of Bulawayo Streets Guide, p. 9.

The 1960 Amendment to the LAA was expected to make the increasingly affluent and sophisticated African more inclined to own a home in urban areas. However 80 percent

of urban Africans in Bulawayo or Salisbury could hardly be described as affluent. There was no effective and meaningful urban residential policy as far as low and near zero income households were concerned. In both cities, about 80 percent of the housing stock was for rental or leasing which meant that the majority of Africans were not being encouraged to set down roots in towns through ownership of houses in which they lived. Lack of a clear African residential policy including rights of tenure and access to serviced stands for the majority of Africans was another characteristic of the housing crisis.⁵³³ Worse still, in 1975, the national government even ordered the Council to withdraw all its freehold schemes (in Luveve Township) and also stated that all new housing in the home-ownership category was not to be on any lease longer than ninety-nine years.⁵³⁴

Low income earners in Bulawayo therefore lived in rented council townships, with the exception of many domestic workers who stayed in the backyards of their employers' accommodation. Tenants who did not pay rent by the 7th of each month could be evicted as that was a breach of the monthly tenure of occupation. Tenancies were not supposed to accumulate arrears. Other than in bachelor accommodation, tenants could occupy rented houses as families only. Rented properties could not be inherited by distant relatives. However, if a registered tenant died, his immediate family could not be evicted if it remained in continuous occupation of the house. A tenant was not allowed to sublet the house. The bereaved family could not sublet or appoint a lodger to stay in the house. Tenants could be evicted for making noise, fighting and gambling in the house.⁵³⁵ Therefore, as Eric Gargett argued, "African occupation of houses hung on a thread, renewable monthly" as they were subjected to harassment such as raids conducted for illegal lodgers or other suspected infringements by municipal or state police, often at night. All these, together with the casual summoning of Africans to township offices for questioning on disciplinary issues, made Africans feel they lived on sufferance.⁵³⁶

⁵³³ C. E. Madavo, "An Unorthodox Approach to African Housing" in *The Rhodesian Journal of Economics*, Volume 7, No. 1, March 1973, p. 51.

⁵³⁴ Busani Mpfu, *BA Special Honours Dissertation*, "The Dynamics of Providing Social Services in a Colonial Urban Authority, with Special Reference to African Housing and Social Advancement in Bulawayo, 1960-1980", University of Zimbabwe, 2003, p. 25.

⁵³⁵ BMRL NGA/100-Iminyela Mabutweni Houses- Memo- "Violation of Leases by BCC Employees in the Housing Department", 18th September 2006 by Director of Housing and Community Services to Detective Assistant Inspector Kondowe C, Bulawayo.

⁵³⁶ E. Gargett, *The Administration of Transition*, p. 52.

Poor urban social conditions, including overcrowding, were linked to the 1960 riots in Bulawayo townships. According to Ashton, single African men played a major part in sparking trouble in Bulawayo. As a result of the riots, the council planned to revise its housing programme towards more family accommodation. In 1960, there were 25,000 bachelor houses compared to 10,000 family houses. The council however, needed around 4,000 to 5,000 houses for families and only 3,000 for single men to lessen the opportunity for single men to indulge in group hooliganism by reducing the proportion between bachelors and families.⁵³⁷ Single men increasingly became more undesirable because of increasing violence and riots associated with nationalist activities in townships that authorities blamed on them. In May 1960, the *African Home News* blamed unemployed “Wandering Africans of no fixed abode” for making it unsafe to travel at night in townships.⁵³⁸ Township residents, composed of the employed, unemployed and illegal lodgers, sometimes hit back against their criminalisation by authorities through various ways.

On the 5th of July 1960 for example, an “angry” African crowd in Makokoba Township destroyed ninety nine window panes at the Makokoba African Administration offices around ten o’clock at night. This was after they had seen a white man in a house in the township with a black woman. The residents telephoned the police and the Township Superintendent of Makokoba. When the Superintendent took the white man into his offices, the African crowd followed and began shouting; “...bring him out, we want to hit him....”⁵³⁹ When the Superintendent refused to hand him over, the crowd destroyed window panes. Part of the crowd went back to the house where the white man was found and destroyed the window panes.⁵⁴⁰ This act by African men could be interpreted in various ways.

Moffat Nkomo argued that attacks on council officials like the municipality police and council property were meant to pre-empt or avenge council raids. According to Nkomo:

⁵³⁷ *Chronicle*, Monday, October 17, 1960, “African Housing is linked with Unrest-Ashton.”

⁵³⁸ *African Home News*, Bulawayo, Saturday 28th May 1960, “Unemployment in Bulawayo.”

⁵³⁹ *African Daily News*, Saturday, July 5, 1958, “Windows of Makokoba Office Broken by Angry Mob.”

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Township residents sometimes attacked municipality officials as a way of dampening their spirit to raid townships, it was meant to frighten them so that they didn't make that [raiding] a habit. That was a way of forcing them to respect the privacy of residents. Of course that did not work at times because the police were just agents sent by big authorities whom they could not resist their orders...⁵⁴¹

This however, put a strain on the meagre African housing funds and money had to be diverted from construction to repairing damaged rooms and it also played into the hands of authorities on the lookout for undesirable Africans to be excluded from the townships to ease overcrowding.

Worsening shortage of accommodation meant that Africans continued to squeeze into the available housing, thus contributing to more slum conditions in townships like Makokoba. Poor housing conditions in Makokoba Township were persistently a thorn in the flesh of residents and the council. In 1962, residents complained against being forced to live under "animal conditions", that is, in one room with a small kitchen in numbers ranging from six to ten people. There was not even enough space for them to walk past at night whenever they intended to go to the toilet. Every morning, they were compelled to queue outside the communal bathrooms waiting for their turns to bath before proceeding to work. Worse still, they walked long distances to reach the communal toilets and the nearest pump of water, which was not safe at night.⁵⁴²

In 1963, overcrowding remained as bad as it used to be. According to Hugh Ashton, in Makokoba for example, a room originally built for four single men might house seven to eight men and a "scattering of women and children" since the excess of adult men had been replaced by more women and children.⁵⁴³ According to Mrs. Mlotshwa, a Makokoba resident, it was very common to find a child sleeping under a bed at night with a sister and her husband on top of the same bed. "You know, that really boggled your mind and you could not blame most of the youth for their wild sexual behaviour. It was because of that terrible experience."⁵⁴⁴ Overcrowding conditions where decency was violated promoted juvenile delinquency which, according to Gargett was the general expected outcome of the chaotic conditions of early African urban settlement,

⁵⁴¹ Interview with Moffat Nomo, Bulawayo City Centre, Bulawayo, Friday 12 December, 2008.

⁵⁴² *African Daily News*, Wednesday, 14 February, 1962, "Overcrowding and poor amenities residents say."

⁵⁴³ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities Department, Bulawayo, 1962/1963, p. 7.

⁵⁴⁴ Interview with Mrs Mlotshwa, 15 December, 2002, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, quoted in B. Mpfu, "The Dynamics of Providing Social Services", p. 14.

breakdown of traditional social cohesion, unemployment and poverty.⁵⁴⁵ As Lewis observed, “The sheer physical conditions of living have a considerable influence on social life.”⁵⁴⁶ A similar view was expressed by Anthony King who, when discussing the importance of space and the built environment on social and cultural existence, argued that society was to a large extent constituted through the buildings and space that it created.⁵⁴⁷

In 1962, Jason Ziyaphapha Moyo, Chairman of the Tenants Association in Makokoba, lamented that “Makokoba is a forgotten township as far as the municipality is concerned. They talk of new townships and forget the dire need of improving Makokoba.”⁵⁴⁸ Moyo’s argument was similar to that of Amin Kamete who argued that virtually all policies and strategies aimed at alleviating the housing problem in Zimbabwe were obsessed with the quantitative dimension of the problem, that is, preoccupied with the numbers issue. In the process, authorities ignored the qualitative dimension, that is, they ignored dealing with obsolescence and overcrowding aspects and equated new construction alone to treating the cause; a process which Kamete said does nothing to correct the symptoms that are already present. Kamete further noted that there was need to incorporate such aspects as upgrading, promoting and encouraging transformations and conversions as well as developing urban planning and management principles and practices that are realistic and in keeping with current development trends.⁵⁴⁹ This recommendation is however, largely academic, difficult to implement practically.

⁵⁴⁵ Eric Gargett, *The Administration of Transition*, p. 60.

⁵⁴⁶ Lewis, quoted in Eric Gargett, *PhD Thesis*, “Welfare Services in an African Urban Area, Bulawayo”, University of London, 1971, p. 25. See also p. 24.

⁵⁴⁷ Anthony D. King, *Urbanism, Colonialism, and The World-Economy*, p. 1.

⁵⁴⁸ J. Z. Moyo quoted in *African Daily News*, Wednesday 14 February, 1962, “Overcrowding and poor amenities residents say.” Mrs J. M. Boggie, a white resident in the city, also testified of the horrible housing conditions they witnessed in African townships. She argued that “Overcrowding was one of the causes of African riots in old municipal locations. I have seen cases of three African women and their husbands living and sleeping in a Location room only big enough for a bed along each side, a bed at the top, and a small passage along the centre. For privacy, the women said they dressed and undressed under blankets. Cooking was done on a small spirit stove in a tiny vacant space. The children slept under the beds. Does anyone wonder that the Government has to build African hospitals for tuberculosis? I have seen some of the nearby lavatory buildings. There were no doors on the inside “toilets.” Men, women and children had to go there, and all their drinking water was drawn from several wash basin taps inside”, see *Chronicle*, Thursday, September 22, 1960, “Letter to the Editor from Mrs J. M. Boggie.”

⁵⁴⁹ Amin Y. Kamete, “Revisiting the Urban Crisis in Zimbabwe: Some Forgotten Dimensions”, Uppsala, Nordic Africa Institute, October 2005, pp. 1 and 19.

The Bulawayo Council carried out upgrading or re-development programmes in townships from 1963 but this did not reduce the housing crisis. When the programme of redeveloping Makokoba Township was started in 1963/64, it was called a “policy of urban renewal” and the first phase of the scheme mainly consisted of building flats on unoccupied portions of the land in the township. Under the programme, the Vulindlela, Sipambaniso and Hlalani flats were built. Housing blocks deemed slum were destroyed to pave way for flats in some sections of the township. Several blocks of flats were also built in the area during the 1968/69 financial year.⁵⁵⁰

Given the serious shortage of funding for low income housing in Bulawayo, it was inconceivable that the upgrading of old townships would be a priority in the council’s housing policy. Ashton aptly argued that it was not wise to spend money on improving old houses since the township had to be reconstructed. Mr. Moyo, who once worked for the housing department during the colonial period, acknowledged that Makokoba always lagged behind in terms of improvements. He noted that while there was always a dire need to improve the services in Makokoba, there was also the question of building more townships to ease overcrowding in the townships as a whole and not only in Makokoba.⁵⁵¹ Redeveloping houses in Makokoba was therefore not a priority. What also rendered the upgrading of slum areas not appealing was that most old townships and hostels did not just require a normal upgrading exercise, but required total demolition and the construction of new houses altogether because of their advanced state of dilapidation. This was unthinkable given the number of residents who would be left without alternative accommodation during the demolition and construction exercise. In 1969 for example, 3,000 sub standard housing units needed to be replaced in Bulawayo.⁵⁵²

Despite overcrowding, Makokoba remained a receptacle for most people coming from adjacent rural areas and people attracted to work in the new factories. The inhabitants of the township responded to the demands. Maxwell Mhlanga argued that “No-one living in Makokoba could ignore a friend or relative with nowhere to sleep and

⁵⁵⁰ Annual Reports of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June 1964, pp. 5 and 7, and June 1969, p. 3.

⁵⁵¹ Interview with Mr. Moyo, 18 December 2002, Bulawayo Tower Block quoted in Mpofo, “The Dynamics of Providing Social Services in a Colonial Urban Authority”, p. 13.

⁵⁵² H. Ashton, “Economics of African Housing”, p. 33.

stay...You know patriotism was very much at work there. As a result you could find some people sleeping outside the rooms.”⁵⁵³ This reveals the existence of popular alliances between the respectable and the unrespectable poor⁵⁵⁴ in Makokoba Township. This African “brotherhood” was perceived by authorities as the source of problems in townships. In 1962 for example, the Medical Officer argued that:

An important factor in the large numbers of deaths from preventable disease is the Africans’ traditional custom of never refusing shelter and food to his “brother”...there is no doubt in my mind that this results in most cases in the overcrowding of accommodation and in malnutrition in the children as the “brother” is often unemployed and not averse to bringing his dependents into the household as well...This custom might be alright in a rural area...but this is certainly not the case in the urban areas where housing is limited and the food and clothing that the family gets is dependent upon the wages the worker brings home each week or each month.⁵⁵⁵

Overcrowding problems were also experienced in two-roomed units in Magwegwe, Makokoba, Njube, Lobengula townships as was the case in rented-shared accommodation in Sotshangane and Makokoba flats where frequent quarrels between wives over the use of cooking space, cleaning and maintaining a standard uniform of cleanliness, and drunkenness were reported due to the sizes of the families and during the presence of visitors. In all rented units, which were on a monthly tenancy, overcrowding was a persistent problem which prompted some tenants to build illegal pole and dagga kitchens to cope with the situation.⁵⁵⁶

Despite the severe shortage of housing in townships, council authorities raided houses to rid them of illegal occupants. Residents resented raiding because they could not avoid taking in relatives some of whom were employed but did not have accommodation. They argued that raiding to rid the house of unregistered occupants in the absence of alternative accommodation was a gross interference with their domestic affairs. Residents defended themselves from the night raids by attacking the municipal officials. In March 1962 for example, residents destroyed a number of rooms in the Burombo hostels following their attack on the hostel caretaker who had reported that one flat was overcrowded because of the presence of illegal residents. The municipal police then

⁵⁵³ Interview between Busani Mpofo and Maxwell Mhlanga, Makokoba, 16 June 2000, cited in T. Ranger, *Bulawayo Burning*, (forthcoming), p. 155.

⁵⁵⁴ F. Cooper, *On the African Waterfront*, p. 182.

⁵⁵⁵ Annual Report of the Medical Officer, Bulawayo, 1962, p. 12.

⁵⁵⁶ M. Ndubiwa, “Urban Community Study”, pp. 12-3.

raided all flats in the area to flush out illegal occupants but residents responded by attacking the caretaker because he behaved as a sell out, a “good boy” to municipal authorities.⁵⁵⁷

High unemployment conditions and low wages affected low income earners’ ability to hold on to their housing. In March 1962 for example, in Mpopoma Township alone, twenty-four low income families lost their houses due to the failure to pay rents. The local ABM Mr. F. Ziyambi indicated that sixty more families were heavily in arrears and likely to lose their houses also. Other low income residents mostly bachelors, especially in Iminyela and Mabutweni townships, simply deserted their houses when the going got tough for them, preferring to stay with their friends as non-paying guests or sharing the responsibility of paying the rent as illegal lodgers.⁵⁵⁸

Low income Africans sometimes refused to move out of overcrowded townships because of fear of paying high rents elsewhere. Moffat Nkomo for example, was allocated a house in Mpopoma in the late 1950s when he was still living in Makokoba but refused to move to the house because rents in Mpopoma were high. He highlighted that:

I just said to my self, how on this earth could I pay rent above £4 a month just for buying a sleep when I was paying less than £1 a month in Makokoba. I let the opportunity pass by but things came to a head when I got married and had a child in an overcrowded room I shared with others. As the child grew, he began to trespass into my room mates’ areas or bed spaces that were only separated from ours by a piece of cloth and they began to complain. That forced me to move out with my wife and child.⁵⁵⁹

Nkomo argued that he could not accept paying high rents just for a bed space to spend a night on as he believed that his presence in the city was only temporary. Bed spaces, designed by the colonial authorities to facilitate the circulation of unskilled labour left no room for community ties, let alone friends and families, as a house was not a home.⁵⁶⁰

⁵⁵⁷ *The Central African Daily News*, Wednesday 21 March, 1962, “War cries and broken windows follow dawn raids: crowd defies police.”

⁵⁵⁸ *The Central African Daily News*, Saturday 10 March 1962, “Relief fund for jobless man urged.”

⁵⁵⁹ Interview with Mr Moffat Nkomo, Bulawayo City Centre, Bulawayo, Friday 12 December 2008.

Nkomo re-registered for accommodation and was finally allocated a house in Tshabalala Township in the 1970s where he still stays. Nkomo was 89 years old in 2008 and was still living in the city mainly because he has children in America who send him remittances for survival.

⁵⁶⁰ Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 223.

One of the most pressing challenges in the building of affordable low cost houses in Bulawayo was lack of unoccupied serviced land nearer to the city centre where new housing could be put up. This problem was identified in 1965 when the council reached a stage where unoccupied building land within reasonable reach of the city and industrial areas was becoming very scarce. Ashton called for a plan to make the best use of the limited, available space by building “upwards” that is, building flats to accommodate more people in a small space. As a result, during the 1964/65 financial year, the council built 112 flats in Nguboyenja, sixty four flats in Makokoba for council employees and 376 flats in Tshabalala for railway employees. This took the total number of flats in various townships to over 1,400 and the total number of houses for families, single men and single women to 15,590, 4,000 and 130 respectively in townships. Families housed in Nguboyenja flats were transferred from Makokoba Township in pursuit of the policy of reducing over crowding in that township. In Iminyela Township, 440 families each occupied a single room, and 3,024 other tenants lived in the remaining 189 cottages.⁵⁶¹ Despite these developments, the housing deficit worsened. Undesirable residents became a target for removal to ease congestion.

In 1965, the Bulawayo Council complained of the presence of undesirable Africans in council accommodation. Hugh Ashton argued that:

One of the problems now confronting us is the large number of houses occupied but men who are unemployed, and in some cases unemployable because of old age and illness and by widows and divorcees...but we are faced with a position that more and more of our houses, originally built for workers in Bulawayo, are now occupied by persons who may never work again, and this at a time when we have over 3,000 working people on our waiting list for accommodation.⁵⁶²

For that year, the council’s rent assistance claim from the national government for destitute persons was nearly £400, indicating that nearly three hundred houses were occupied by persons temporarily or permanently unemployed.⁵⁶³

⁵⁶¹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June 1965, p. 7.

⁵⁶² Ibid. Also see Marx’s emphasis that the capitalist mode of production has, for example, inherent forces of democratic behaviour that can transform a group of individuals into a surplus population, quoted in M. Monsted and P. Walji, *A Demographic Analysis of East Africa: A Sociological interpretation*, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1978), p. 27.

⁵⁶³ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June, 1965, p. 7.

While the council had gone a long way in reducing the ratio of single to married accommodation in Bulawayo, it however still depended to some extent on the super-economic single accommodation rents to subsidise rents in accommodation for married couples. The council still suspected that there were many single men about the townships and that overcrowding and bands of thugs and hooligans were making the administration of townships difficult.⁵⁶⁴

Many financially struggling African landlords accepted lodgers in rented townships, a practice that could lead to eviction by the municipality. Lodgers in townships were only tolerated for economic reasons as some tenants could not afford to pay the economic rent and survive for a whole month. In such families, lodgers were a decisive economic factor between continued existence as a family unit or starvation and ultimate eviction for failure to meet the rent requirements.⁵⁶⁵ Makokoba had the highest number of illegal tenants in all rented townships, and fortunately for them in 1965, the council argued that conditions in townships did not warrant concerted action against them and raids for illegal lodgers were not carried out except for some specific reason.⁵⁶⁶

The presence of illegal lodgers created other problems. For example, lodgers could not claim the \$3.50 per month housing allowance from their employers which was payable to all workers earning less than \$44,00 in 1974 because they were not registered. Since lodgers could not be registered in single accommodation, they were prone to victimisation or exploitation by their landlords who could charge them whatever rent they wanted.⁵⁶⁷

Lodging was held in low esteem by many in Bulawayo. Moffat Nkomo argued that:

I remember a young lady ... who came from a well to do conservative middle class Ndebele family from Pelandaba Township who was stopped by her parents from marrying a man she loved because the man was a lodger and regarded as poor. I heard that her parents asked her three questions; the first was 'does he have a house', the answer was no; the second question was 'do his parents have a house', the answer again was no; the third question was 'does your boyfriend's family have a rural homestead', the answer was no again. So she was asked 'what type of a person is he? No house and no rural home, he must be a useless poor man or one of those wandering 'aliens' not even with a rural

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁶⁵ M. Ndubiwa, "Urban Community Study", pp. 13-14.

⁵⁶⁶ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, 1965, p. 3.

⁵⁶⁷ M. Ndubiwa, "Urban Community Study", p. 13.

home and she was told by her parents ‘we don’t accept that man...’ What could you do if you were the man in such a situation, wouldn’t you feel the pain of being a lodger?⁵⁶⁸

Robbie, a former township resident who fondly remembered township life in late 1970s recalled that he had a tough time dealing with problematic lodgers who failed to pay rent on time. He also complained of a neighbour who used to borrow a bucket of mealie-meal and never replaced as promised.⁵⁶⁹ Lodgers failed to pay rent or replace borrowed items because of poverty. Despite all problems that lodgers endured, lodging remained the cheapest though risky housing alternative for many of them.⁵⁷⁰ The building of new housing in Bulawayo was hampered by lack of funding.

4.3 Complications in Funding Low Cost Housing in Bulawayo.

In many colonial and even in post colonial cities, a large proportion of housing has been undertaken by the national government because of lack of finance or capacity in the private sector.⁵⁷¹ In colonial Zimbabwe, municipalities were prohibited from borrowing housing funds from the open market,⁵⁷² making it harder for them to secure funding for low income housing. Only two percent of Africans in all urban areas had sufficient income to purchase a house that met building society requirements. Building societies could not be involved in the low income housing sector. As a result there was no institutional mechanism that provided for housing finance requirements of over 98 percent of the black urban population.⁵⁷³

In 1966, the Ministry of Local Government and Housing clearly stated that the national government had no intention of taking over the responsibility of providing low cost African housing in urban areas, stating that:

Present policy aims at disengaging Government from direct provision and administration of housing and negotiations are proceeding with various municipalities to hand over to them African townships in urban areas. However in Greater Salisbury there is a serious shortage of housing for Africans as the

⁵⁶⁸ Interview with Moffat Nkomo.

⁵⁶⁹ Robbie, quoted in William Phiri, “Ibhave yemalokitshini”, Here and there with William Phiri, 30 August 2005, see http://www.inkundla.com/forum/ubbthreads.php/topics/30358/ibhave_yemalokitshini

⁵⁷⁰ Also see Miriam Grant, “Lodging as a Migrant Economic Strategy in Urban Zimbabwe”, in *Development Southern Africa*, Vol. 24, No.1, March 2007.

⁵⁷¹ Anthony D. King, *Urbanism, Colonialism, and the World Economy*, p. 57.

⁵⁷² H. Ashton, “The Economics of African Housing”, pp. 33-4.

⁵⁷³ The Whitsun Foundation, *Finance for Low income Housing*, Causeway, Salisbury, November 1979, p. i.

municipality accepts no responsibility for housing Africans employed in the peri-urban areas. Government is inescapably involved until the present situation can be rationalized and all housing brought under a single authority responsible for the whole area. No low cost housing schemes were in progress and there are no acquisitions in this category by the Housing/Guarantee Fund.⁵⁷⁴

African housing was therefore a moral problem that depended on some people's sense of values and was affected by the question of morals and money and on whether those concerned cared enough to make an investment on human welfare.⁵⁷⁵

From 1966, with Ministerial permission, municipalities could use up to one third of annual beer profits (profits from municipal liquor undertakings) for low cost dwelling units. Such money could also be used for street lighting and as loans for the African home ownership schemes and to finance all health, recreation and welfare services.⁵⁷⁶ The national government however soon pounced on municipalities' beer profits. The idea of taxing the profits from African beer sales was first mooted by the national government around 1970/71. The initial proposal was an excise duty on African beer produced at council breweries to be pegged at three cents per gallon. This proposal was opposed by local authorities on the grounds that African beer profits were a traditional source of local government revenue extensively used for the benefit of Africans, and that such a tax was going to be contrary to the intention and spirit of the African Beer Act. In 1970/71, the recommendation by the Third Report of the Select Committee on Liquor Licensing that a proportion of African beer profits generated in urban areas be diverted to Tribal Trust Lands and to be administered by the Minister for Internal Affairs riled local authorities. The Bulawayo Council argued that this was tantamount to suggesting a levy or excise duty on urban African beer sales for rural development.⁵⁷⁷

At the same time, the Minister of Local Government Mark Partridge encouraged municipalities to court private enterprises to provide African housing. When the Bulawayo Council posted an invitation for private companies to undertake flat development in townships, there was no response at all and this was not surprising as private concerns had never financed low income African housing in Bulawayo. The

⁵⁷⁴ NAZ S3269/25/151 Ministry of Local Government and Housing, Report of the Guarantee, Housing and African Building Funds, 1966.

⁵⁷⁵ Hugh Ashton, cited in M. Ndubiwa, *M. A Thesis*, "African Participation in Housing and Management in Rhodesia, The Bulawayo African Advisory Board", 1972, pp. 37 and 29.

⁵⁷⁶ H. Ashton, "The Economics of African Housing", pp. 33-4 and 37.

⁵⁷⁷ Annual Report by the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1971, p. 4.

council therefore hoped to make use of central government authority to spend up to one third of African beer profits on housing.⁵⁷⁸

In 1971, Bulawayo Councillor Max Logan argued that it was time low cost housing and its problems became a responsibility for the national government which he blamed for the housing crisis and noted that the council could not tackle this housing crisis on an ad hoc basis. He called on the national government to look into the housing problem and take over housing on a national scale.⁵⁷⁹

Prospective donors at times enforced the building of tiny rooms that were resented by the homeless in Bulawayo. For example, a mission from the World Bank criticised Bulawayo Council's housing as being "too extravagant and town layout too generous for a third world country" and insisted that for the council to meet its requirements for a loan, tiny houses were to be built on pinched stands.⁵⁸⁰ The unscrupulous pursuit of affordability may sometimes be taken to mean cheap housing units built of cheaper materials which presumably lower costs but this sometimes compromises quality.⁵⁸¹ This happened in Lobengula Township where houses were soon dubbed "match boxes" and were so unpopular amongst residents that the council reverted to its previous standards. Residents demanded that those "matchboxes" be demolished and re-built because "all was not well there" as the houses consisted of poor structure and also because "they were so crammed together that they rather looked like rows of houses in a mining compound."⁵⁸² They argued that in townships there was no need to cram houses as in Europe where "land is such a scarce commodity that there is only luxury in building upwards into the air."⁵⁸³ Residents yearned for spacing of housing that would ensure adequate privacy for individual families, not the kind of spacing found in Makokoba where walls were "...so thin that neighbours always listened to each other's anxiety through thin walls with a pondering heart. The neighbours, listening not through the sheer

⁵⁷⁸ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June, 1968, p. 3.

⁵⁷⁹ *Chronicle*, 7 May, 1971.

⁵⁸⁰ H. Ashton, "Housing Policy and Practice", p. 61.

⁵⁸¹ Mayo and Gross, cited in A. Kamete, "Cost Recovery in Urban Low Income Housing", p. 247.

⁵⁸² *Bulawayo African News*, Volume.1, No. 4, 1973, pp. 3-5.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*

wanting of listening but because walls were an invitation one could not guard against...”⁵⁸⁴

In the 1970s, funding of low income housing was hampered by some officials who still denied the permanence of the African urban community and tried to evade the implications of its existence, arguing that the African townsman was merely a displaced countryman who could be readily transplanted back to the tribal land and to accept tribal ethos.⁵⁸⁵ Ashton however, argued that since the 1950s the existence of a permanent (African) urban community in Bulawayo could not be doubted as a whole new generation had grown up in the city so that by the 1970s there was at least a third generation. Michael Ndubiwa also noted that a sizeable number of the population in Bulawayo during the 1970s was growing largely through natural increase and about one third of the population had been born in Bulawayo, with the number of those with no rural “home” experience on the increase.⁵⁸⁶

In 1975, low income workers’ plight in urban areas was worsened by the phasing out of the Services Levy Act. The levy had been very instrumental in helping most workers pay their rents and it had reduced the number of workers evicted from council houses due to failure to pay rents.⁵⁸⁷ Phasing out the levy meant that municipalities had to get their levy for services direct from workers through increased rent charges. The Services Levy was introduced in 1961 specifically to offset growing deficits in housing accounts and on bus services. This was essentially a housing tax, paid by employers other than domestic employers, for male employees earning less than £22 per month. This became a boon to housing authorities and was the most effective method of bridging the gap between what a family needed and what it could afford. In 1968 this was unpopular in Salisbury and pressures mounted to have it abolished in all municipalities.⁵⁸⁸

To try to soften the impact on Africans earning low wages the government called on Industrial Boards and the councils to revise accommodation allowance provisions prior to the phasing out of the Services Levy Act which was set to begin in July 1975.

⁵⁸⁴ Yvonne Vera, *Butterfly Burning*, (Harare: Baobab Books, 1998), p. 41.

⁵⁸⁵ E. H. Ashton, “Introduction” in M. Ndubiwa, *Urban Community Study*, p. ii.

⁵⁸⁶ M. Ndubiwa, *Urban Community Study*, p. 24.

⁵⁸⁷ Interview with Mr. L A. Ncube, Lobengula Township, 13 December 2002 quoted in Mpfu, “The Dynamics of Providing Social Services”, p. 22. Ncube was a former African Advisory Board Member.

⁵⁸⁸ H. Ashton, “The Economics of African Housing”, p. 36.

Employers were asked to raise wages for workers and increase accommodation allowance by seventy five cents as the first stage of the phasing out process directly led to a rent increase of seventy-five cents.⁵⁸⁹ Not all employers heeded the call to increase wages and the accommodation allowance for workers and some employers totally refused to pay the accommodation allowance which amounted to four dollars and twenty-five cents. Workers' predicament worsened during the second and final stage of the phasing out of the Levy Act in July in 1976 which resulted in a further rent increase of about two dollars and fifty cents.⁵⁹⁰ This increased incidences of workers failing to pay their rents and exposed them to eviction.

4.4 Fears and Effects of the Low Cost Housing Crisis.

In 1968, there was a total of 9,511, 13,000 and 6,723 houses for single, married (letting) and married (home ownership) people respectively in Bulawayo. The housing waiting list indicated that 2,230 more houses were needed.⁵⁹¹ The gap between supply and demand however continued to widen every year. In 1969, the Bulawayo Council admitted that:

we are short of houses, we are woefully short of adequate housing (far too many families are squeezed into one room or two, or are having to share small cottages and flats, creating densities that exceed normal legal limits) and we live in daily dread of one or other of our props being knocked from under us.⁵⁹²

The table below shows the total number of houses that were built in Bulawayo African Townships between 1965 and 1971.

Table 3

Financial year	Total number of houses built
1965/66	537
1966/67	1 051
1967/68	244
1968/69	899
1969/70	874
1970/71	148
TOTAL	3 753

Source: Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June, 1971, p. 7.

⁵⁸⁹ Minutes of the Joint African Advisory Board, Tuesday 27 May 1975, pp. 3 and 5.

⁵⁹⁰ Minutes of the Joint African Advisory Board, 23 March 1976, p. 2.

⁵⁹¹ H. Ashton, "Economics of African Housing", p. 33.

⁵⁹² M. Ndubiwa, "African Participation in Housing and Management in Rhodesia", p. 37.

For the 1970/71 financial year, the building of houses suffered a setback due to a chronic shortage of professional and technical staff⁵⁹³ even though the shortage of staff in the building of African townships was because African builders were disqualified from building in African townships.

In 1970, about seventy percent of black workers in Bulawayo earned below the poverty datum line. When a family head lost their job, became ill or died the poverty problem was aggravated for the family leading to many reported cases of families subsisting on a single meal per day. The incidence of poverty was increased by periodic commitments such as paying school fees and hospital fees.⁵⁹⁴ Excessive drunkenness by some parents led to family disruptions because of problems associated with extramarital affairs, leaving many children uncared for.⁵⁹⁵ Because of the increasing social ills associated with alcohol in townships, the Minister of Local Government and Housing accused the local authorities of selling excessive quantities of beer while at the same time extolling the valuable contribution of African beer profits to African welfare.⁵⁹⁶

Some low income groups could not even afford paying the economic rent. The need amongst residents to take in relatives and other visitors to the town ensured that single accommodation was single in name only as tenants took their wives and girlfriends into this type of accommodation except in hostels. The worst cases of overcrowding were found in one roomed rented units in Makokoba, Iminyela and Mabutweni Townships. In these areas the single room was a bedroom, dining room and a kitchen for the family. Privacy or decency was completely violated. The use of one room by parents and grown up children is a taboo in African culture. This was aggravated during times when visitors like in-laws were present. Separation of sexes became very difficult. Sometimes one single room was allocated to three single men and their privacy was compromised when one or all of them were visited by their wives.⁵⁹⁷ Bhoqo Mpala, who lived all his urban life in Makokoba noted that:

⁵⁹³ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Amenities, June 1971, p. 3.

⁵⁹⁴ M. Ndubiwa, "Urban Community Study", pp. 32-4.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 33.

⁵⁹⁶ Eric Gargett, "Drinking for Pleasure-and Whose Profit?", *Zambezia*, (1975-1976), 4, (ii), p. 115.

⁵⁹⁷ M. Ndubiwa, "Urban Community Study", pp. 7 and 11.

I remember at one point in 1975 right here in Makokoba we had to partition our room into four mini rooms using plastic papers because the wives of all my room mates had visited. I was not married then. Just imagine how I could sleep in that environment, knowing and hearing that another man sleeping with his wife a metre or so away from you, being separated by plastic paper only. Worse still, they would stay for a week or more, not just one day. We heard funny stories that some man in similar position like mine then were discovered touching the toes of someone's wife trying to help themselves thinking that the husband would be fast asleep. That automatically triggered a serious fight...so there was great temptation, great risks, and sleepless nights....That corrupted you, the next day you will spend time "hunting" for a lady to spend time with...⁵⁹⁸

Fear of eviction for any offence created a feeling of insecurity amongst tenants in rented houses. House seekers were quick to report any irregularities concerning other tenants to local housing area offices. Tenants found guilty were evicted, the house repossessed and re-allocated by the council. Wives of single men usually stayed in rural areas. This resulted in men in single units finding "*mapoto*" or temporary wives or girlfriends in the absence of their wives. When wives visited unannounced and found other women co-habiting with their husbands, serious fighting ensued and this was a growing problem in Mabutweni Township in the 1970s. Once that commotion was reported to the housing office, the tenant was evicted. Those evicted squatted somewhere in town so that they would be able to keep their job. Living in rented accommodation meant living in perpetual fear for many tenants because for one to survive (economically, socially and physiologically), somehow, they had to break the accommodation by-laws on a daily basis.⁵⁹⁹

Mbulawa Moyo highlighted that the threat of eviction not only came from the city authorities but:

sometimes even from the house owner or friend who accommodated you. Some of us had no relatives in the city and friends accommodated us but they sometimes made you feel very unwelcome, especially when they started talking about the difficulties they may encounter when evicted for harbouring us illegal residents. Sometimes they would just cook food and eat all of it in your absence. When you arrive home at night, you will find them asleep and with no food in the house. In a very crowded house you can't be seen looking for pots at night, so sometimes we slept on empty stomachs....⁶⁰⁰

Township houses were so overcrowded that anything could be stolen from them when unattended. For example, township boys used to collect wires to design and make toy

⁵⁹⁸ Interview with Bhoqo Mpala, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Friday 23 November 2007.

⁵⁹⁹ M. Ndubiwa, "Urban Community Study", pp. 13-4.

⁶⁰⁰ Interview with Mbulisi Moyo, Mzilikazi Township, Bulawayo, 05 December 2008.

cars with them. William Phiri noted that “We used to take pride in doing [sic] the biggest and the strongest car. We would drive these cars to the shops and load some of the stuff on them.” However, “the more beautiful and stronger your car was, the more likely it was to be stolen outside the shops or from the roof tops of chicken runs or toilets or *ekitshini* (illegal structures used as kitchens) where we used to keep them overnight. You see where some people perfected their carjacking skills?”⁶⁰¹

Finding a house or lodging of any kind therefore loomed large in the cares of Africans settling in the city.⁶⁰² Africans did not just want to have access to houses but also to be able to have a home with security of tenure in the form of freehold tenure so that they could build their own houses and own not only the building but the land on which it was built. A housing policy which encouraged such security of tenure would have had a profound impact on an urban community, because only then would the African have a real stake in urban society that he was becoming a part of. Without secure tenure, it was inconceivable that Africans would invest in developing or improving the houses.⁶⁰³ It is likely that the high rate of vandalism that took place in the city’s rented houses, especially in overcrowded hostels like Burombo and Sidojiwe was caused by the feeling of lack of ownership.

Between 1967 and 1972, the Rhodesian Front Government embarked on a campaign to purge white suburbs of all blacks who were not employees of whites under the pretext of enforcing all the provisions of the 1946 African (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act. Family members, wives and friends of domestic workers were therefore expelled; some of them went back to rural areas while some relocated to townships thereby exacerbating the overcrowding situation.⁶⁰⁴ This exacerbated the housing crisis.

There was little security in some hostels. For example, in 1973, some of them had no lockers where men could lock in their personal belongings. According to Ashton, it

⁶⁰¹ William Phiri, “Transport Emalokishini”, Here and there with William Phiri, 4 June 2005, see http://www.inkundla.com/forum/ubbthreads.php/topics/30358/ibhave_yemalokitshini

⁶⁰² Eric S. Gargett, “The African in the City”, Notes for a talk to the Chartered Institute of Secretaries, 25 February 1975, p. 2.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ John Pape, “*Chimurenga* in the *kia*: Domestic Workers and the Liberation Struggle in Zimbabwe”, in Brian Raftopolous and Tsuneo Yoshikuni (eds), *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe’s Urban History*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 1999), p. 261.

was unreasonable to expect eight and sometimes even more men to share a room without a place to keep their possessions.⁶⁰⁵ Tito Dlodlo recalled that he used to move around carrying all his important documents and money, highlighting that:

Even if it meant walking along very dark, dangerous places at night when coming off work, I had no choice but to be carrying my little money around every time. The risk of losing it was sometimes very high but leaving it in your small bag or suitcase was like donating it to the unknown, who you would confront when you discovered that it was missing, staying as a football team like we did.⁶⁰⁶

In 1976, single men in Bulawayo were still required to pay higher rents even though living conditions were pathetic. In August of that year, the monthly rent for a bed in a hostel room was increased from \$4,25 to \$6,75 and the unpopularity of hostels worsened. In 1978 unoccupied beds increased on an average of twenty one a month in the three Burombo hostels and 10.8 in the three Sidojiwe hostels. Sharing a room for eight was very unpopular, and only became marginally popular as the numbers decreased. The three Vundu hostels were also not fully occupied.⁶⁰⁷

Some men also suffered abuse in bachelor accommodation. Benjamin Banda, who arrived in Bulawayo from Zambia in 1961 and worked as a labourer for the City Council, had bad memories of the council's hostel housing which he used to share with other bachelors, most of whom were foreign migrants from Zambia like him. He recalled that men from Zambia abused him several times until he changed accommodation. They often touched his thighs saying:

Mfana, amatanda akho mahle [Boy! Your thighs are so nice!] A! A! A! I has never experienced anything like that in my life, they wanted to treat me like a woman. Most of those men did not want to look for ladies, they enjoyed making other man their 'women', but I never liked that as now I am married and have children.⁶⁰⁸

Banda believed that some of the migrant workers never wanted women in their lives and the bachelor accommodation provided them with an opportunity to "pounce" on other men, especially those that appeared small and powerless like him when they arrived in the city. Many explanations for the man to man sexual relations in colonial Zimbabwe

⁶⁰⁵ BMRL Location H1/4 Hostel for Single African Men – Extract from Minutes of Finance 11 July 1979.

⁶⁰⁶ Interview with Mr Tito Dlodlo, Makokoba, Bulawayo, Friday 23 November 2007.

⁶⁰⁷ BMRL Location H1/4 Hostel for Single African Men – Extract from Minutes of Finance 11 July 1979.

⁶⁰⁸ Interview with Mr Benjamin Banda, Bulawayo City Hall, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 14 April 2008.

have been advanced. Marc Epprecht argued that African men's sexual attraction to men can not be explained simply by the conditions of accommodation.⁶⁰⁹ While this point is valid, judging by Banda's experiences, it is clear bachelor accommodation provided a very convenient venue for migrant workers in Bulawayo to engage in such acts, whatever their reasons. Charles van Onselen and Diana Jeater argued that relations were partly an indirect result of the country's enormously distorted urban demographics. The influx of thousands of alien Africans in town produced a high demand for commercial sex with a low supply of female prostitutes to meet it. That supply and demand ratio meant that local women could negotiate relatively high prices for their services, making as much as forty pounds a month.⁶¹⁰ Low income men could not afford to pay for commercial sex every time hence they turned to one another.

Women in the city suffered more than most low income earners in their attempt to access housing. To start with, African women in urban areas were generally not acknowledged as part of the urban environment even though they have always been part of the urban landscape since the early colonial times. Secondly, as Diana Jeater aptly argued, African women's presence in town was obscured by African men who claimed urban public spaces as "male space" and even if women were in urban areas, the whole "meaning" of town was one that denied their presence or their "place" there.⁶¹¹ While Jeater was referring to Gwelo (now Gweru) women before 1920, this was equally true for Bulawayo women even during the later part of the colonial period in Zimbabwe.

N(UA)ARA left women, especially the unmarried, in a very precarious position in regard to accessing housing in the city. "Unattached" employed urban women in the post-Second World War period had no housing available to them.⁶¹² Bulawayo was male centric and accommodation was also male-centred. Theoretically, only employed African men with work passes could get accommodation. For women in towns finding

⁶⁰⁹ Marc Epprecht, *Hungochani-The History of the Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa*, McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal and Kingston: London, Ithaca: 2004), pp. 110.

⁶¹⁰ Charles van Onselen, Diana Jeater and Lawrence Vambe cited in Marc Epprecht, *Hungochani-The History of the Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa*, pp. 110-111.

⁶¹¹ See abstract, Diana Jeater, "No Place for a Woman: Gwelo Town, Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1920" in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 26, Number 1, March 2000, and p. 42. Jeater was referring to Gwelo (now Gweru) women before 1920 but this was equally true for Bulawayo women even during the later part of the colonial period in Zimbabwe.

⁶¹² D. Makanyire, *MA Thesis*, "Urban African Living Conditions in Colonial Zimbabwe: with Special Reference to Housing in Fort Victoria-1940-1970", 1977, p. 25.

accommodation was dependent on forming some kind of union with a man. The unions ranged from marriage to informal marriages and prostitution.⁶¹³ Therefore, as Jeater argued, just as towns in Southern Rhodesia were white places, they were equally male places. The city was no place for a woman.⁶¹⁴ Jeater interpreted “no place” to mean “you don’t belong.” Therefore, while women were present in towns, they were not seen as belonging.⁶¹⁵

An amendment of the N(UA)ARA in 1951 defined an approved wife as a woman issued with a marriage certificate by a competent authority that held office at the pleasure of the Governor.⁶¹⁶ All women married through the customary African ties could not be regarded as approved wives fit to stay with their husbands in residential areas. Marriage thus acted as a passport for women to assert themselves as “proper”, “respectable”, and “moral” against the “immoral” independent or single women.⁶¹⁷

Single women in Bulawayo faced hostility from African men. Mr. T. Moyo, a former council employee, argued that it was “un-African” to have female headed households.⁶¹⁸ African Advisory Board member (ABM) J. E. Ncube felt that the main problem in Bulawayo was that of young, unmarried mothers who acquired accommodation on their own because that discouraged them from marrying. He highlighted that it was unfair to allocate such women houses when there were so many married men and their families who had no accommodation.⁶¹⁹ Single women who were allocated houses in Iminyela Township were destitute, case or social work-referred, and were given about six months to find alternative accommodation.⁶²⁰

In 1973, ABM Mutasa called for more flexibility and a closer look into the housing difficulties faced by unmarried mothers and their children who were victims of circumstances.⁶²¹ Most ABMs however, opposed the call for greater flexibility arguing

⁶¹³ Koni Benson and J. Chadya, “Ukubhinya: Gender and Sexual Violence in Bulawayo Colonial Zimbabwe, 1946-56” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 31, Number 3, 2005, pp. 590-591.

⁶¹⁴ D. Jeater, “No Place for a Woman”, pp. 29 and 33.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ Koni Benson and J. Chadya, “Gender and Sexual Violence in Bulawayo”, p. 7.

⁶¹⁷ Minutes of the Bulawayo Townships Advisory Board, Tuesday 27 February 1973, p. 3.

⁶¹⁸ Interview with Mr. Moyo, Bulawayo Tower Block, 18 December 2002, quoted in Mpfu, “The Dynamics of Providing Social Services”, p. 24.

⁶¹⁹ Minutes of the Bulawayo Townships Advisory Board, Tuesday 27 February 1973, p. 3.

⁶²⁰ Interview with Charlton Ngcebetsha Jnr.

⁶²¹ Minutes of the Bulawayo Townships Advisory Board, Tuesday 27 February 1973, p. 3.

that such a tendency might lead to greater laxity and loose living by such women.⁶²² Therefore, the desire to control African women's movement and sexuality in Bulawayo, which revealed a degree of collaboration between colonised and coloniser men, between their contesting patriarchies, lingered on for much of the colonial period.⁶²³

In the late 1970s overcrowding in townships was exacerbated by the increased rural-urban migration due to the intensifying war of liberation in rural areas. Rural people flocked to cities to avoid risks of abduction, recruitment and violence in rural areas. According to the Director of Building and Amenities Van Der Meulen, this put a serious strain on the Bulawayo Council's housing services even though such people were absorbed into the existing accommodation in townships.⁶²⁴ In June 1972 before the intensification of the war of liberation, applicants on the waiting list were estimated at 5,717 with a current rate of fifty applicants per month. However towards independence, the council's waiting list was estimated at nearly 10,800 applicants with a rate of four hundred and twenty-seven per month.⁶²⁵ In 1979, the national government housed armed elements of the national army in Entumbane and Glenville townships during a demobilization exercise against council's concerns. The army was allocated over eight hundred and fifty-two new houses which people on the waiting list were expecting to be allocated. According to Van der Meulen, this merciful exercise on council's part resulted in an extremely regrettable crisis in townships. Violence between the armed units erupted on an unprecedented scale and caused many casualties and great damage to property in the townships. In Entumbane Township alone, violence led to the destruction of 4,300 houses, leading to a diversion of council resources from constructing news housing to repairing damaged ones.⁶²⁶

Despite all these problems, townships dwellers always engaged in interesting social events. Barry Sakhamuzi fondly remembered the Christmas day of 1979 when he and his friends wore suits of "Sting" brand names with brown matching shoes known as "Woppers." Shoes for ladies in fashion then were known as "Tractor." They were

⁶²² Minutes of the Township Advisory Boards, Thursday 28 June, 1962, pp. 5-6.

⁶²³ Lynette A. Jackson, "When in White Man's Town: Zimbabwean Women Remember Chibaura", in Jean Allman, Susan Geiger and Nakanyike Musisi (eds), *Women in Colonial Histories*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 2002), p. 194.

⁶²⁴ Annual Report of the Director of Building and Amenities, June, 1981, p. 1.

⁶²⁵ Annual Report of the Director of the Housing and Community Services Dept, 1976/77, p. 1.

⁶²⁶ Annual Report of the Director of the Housing and Community Services Dept, 1980/81, p. 1.

dancing to Michael Jackson's song entitled "don't stop till you get enough" but *elokishini* (in the township) because "we didn't understand all the English words in the song very well, we just coined our own words and sang along saying "don't talk to a guerilla" because members of the guerilla armies had just begun living in Entumbane township during the demobilization period after the liberation war. We were aggrieved because those "guerillas" who had come from Zambia were snatching away our girl friends."⁶²⁷

Soweto Sikhulu recalled that "The dances have since changed. We were an energetic lot. Talk about *Patapata*, *Sinjonjo*, *MJ*, *robot*, *break dance*, *catfish*, *cabbage*, *running man dances*, *MC Hammer dances*, they were nowhere near the slight jerking movements made by today's youths."⁶²⁸

Because of these interesting social and cultural activities that township residents always engaged in to brighten their township life Terence Ranger observed that it was not surprising that columnists in the Bulawayo newspapers still expressed keen nostalgia for the "good old township days."⁶²⁹ Themba Nyoni, for example, cited by William Phiri in 2005, argued that "Times were hard but they were the most enjoyable times of my life."⁶³⁰

4.5 Conclusion.

The gap between the supply and demand for low cost housing widened between 1960 and 1980. A "Report on the Urban Development in the Main Centres" in Southern Rhodesia concluded that lack of finance for low income housing was responsible for the ever-widening gap between supply and demand."⁶³¹ Poverty caused partly by a general economic recession, low wages, high unemployment rates and gender restrictions directly affected low income earners' access to housing services in Bulawayo and most low income earners failed to pay rents and other services.⁶³²

⁶²⁷ Barry Sakhamuzi, quoted in William Phiri, "Ibhave yemalokitshini", Here and there with William Phiri, 30 August 2008, see http://www.inkundla.com/forum/ubbthreads.php/topics/30358/ibhave_yemalokitshini

⁶²⁸ Soweto Skhulu, quoted in William Phiri, "Transport Emalokitshini."

⁶²⁹ Terence Ranger, "Myth and Legend in Urban Oral Memory: Bulawayo, 1930-1960" in *Journal of Post Colonial Writing*, Vol. 44, No. 1, 2008, p.87.

⁶³⁰ Ibid.

⁶³¹ "Report on the Urban Development in Main Centres" cited in The Whitsun Foundation, *Finance for Low income Housing*, p. 21.

⁶³² Annual Report of the Director of the African Administration Department, 1962/3, p. 4.

Low income Africans were therefore far from being secure in townships, with pressure on them being exerted from various sources that included the local authority, their landlords and even their colleagues. Being secure was defined by Gargett as having:

somewhere to live without harassment; to have a job that satisfies you; to have an income on which you can support yourself and your family; education for your children (and maybe yourself); opportunities for self-development; and a measure of self-determination.⁶³³

Residents faced a constant threat of eviction due to factors that ranged from failure to pay rent to harbouring illegal occupants.

The housing crisis spilt into the post colonial period and ballooned as a various new classes of homeless people emerged in the city.

⁶³³ Eric S. Gargett, "The African in the City", p. 2.

Chapter 5.

The Poor and Low Cost Housing Crisis after Independence.

In post-colonial Zimbabwe the housing problem has remained as intractable and persistent as ever in spite of the national government's frequently stated intentions and commitment to provide adequate housing for all. This chapter argues that the traditional principal low income housing providers, the national government and local authority, have never been able to provide enough serviced land and raw materials for low income housing while low income earners have been too poor to built housing for themselves. I therefore emphasize the financial incapacity of the authorities that led to slow delivery of serviced land, together with the high building standards requirements and the poverty of many urban residents as major factors behind the very slow provision of low income housing in Bulawayo between 1980 and 2005. The financial incapacity of authorities contributed to the promulgation of various half baked housing policies that failed to ensure affordability for many low income earners. As a result, it became difficult for the poor to access housing and remain in permanent occupation in the city. The chapter begins with a brief overview of social, economic and political problems faced by city residents in relation to the national government and then highlights the background of the various classes of low income earners that have existed in Bulawayo since independence before exploring the severity of the housing crisis.

5.1 Bulawayo, National Politics and the Question of Lack of Industrial Development after 1980.

In 1980, Bulawayo had already been overtaken by the capital Salisbury (renamed Harare) as the main industrial centre of Zimbabwe.⁶³⁴ The city immediately suffered political violence as various wings of soldiers that were housed in townships clashed during the demobilisation exercise that began in 1979, leading to the destruction of houses and affecting the operation of businesses and development projects in the city. For example,

⁶³⁴ Bill Freund, *The African City: A History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 144.

there was a drop in the sales of liquor due to a curfew that was imposed by the army and considerable quantities of beer were destroyed as it could not be sold.⁶³⁵

Following a falling out between the Matabeleland-based Zimbabwe African Patriotic Union (ZAPU), a former nationalist party and the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) party immediately after independence, the government unleashed *Gukurahundi*, a “dissident eradication” operation in the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces that left between 20,000 and 30,000 civilians dead.⁶³⁶ The government’s Fifth Brigade carried out a grotesquely violent campaign between January 1983 and late 1984 when it was withdrawn. Targeted people, all in the Ndebele speaking areas, included ZAPU party chairmen and civil servants, civilians at large, refugees, former Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) fighters (the armed wing of ZAPU) and anyone suspected of having crossed the border to Botswana during the liberation war.⁶³⁷ The war situation rendered rural districts horrible places to live in. Because of the killings, Kezi district was described as “a naked cemetery,” a place where “There is no certainty of life, only death... No one knows how many people have died. No one knows when it will end, or if it will end...”⁶³⁸, “only a place for those who were born here and have nowhere else to go...Many people have left and most of the homes are empty.”⁶³⁹ The situation forced many rural people to flee to Bulawayo in the hope of finding peace in the city.

Victims of the violence from the Matabeleland and Midlands provinces fled to Bulawayo resulting in the population to grow at an annual rate of 9.8 percent between 1982 and 1985 and by 10.9 percent per annum between 1985 and 1991.⁶⁴⁰ The table below captures the population growth in Bulawayo between 1982 and 1991.

⁶³⁵ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1981, p. 1. The tragic murder of one of the directors of a principal building contractor in the city affected other building contractors’ work and the building of houses in townships almost came to a standstill.

⁶³⁶ Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, *Breaking the Silence: A Report into the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands, 1980-1988*, (Harare: The Legal Resources Foundation, 1999).

⁶³⁷ Jocelyn Alexander, Jo Ann McGregor and Terence Ranger, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the ‘Dark Forests’ of Matabeleland*, (Oxford: James Currey, 2000), p. 192.

⁶³⁸ Yvonne Vera, *The Stone Virgins*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2002), p. 159.

⁶³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 153.

⁶⁴⁰ Ben Strydom, “A Situational Analysis of Urban Poverty Bulawayo”, pp. 2-3.

TABLE 4.

Population growth in Bulawayo from 1982 to 1991

Year	Population	Percentage Increase
1982	413,814	
1985	535,800	29.4%
1991	820,000	53%

Source: Bulawayo Municipal Records Library (BMRL) N6A/17 Squatters/Vagrants, by Ben Strydom (Chairman and Director of Combined Churches and Mobile soup Kitchen) “A Situational Analysis of Urban Poverty Bulawayo,” Not dated, pp. 2-3.

The conflict only stopped in 1987 with the signing of a Unity Accord between ZAPU and ZANU PF.

Bulawayo and surrounding areas also suffered from the impact of droughts in 1982-1984/85, 1986-87 and in 1991-1992, 2001-2003. Bulawayo therefore acquired a negative image of having persistent water problems and this made it difficult to attract industrial investment.

The city was also perceived as the home of the ruling party’s opponents, first as home to ZAPU up to 1987 and then to Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) after 1999. For example, after losing national elections in Matabeleland to ZAPU in 1980, local municipal elections in Bulawayo in the 1984 and 1985 national elections, Prime Minister Mugabe was angered by “what he saw as the “Ndebele vote” and warned people of Matabeleland about the dangers of voting for ZAPU and gave them the “last chance” to vote “right.”⁶⁴¹

At the same time, all development projects in Bulawayo and Matabeleland had been suspended because of insecurity and political consideration on the part of the government during the conflict.⁶⁴² That government sponsored violence left a permanent scar in the relations between the government and residents of Bulawayo, many of whom lost their relatives during the conflict and some vowed never to forgive Robert Mugabe and his party for the violence it perpetrated on Ndebele people.

The “neglect” by the central government in making investment to boost the water capacity and industrial base of the city has often been cast in terms of these political

⁶⁴¹ Jonathan Moyo, quoted in Muchaparara Musemwa, “Disciplining a ‘Dissident’ City: Hydropolitics in the city of Bulawayo Matabeleland, Zimbabwe, 1980-1994” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 32, Number 2, 2006, p. 242.

⁶⁴² Robert Mugabe, cited in Muchaparara Musemwa, “Disciplining a ‘Dissident’ City”, p. 242.

factors.⁶⁴³ It has been argued that the post-colonial government used the water problem in Bulawayo to “browbeat” this “dissident” city into political submission.⁶⁴⁴ This brings in the dimensions of ethnic and regional conspiracies in the explanations of poverty in Bulawayo. As Muchaparara rightly observed, in an atmosphere charged with political conflict, suspicion, lack of development, use of state power and machinery to resolve conflicts and presumed prejudices in resource allocation, lack of government action in times of serious water crisis, residents in the city have explained all this in terms of ethnic and regional conspiracies⁶⁴⁵, which however, while difficult to prove, can also not be dismissed at firsthand as irrelevant.

To understand the welfare of urban residents in post colonial Zimbabwe, there is also a need to explore the strands of nationalism that have existed and their effects on the urban masses in general. One can ask whether the Zimbabwean nationalism has really been concerned with “government for the people by the people.”⁶⁴⁶ When considering this question, one must not lose sight of the fact that nationalism in general depends upon the rejection of the present in favour of a romantic past and an even more romantic future. It also needs a real or imagined enemy, responsible for “things as they are.”⁶⁴⁷ As Jocelyn Alexander *et al* rightly argued in 2000, “in Zimbabwe today...a critical history of nationalism is essential: many of the fundamental issues which affect Zimbabwean society arise out of the promises, the disputed character and the failures of nationalism.”⁶⁴⁸ This became even more essential after 2000 under the third *Chimurenga*⁶⁴⁹ policies when the government’s discursive strategies became exclusionary after it failed to secure a majority support in the constitutional referendum

⁶⁴³ Mirjim Zaaier, cited in Beacon and Michael Ndubiwa, Decent Work in Construction and the Role of Local Authorities: the Case of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe”, *Unpublished Report*, January 2008, p. 48.

⁶⁴⁴ M. Musemwa, “Disciplining a ‘Dissident’ City”, p. 241.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Information Section, “Background Briefing: A View of African Nationalism”, 18th November, 1976, in <http://www.rhodesia.nl/backgr1176.htm>

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁸ Jocelyn Alexander *et al*, *Violence and Memory*, p. 83.

⁶⁴⁹ Third *Chimurenga* refers to the period from 1999/2000 characterised by chaotic farm invasions and portrayed by government as an extension of the liberation wars but now to achieve economic independence.

in 2000.⁶⁵⁰ The government became hostile to urban residents who supported the opposition MDC.

5.2 Background of the Poor in Bulawayo after 1980.

Some low income earners in Bulawayo were inherited from the colonial period. These included a rural refuge population that fled into the city seeking the relative security of town for themselves, their families and particularly their children as a result of the 1970s liberation war, and in the process exacerbated housing shortages. The argument by Hugh Ashton that somehow, residents appeared to have absorbed the influx “quietly and without fuss”⁶⁵¹ was not valid as symptoms of homelessness, vagrants and squatters soon appeared.

Other low income earners included former residents in council hostels that included Burombo, Sidojiwe, and Vundu among others as the council failed to deal with the deteriorating conditions in townships. Hostels originally built for bachelor workers in the 1950s were now being occupied by families comprising as many as ten people per unit. Despite the housing crisis, the hostels continued to be raided by the municipality police for illegal occupants. In July 1990 for example, in the middle of the night, the Mzilikazi Housing Officer “visited” rooms 48, 50 and 52 in Burombo Hostel 2. In the first room the legal tenant had relocated to a farm in rural areas and it was occupied by two single women. In room 50 there was a tenant living with his girlfriend and eight other people occupied the room some of whom shared beds and paid rent to the tenant. Room 52 was occupied by a man with his wife and four children. The housing officer evicted all the “illegal” occupants in room 48 and 50 and re-allocated the rooms to persons on the waiting list,⁶⁵² leaving the ten residents (two in room 48 and eight in room 50) homeless. To highlight the slum conditions after 2000, one hostel is case studied below even though slum conditions had existed since the colonial period in hostels.

Sidojiwe Hostel is located in Belmont Industrial area and was built for bachelors who worked there. In the 1980s, it was occupied by members of the Zimbabwe Republic

⁶⁵⁰ Sara Dorman, “NGOs and the Constitutional Debate in Zimbabwe: from Inclusion to Exclusion”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 29, Issue 4, December 2003, pp. 845-863, cited in Lene Bull-Christiansen, *Tales of the Nation: Feminist Nationalism or Patriotic History? Defining National History and Identity in Zimbabwe*, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2004), p. 59.

⁶⁵¹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1978, p. 1.

⁶⁵² BMRL H4/Dept CS Sidojiwe Hostel, Memo from Director of Housing and Community Services to Town Clerk, “Illegal tenants-Burombo Hostel 2: Rooms 48, 50, 52” 30 July 1990.

Police (ZRP) who were later removed because of the poor conditions. In 2001, the hostel was occupied by full families, husbands, wives and children, sometimes with each unit occupied by two or more families. Its population was more than double what the hostel had been built to accommodate. There was one communal toilet and bathroom per floor in this three storey building. Plumbing installations were worn out and cast iron pipes were collapsing resulting in waste flowing onto the floor below instead of through pipes. Some pipes were completely blocked. Bathroom and toilet floors were leaking. Reinforcements in concrete floors were corroded by waste water and the floor could collapse anytime without warning.⁶⁵³ Occupants were ultra low income earners, predominantly unemployed single mothers, AIDS orphans, children in difficult circumstances, unemployed youth, old people, widows and widowers.⁶⁵⁴

Residents in hostels vandalised facilities like toilet cisterns making it impossible to flush toilets after use. The caretaker only flushed the toilets once during day using a hosepipe, posing a serious health hazard. The supply of coal used for cooking was erratic resulting in residents illegally connecting electric stoves and other electric gadgets to the laundry rooms where electricity was available, posing a serious fire hazard.⁶⁵⁵

In 2001, the Bulawayo Council resolved to close down the hostel and transfer the tenants to low cost “Millennium houses” that were under construction at Emganwini Township⁶⁵⁶ but this was never accomplished as funds for the scheme were exhausted before the completion of houses. Renovation and repair of damaged water and sewer pipes was negated by rampant vandalism and theft.⁶⁵⁷ No alternative accommodation was found for hostel residents.

Other hostels were no different. Maseko-Phiri, who stayed in Vundu hostel No. 3 from 2000 to 2007, shared one room with other seven men. He highlighted that

⁶⁵³ BMRL H4/Dept CS Sidojiwe Hostel, Memo from the Director of Engineering Services to Director of Housing and Community Services- “Inspection of Sidojiwe Flats”, 29 June 2001. See also *Chronicle*, 15 December 1997.

⁶⁵⁴ BMRL H4/Dept CS Sidojiwe Hostel, Council Memo from Town Clerk M. Ndubiwa Ref- TSN/TD/H4 17 June 1998, The Social Welfare Department of Bulawayo-ref to the Sidojiwe Community as a “poverty stricken community.”

⁶⁵⁵ BMRL H4/Dept CS Sidojiwe Hostel, Health Services Dept, Internal Memo from the Director of Health Services to Director of Housing and Community Services, 25 July 2001, “Inspection of Sidojiwe Hostels”.

⁶⁵⁶ Annual Report of Director of Housing and Community Services, December 2000, p. 4 and Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, December 2001, p. 20.

⁶⁵⁷ BMRL H4/Dept CS Sidojiwe Hostel-Memo from the Town Clerk to the Chairperson of Sidojiwe Tenants, 9 March 2004.

conditions in all hostels were horrible. “Go and tell the council that what they are doing is bad. How can they continue housing eight big men like me in one room with stinking toilets for that matter...?”⁶⁵⁸ The Council argued that the only course of action left to it would be to close down all hostels in the city, leading to more people becoming homeless.⁶⁵⁹ Slum conditions after independence also existed in townships like Makokoba.

Makokoba Township, as one of the places with shared accommodation, still suffered from serious overcrowding after independence. Mrs Moyo, a resident in Makokoba observed that:

Makokoba will always be Makokoba. Those horrible housing conditions that existed in the township during the colonial period still exist now more than twenty five years after independence. I know of many cases where parents still sleep on top of beds with children still sleeping under the beds or in the same room... It's clear that this city has refused to accept us as its residents. These days it's even worse because of the drainage blockages and sewerage spilling over the streets...⁶⁶⁰

Although an effort was made to provide alternative accommodation to the occupants of shared accommodation, it took long to find. In some cases, the offer of alternative accommodation was turned down because the affected Makokoba family could not afford the high rent paid in alternative places or simply because of the attachment to the area.⁶⁶¹

Former Member of Parliament (MP) for Makokoba constituency Sithembiso Nyoni, argued that “the trouble is that people in this constituency are those with very low incomes, so low that they cannot even afford what is considered low-cost accommodation.”⁶⁶² This was after *The Sunday Mail* reported an extreme case of overcrowding in the township where up to eighteen people, among them three married couples, shared a single room.⁶⁶³

Women continued to be affected by the inherited colonial housing policy. At independence, the reported resounding success in the transfer of houses to sitting tenants from rented to home ownership schemes was a success largely belonging to African men

⁶⁵⁸ Interview with Juma Maseko-Phiri, Makhumalo Beer Hall, Makokoba, Bulawayo, 4th January 2009.

⁶⁵⁹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, December 2005, p. 17.

⁶⁶⁰ Interview with Mrs Moyo, Makokoba, Bulawayo, 16 January 2008.

⁶⁶¹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1989, pp. 8, 9 and 10.

⁶⁶² *Sunday Mail*, 19 July 1998, “Joint Efforts to fight poverty in Makokoba.”

⁶⁶³ Ibid.

since they were the recognised heads of families and most houses were registered in their names.⁶⁶⁴ This was confirmed by the Council which highlighted that the conversion of rental housing to home ownership was much slower and difficult in houses occupied by wives who were deserted by their husbands or in houses that were originally occupied by people who had died.⁶⁶⁵ Charlton Ngcebetsa also noted that it was:

very difficult to convert some houses from rented to home ownership especially in Makokoba due to infighting among occupants over the ownership. This was due to the colonial housing policy where one or two roomed house(s) were allocated to at least four men. Most of those occupants or their relatives still occupy the rooms and all of them claim ownership of the house. The council so far has failed to solve this issue and there are about 869 houses still occupied by around four families each and the council's attempt to reduce the number of families in such houses have not been helped by the severe lack of alternative accommodation.⁶⁶⁶

In 1989, the government conceded that it was nearly impossible for low income earners to build for themselves. Then Minister of Public Construction and National Housing Joseph Msika highlighted that costs of building materials increased rapidly making it difficult for the lowest income people to “afford even a square metre of a decent house.”⁶⁶⁷

New job seekers were another class of low income earners in Bulawayo after independence. Freedom of movement towards and after independence reversed the effects of colonial legislation like the 1930 Land Apportionment Act (LAA) and its variants that insulated urban areas from an influx of the poor African population.⁶⁶⁸ Urban areas began to face an increased demand for housing than authorities had anticipated from new migrants in search of new economic opportunities.

Increasing unemployment, introduction of shorter working hours, factory closures and retrenchments also created new classes of the poor in Bulawayo as the government

⁶⁶⁴ Sithembile L. Nyoni, “Policy Silences and Invisible Women” in *The Journal on Social Change and Development*, No. 47, May 1999, pp. 19-20. The colonial “male only” ownership resulted in complaints when the man died, in cases of divorce or when the woman was evicted by the husband. With no binding legislation, there were cases of women who lost property rights in the “sitting tenants” home ownership policy disputes.

⁶⁶⁵ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1987, p. 4.

⁶⁶⁶ Interview with Charlton Ngcebetsa Jnr, Bulawayo Tower Block, Bulawayo, Wednesday 7 January 2009.

⁶⁶⁷ Government of Zimbabwe, Press Statement, Ref. 177/89/BC/CB/SK, “Cost of Material Hampers Housing Development-Msika”, Causeway, Harare, June 13, 1989.

⁶⁶⁸ Ben Strydom, “A Situational Analysis of Urban Poverty Bulawayo”, pp. 2-3.

was very slow in employment creation. In 1980/81 the Bulawayo Council reported high unemployment levels in the city and this, coupled with spiralling costs of the basic commodities, led to serious industrial unrest. The Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe argued that unrest in urban and rural areas was caused by a “crisis of expectation”⁶⁶⁹ as had been the case in other African countries like Ghana, Nigeria and Tanzania, that is, the population expected independence to quickly translate into improved living and working conditions.

To highlight the uneasy relationship between the urban workers and the nationalists who ascended to power, during the strikes in May 1980, a member of Mugabe’s cabinet warned striking workers “not to regard the coming of independence as a licence for laziness or anarchy.”⁶⁷⁰ The Minister of Labour threatened to “crack my whip if they do not go back to work. They must go back now,” and indeed they went back to work the following day but in Bulawayo, more than 300 refuse collectors and street cleaners ended their strike only after persistent appeals.⁶⁷¹ Therefore, to stop strikes, the government used ZANU PF’s influence to persuade militant workers to accept wages that kept them at the poverty level, and to remain in very poor living conditions and later tried to co-opt the labour movement. Andre Astrow rightly predicted that in the long run, it appeared that if the Mugabe government wanted to stay in power, it could only do so by nakedly oppressing workers.⁶⁷²

Unemployment led to an increase in starvation and other related misfortunes. In June 1982 for example, arrears on rent and service payments increased in Bulawayo⁶⁷³ as some workers were placed on short working time and had their salaries reduced accordingly. This had serious consequences as workers earned wages below the legal minimum, making it difficult for them to pay their monthly rents and other bills which

⁶⁶⁹ Robert Mugabe quoted in Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1981, p. 2.

⁶⁷⁰ Michael O. West, “Pan-Africanism, Capitalism and Racial Uplift: The Rhetoric of African Business Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe”, in *African Affairs* (1993), 92, p. 282.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid.

⁶⁷² Andre Astrow, *Zimbabwe: A Revolution That Lost Its Way?* (London: Zed Books, 1983), pp. 176-177 and 183.

⁶⁷³ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1982, p. 3. This was a strong trend towards casualisation of labour whereby workers were hired on short term contracts, for example, a worker might work one week, be unemployed for a couple of weeks, then work for some week again and so on in the same company. See Mkhululi Ncube, “Employment, Unemployment and the Evolution of Labour Policy in Zimbabwe”, *Zambezia* (2000), XXVII (ii),

went up due to increased costs of other services and electricity in particular.⁶⁷⁴ All supplementary charges for example, were increased by Z\$1,20 from the 1st of October, 1983 and the minimum water charge was increased from Z\$2,58 for the first 14kl to Z\$5,48 due to the increased costs of electricity which increased the costs of pumping water. This added a financial strain to big families who paid surcharges or penalties imposed for excessive water consumption.⁶⁷⁵ Families who could not afford to maintain their homes surrendered them and became lodgers. Rent arrears in the council's home ownership schemes rose for example, from Z\$189,796 in 1982/83 to Z\$344,168 in 1983/84. This exposed defaulting residents to eviction. Defaulters tended to be old and retired lessees who depended on lodgers or their children for money to meet their monthly bills.⁶⁷⁶ With no hope of finding formal jobs, some youth in Bulawayo resorted to community theatre to create a livelihood for themselves with more than thirty drama groups in existence in 1988 in the city.⁶⁷⁷

One of the symptoms of the Gukurahundi massacres in the 1980s was the spontaneous emergence and growth of squatter settlements in Killarney and Trenance in Bulawayo. A contingent of pavement sleepers from the strife torn rural districts of Tsholotsho, Lupane, Nkayi, Gwanda and Kezi became a novel nocturnal phenomenon around the Railway Station premises. For the first time, scavenging by the war-displaced and helpless vagrants became tolerated as a way of gaining a living in Bulawayo. Individuals displaced by the political turmoil were marginalised and remained in need of rehabilitation⁶⁷⁸ as the post colonial government fiercely opposed squatting. In late 1983 for example, the government embarked on a purge of urban squatters and other people

⁶⁷⁴ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1983, pp. 1 and 4. The introduction of a short working week and the practice of sending some workers on a six weeks' unpaid leave was reported in 1985. See Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June 1985, pp. 5 and 10.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June 1985, pp. 10, 11 and 12. Increasing incidents of theft and robberies linked to increasing unemployment were reported in the 1980s after the rise of criminal gangs that were popularly known as *gubuzela* in townships like Magwegwe. See Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June 1985, p. 10. *Gubuzela* is a Ndebele word which means "cover your head" and referred to criminal townships gangs that forced their victims to cover their heads each time they attacked their homes.

⁶⁷⁷ Preben. Kaarsholm, "Siye pambili-Which Way Forward? Urban Development, Culture and Politics in Bulawayo" in B. Raftopoulos and Tsuneo Yoshikuni (eds), *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe's Urban History*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 1999), p. 243.

⁶⁷⁸ Ben Strydom, "A Situational Analysis of Urban Poverty Bulawayo", pp. 2-3.

classified as vagrants and prostitutes through the nationwide “Operation Clean-Up.”⁶⁷⁹ Imprisoned squatters were soon released on condition that they would not squat again. In October 1985, the Minister of Local Government Rural and Urban Planning announced his intension to form “squatter hunting units” to smash any squatting tendencies.⁶⁸⁰ This failed to halt squatting.

In 1984/85 thirty shacks were erected to accommodate about 300 squatters who had moved into North Trenance. In 1986, squatting intensified on municipal land especially in the Trenance, Umguza and Killarney areas. The council asked the government to resettle or repatriate the squatters, but no action was taken.⁶⁸¹ Some displaced persons in Bulawayo were found at Railway Avenue/Basch Street, 11th Avenue/Robert Mugabe Way, Bulawayo Golf Club, Matsheamhlophe Stream/Hume Park, Killarney, Richmond Landfill site, 1st and 2nd Avenues in the CBD and in Makokoba Township near MaKhumalo beer hall. Squatters originated from local rural districts such as Esigodini, Plumtree, Tsholotsho, and so on. A number originated from neighbouring countries especially Zambia and Mozambique. Others formerly stayed in townships but high rentals forced them out to become scavengers.⁶⁸²

A number of the squatters at Richmond landfill were former ZAPU liberation fighters. One of them, popularly known as Ndlovu, spent most of the days running around the streets of Bulawayo. Former fighters did not want to approach the city council’s welfare office for assistance. According to Ngcebetsha:

they would rather approach the War Veterans office in the city and when they do not get any assistance from the office, they approach the war veterans patron, Dumiso Dabengwa who is based in Bulawayo. Most of them appear to be suffering from mental illness most probably because of the war experiences. Unfortunately there is nothing that the council can do about their condition.⁶⁸³

⁶⁷⁹ Diana Patel, “Housing the Urban Poor in the Socialist Transformation of Zimbabwe” in M. G. Schatzberg (ed), *The Political Economy of Zimbabwe*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1984), pp. 191-92.

⁶⁸⁰ C. Mafico, *Urban Low Income Housing in Zimbabwe*, (England and Gower: Averbury, Brookfield, 1991), p. 69.

⁶⁸¹ Annual Reports of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1985, p. 5 and June 1986, p. 4.

⁶⁸² BMRL N6A/17 Squatters, Extract from Agenda of Finance and Development Committee-Report of the Displaced Persons Sub-Committee Meeting held on the 24th June, 1998.

⁶⁸³ Interview with Charlton Ngcebetsha Jnr.

Squatters in Bulawayo followed council landfills/rubbish dumpsites. When the landfill was at Pumula Township before 1994, the Council demolished their structures there, but they rebuilt them immediately.⁶⁸⁴ Some landfill squatters were lodgers in high density suburbs but their economic activity was not acceptable to landlords. As Grant rightly observed, lodgers tended to be more vulnerable to conditions such as interference by the landlord who restricted their access to the use of the yard for income generating activities.⁶⁸⁵ The main complaint from the landlords was that the storage of scrap materials brought by the lodgers emitted unpleasant smells. Rentals also became unaffordable high. In frustration, landfill pickers relocated to dumpsites where they could pick and store items at “peace” and where they did not pay any rents. Municipal police frequently raided the dumpsite but they persisted residing there, an indication of their desperate situation.⁶⁸⁶

In 1998, Killarney and the Richmond landfill were the biggest squatter settlements in Bulawayo. In the “unsightly” environment, they organised their villages in a traditional set up. At Killarney, squatters had an area “chief” and his “right hand man” who indicated that they had squatted in the area for varying periods of up to thirty years. Squatters at the dumpsite were also well organised, with a chief and five litter officers and had built semi-permanent structures around the dumpsite.⁶⁸⁷

The Killarney settlement comprised three villages with about four thousand families. They fetched water from the nearby Umguza River or vandalised municipal valves. There were no sanitary facilities in the area; squatters used the bush to relieve themselves, thus exposing themselves and residents of nearby middle income suburbs of Killarney and Mahatshula to potential disease outbreaks. Prostitution was rife in the area and children under five years were not immunised against vaccine-preventable childhood diseases.⁶⁸⁸ Some squatters had formal jobs but just as with other urban squatters in

⁶⁸⁴ BMRL N6A/17 Squatters, Memo from the Director of Health Services to Town Clerk, 24 February 2003, “Displaced Persons in Bulawayo.”

⁶⁸⁵ Miriam Grant, “Difficult Debut: Social and Economic Identities of Urban Youth in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe”, in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 37, 2-3, 2003”, p. 427.

⁶⁸⁶ BMRL N6A/17 Squatters, Inter-Country People’s Aid and Save the Children, Rapid Livelihood Security and Needs Assessment, Richmond Landfill Site-“Ingozi Mine” Report, 4th December 2001, pp. 3, 11-12.

⁶⁸⁷ BMRL N6A/17 Squatters, Extract from Agenda of Finance and Development Committee-Report of the Displaced Persons Sub-Committee Meeting held on the 24th June, 1998.

⁶⁸⁸ Memo from the Director of Health Services to Town Clerk, “Displaced Persons in Bulawayo.”

Zimbabwe, their most serious handicap was lack of an affordable low cost housing solution.⁶⁸⁹

In 2003, the Richmond Landfill was occupied by about three thousand squatters whose main activity was salvaging dumped material for re-use. Most women squatters were widows, and illiterate. They faced severe starvation and the Council refused to supply them with clean water so as to discourage more squatters from moving in and increasing the size of the settlement; after all, the landfill itself was just a temporary site to be abandoned when filled up.⁶⁹⁰ They ate stale and condemned food. By picking up domestic and industrial refuse, they were exposed to the high risk of chemical, biological and physical dangers. Most of the children in the area had no birth certificates; they did not attend school and suffered respiratory infections and nose bleeds.⁶⁹¹

The Bulawayo Council did not have any well defined approach for dealing with squatters but regarded them as a threat to the well being of other residents. As such, the Council tried various ways of getting rid of them. In the late 1980s, the Council, in conjunction with the national government, destroyed their structures and moved them to Tsholotsho rural district, a relatively dry area with sandy soils mostly unsuitable for crop production but they returned to the city within three months of eviction.⁶⁹² In 1988, more than fifty raids were conducted at various localities in the city to remove illegal structures. Evictions were also undertaken at Ascot Race Course where a number of squatters had allocated themselves horse stables.⁶⁹³

In 1997 the Killarney squatters resisted council efforts to resettle them near Hyde Park arguing that the area had unsuitable land and was also “too small for the people who were accustomed to living on the sprawling seven square kilometre camp.”⁶⁹⁴ The Council resolved to forestall squatting in the city by monitoring open spaces and patrolling stream banks. In 1998, it resolved, in conjunction with the ZRP, to undertake a massive operation to “clean up” the city and its environs occupied by squatters and suggested that squatters be resettled and the rest be either sent back to their rural homes

⁶⁸⁹ Diana Patel “Housing the Urban Poor”, pp. 191-192.

⁶⁹⁰ Memo from the Director of Health Services to Town Clerk, “Displaced Persons in Bulawayo.”

⁶⁹¹ Inter-Country People’s Aid and Save the Children, Rapid Livelihood Security and Needs Assessment, Richmond Landfill Site-“Ingozi Mine” Report, pp. 3, 11-12.

⁶⁹² Memo from the Director of Health Services to Town Clerk, “Displaced Persons in Bulawayo.”

⁶⁹³ Annual Report of the Director of Housing Services, 1988, p. 3.

⁶⁹⁴ *Chronicle*, Tuesday, September 23, 1997, “Squatters Reject Council Land Offer.”

or repatriated to their countries of origin. The Council proposed to establish a resettlement area at Mazwi village outside the city where about fifty squatters could be resettled, but this never materialised.⁶⁹⁵

Squatters indicated willingness to be relocated provided they were notified well in advance so that they could make arrangements, not after the usual haphazard evictions and destruction of their property they usually experienced. They refused to be taken to Tsholotsho and St Peters, areas with very poor rainfall patterns but wanted a place with water, school, clinic and good soils for crop cultivation so that they would be able to live a normal life.⁶⁹⁶

In 1998, the Bulawayo Council demanded that the Golf Club provide accommodation to squatters living in the “unsightly” slum at the entrance of the Club because the “pull factor” for the squatters was their temporary engagements as ball boys by the club for which they provided a reasonable cheap labour force.⁶⁹⁷

Some members of the Bulawayo business community reacted strongly to the presence of squatters near their premises. In April 1999 for example, Procon Sales factory in Belmont Industrial area notified the Town Clerk of about ten to eleven unsightly shacks of plastics and bits of tin with about fifty squatters living in them and later sought permission to “obliterate these squatters from their sight.” when the Council had not made any plans to remove them.⁶⁹⁸ The director of the factory complained that:

Apart from being a serious health hazard and a security risk they are an absolute eyesore to our business visitors and ourselves. We are therefore requesting the municipality to allow us, at our expense, to erect a wall between our side of the canal and our access road so as to obliterate these squatters from sight.⁶⁹⁹

The Director of Housing and Community Services Isaiah Magagula highlighted that: “As the squatters will not have committed any crime, state police does not get involved in the

⁶⁹⁵ BMRL N6A/17 Squatters, Extract from Agenda of Finance and Development Committee-Report of the Displaced Persons Sub-Committee Meeting held on the 24th June, 1998.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁷ BMRL N6A/17 Squatters, Memo from the Town Clerk to the Secretary, Bulawayo Golf Club, “Re: Squatter Problem-Golf Course”, 19th November 1998.

⁶⁹⁸ BMRL N6A/17 Squatters, Letters from M. L. Beaumont, Director (Procon Sales Factory) to Town Clerk, Bulawayo, 20 April 1999 and 25 August 1999.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid.

exercise. My rangers will, as usual raid the Bristol Road South Squatter settlement.”⁷⁰⁰ In June 1999, council rangers continuously raided the squatter camps and destroyed their shacks but squatters returned soon afterwards as they had nowhere else to go and could not find any job.⁷⁰¹ Squatters indicated that they needed land for resettlement and job opportunities to sustain themselves, but Magagula argued that “regrettably council has no immediate solution to their needs. As usual, my rangers will continue raiding these squatters with some hope that some of them might leave for good.”⁷⁰² The Council indicated that the solution to the problem of squatters was to be found in their permanent removal or relocation but this required the involvement of the national government ministries of Local Government and that of Lands and Agriculture in resettling them in rural areas.⁷⁰³

In 2000, the Health, Housing and Education Committee from the Bulawayo Council recommended that the Richmond dumpsite be declared a “no-go-area” for squatters and called for increased patrols by the police and the municipal security guards to enforce this. The squatters, estimated to number 500, were also accused of indiscriminately cutting down trees, illegal hunting and criminal activities in the nearby residential areas. The Council committee also demanded that the national government resettle these people as the council had no financial resources to do so even if it wanted to.⁷⁰⁴

Residents in the neighbouring Emakhandeni Township also accused the dumpsite squatters of criminal activities. Kholwani Ncube argued that:

Those are not people. They behave like wild animals. They can devour you any minute they meet you along the road leading to the dumpsite at night. They are very dangerous people. Almost everyone in this township knows about the danger posed by those dumpsite vagabonds... I think most of them are normal people; they want to stay in the dumpsite so that they can use it as their base to hide in while conducting criminal activities in nearby townships like this one (Emakhandeni) and Cowdry Park....⁷⁰⁵

⁷⁰⁰ BMRL N6A/17 Squatters, Letter from the Director of Housing and Community Services to the Town Clerk; Illegal Squatters-Bristol Road South, 28th June 1999.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² BMRL N6A/17 Squatters, Letter from the Director of Housing and Community Services to the Town Clerk; Illegal Squatters-Bristol Road South, 9th September 1999.

⁷⁰³ BMRL N6A/17 Squatters, City of Bulawayo, Internal Memorandum from the Housing and community Services to the Chamber Secretary, 2nd November 2000. Re: Squatter Problems: Bristol Road South.

⁷⁰⁴ *Chronicle*, Wednesday, March 1, 2000, “Squatters to be Screened.”

⁷⁰⁵ Interview with Kholwani Ncube, Emakhandeni Beer Hall, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 3 January 2009.

A new class of “overnight squatters” composed of members of the low income working class who could not afford transport and lodging costs⁷⁰⁶ have been observed in Bulawayo since 2001 but the Council believed that such people only squatted to avoid paying rent and other bills in townships and therefore descended hard on them through raids.⁷⁰⁷

The Bulawayo Council once threatened a businessman who sunk a borehole for Killarney squatters and stated that for his sympathy on humanitarian grounds he should not take offence at being labelled “chief culprit” in promoting squatting in the area as it was thought that the presence of a clean water source would make squatters refuse to leave the area when ordered to do so.⁷⁰⁸

Sending the Killarney squatters who originated from Zambia and Mozambique to rural areas was not plausible as they did not have rural homes in Zimbabwe. The national government however, argued that if such people existed, it could easily create a rural space for them. Then Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa was to argue that:

...the Fifth Parliament, passed a law which basically facilitated people of Malawian, Mozambican and Zambian origin to gain citizenship in our country....those will be relocated to our rural areas. We have got farms which we can relocate them to, into A1 A2 where they can be accommodated, so we see no problem....Government will put into place the necessary mechanisms to ensure that these people are settled on land. They are our citizens, they are our responsibility and we will discharge that responsibility without any problem.⁷⁰⁹

This was questionable since the post colonial government even failed to resettle squatters of local origin like those who had camped in the Railway Avenue for years whom the Affirmative Action Group (AAG) labelled as “the poorest of the poor” in the city. The AAG questioned the motives of the national government’s fast track land redistribution begun in 2000 for its failure to accommodate such landless people,⁷¹⁰ while Wilbert

⁷⁰⁶ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, December 2001, p. 40.

⁷⁰⁷ Interview with Charlton Ngcebetsa Jnr.

⁷⁰⁸ BMRL N6A/17 Squatters, Internal Memorandum from the Director of Housing and Community Services to the Town Clerk: Encouraging squatters.

⁷⁰⁹ Patrick Chinamasa, Parliamentary debates, Hansard Vol. 32, No. 4, Parliament of Zimbabwe June 22, 2005 quoted in Sara Dorman, ‘Running from the Land’, p. 19.

⁷¹⁰ BMRL N6A/17 Squatters, Letter from the Affirmative Action Group President, S. Ncube-Matabeleland Chapter, Bulawayo, to the Acting Executive Mayor, Re: Railway Avenue Saga, 16 November, 2000.

Sadomba *et al* rightly argued that land redistribution was elitist, not intended to absorb the destitute.⁷¹¹

In 2003 and 2004, fearing the destruction of their shelter, many squatters in Bulawayo turned into vagrants by desisting from shack construction. They increasingly resorted to sleeping on pavements and rendered themselves untouchable by the Council's by-laws. The ZRP, mandated to deal with vagrants, was not forthcoming. The Council argued that its rangers resorted to "harmless" threats, rounding up the vagrants in the city and transporting them to Richmond Squatter camp. However, soon after such an eviction, the vagrants immediately returned to the CBD.⁷¹² Many mentally unstable vagrants were also removed from the city, but the same people had to be removed several times from the same areas as they always returned soon after their removal.⁷¹³ A killer blow for squatters came on 11 June 2005 during the dreaded massive state-sanctioned clean-up operation codenamed Operation Murambatsvina when the Richmond and Killarney squatter settlements were razed.⁷¹⁴

Because of the poverty conditions experienced by all groups of low income earners discussed above, Jeffrey Alwang *et al*'s argument that in 1990 "virtually no poverty existed in urban areas" was an incorrect assessment of the urban poverty scenario at least in Bulawayo. They contended that the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe began with the failure of the World Bank/International Monetary Fund sponsored Economic Structural Adjustment programme (ESAP) that was launched in December 1991.⁷¹⁵ While ESAP certainly had a negative impact on the majority of the population, this must not be allowed to overshadow that the ruling elite's declining commitment to the welfare of the poor in Zimbabwe predated the introduction of ESAP.⁷¹⁶

5.3 The Urban Poor and SAPs in Bulawayo.

⁷¹¹ Wilbert Z. Sadomba, K. Mujeyi and G. Siziba, "Nipped in the Bud: Zimbabwe's War Veterans-led Land and Industrial Movements, Class and State (1998-2008), *Unpublished Paper*, p. 10.

⁷¹² Annual Report of the Director of Housing, Amenities, Social and Community Services, December 2003, p. 34.

⁷¹³ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2004, p. 27.

⁷¹⁴ *Chronicle*, 13 June 2005, "Makokoba illegal structures removed", p. 1.

⁷¹⁵ Jeffrey Alwang, Bradford F. Mills and Nelson Taruvinga, *Why Has Poverty Increased in Zimbabwe*, (The World Bank: Washington DC, 2002), p. 15.

⁷¹⁶ Hevina S. Dashwood, *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transformation*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 200), p. 12.

The implementation of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) in the 1980s worsened the living standards of the urban poor who made up the majority of the population of nearly all sub-Saharan African towns and cities and led to falling per capita urban incomes, public sector retrenchments and deteriorating urban infrastructure.⁷¹⁷

SAPs aimed at reducing what became known as the “urban bias” through cutting out anything that smacked of state subsidisation, effectively making town life more difficult than in the countryside according to many criteria.⁷¹⁸ The “urban bias” idea was that the scale of the rural/urban income gap was too large, and that this was caused by inefficiencies in resource allocation, a labour aristocracy thesis that argued that the urban sector in sub-Saharan Africa was characterised by high wages and many privileges (for example, subsidised food and housing).⁷¹⁹ Western donors therefore sought to increase the burden of development for those who would be its beneficiaries. As Freund aptly argued, the crisis in urban planning regimes was not seen as a catastrophe, the poor “were doing it for themselves” and if they chose to live in urban areas, it must be because that was where the market forces decreed them to go, they did not need the state to assist them.⁷²⁰

Zimbabwe experienced full blown effects of SAPs in the 1990s when policies reduced the urban population’s living standards and caused significant suffering.⁷²¹ In Bulawayo, ESAP led to many retrenchments due to factory and other business closures and the Social Dimension Fund advanced as a social safety net was miserably inadequate to help the suffocating masses.⁷²² Some Bulawayo workers recalled the traumatic experience they suffered after being put on short working time during the ESAP era.

⁷¹⁷ Deborah Potts, “Shall we go Home: Increasing Urban Poverty in African Cities and Migration Processes”, *The Geographical Journal*, 161, 3, 1995, p. 245. The standard features of SAPs included a reduction in the budget deficit through a combination of cuts in public enterprise deficits and rationalisation of public sector employment; trade liberalisation, including price decontrol, and deregulation of trade, investment and production; phased removal of subsidies, devaluation of local currency and introduction of cost recovery in the health and education sectors. See Leon A. Bijlmakers, M. T. Basset and D. M. Saunders, *Health and Structural Adjustment in Rural and Urban Zimbabwe*, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1996), p. 11.

⁷¹⁸ Bill Freund, *The African City*, p. 156.

⁷¹⁹ Deborah Potts, “Shall we go home”, p. 247.

⁷²⁰ Bill Freund, *The African City*, p. 156.

⁷²¹ Deborah Potts, “Shall we go home”, p. 257.

⁷²² *Masiye Pambili*, May 1994, p. 19.

Moffat Bhandigwe, who worked for a blanket making factory only worked for two weeks a month and was put on two weeks unpaid leave every month. He highlighted that:

The most difficult thing was how to raise money for buying food for my children. Remember that was during a drought period and we had harvested nothing in my home area. My situation was probably better because I was employed in the mechanical department where I had to ensure that machines were always running. Other workers were retrenched. One of our branches closed down completely. I think the situation has always been getting worse since that period. Life has been difficult. Sometimes I don't even know how I went through some months alive because in most cases my pay would only cover rent and food for less than one week...⁷²³

Import liberalisation opened up the national economy by removing import duties leading to a flood of the domestic textile industry with second hand clothes. *Amasarawura* (second hand clothes) became a hit among low income earners during the 1990s. According to Susan Moyo, a vendor, the Mupedzanamo (one that extinguishes poverty) Market in Nkulumane Township was the main market for such clothing even though they were also found in all townships in the city.⁷²⁴ Although cheap enough to be afforded by many low income people, second hand clothes were a retrogressive face of trade liberalisation. This was worsened by increased smuggling of second hand clothes from Zambia and Mozambique.⁷²⁵

Bulawayo, which had been a citadel of the textile industry with five of the eight largest textile manufacturers in Zimbabwe based in the city, experienced the worst effects of the collapse of the textile industry because of massive retrenchments in the biggest textile and clothing factories. In 1995 for example, Merlin, which produced towels that were marketed in the entire Southern African regional market retrenched one thousand workers. Bulawayo Clothing Factory and National Blankets Limited laid off several hundreds of workers. Contextiles closed down altogether. In October 1996, the big G & D Shoes factory was placed under judicial management. Several other textile factories that included Merlin Textiles, Zeco and Security Mills were placed under provisional liquidation and some of these companies were de-listed on the stock exchange. An estimated 10,000 textile and clothing industry workers in Bulawayo lost their jobs due to

⁷²³ Interview with Moffat Bhandigwe, Lobengula Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Saturday 6 December 2008.

⁷²⁴ Interview with Susan Moyo, Old Rank Bus Terminus, Bulawayo, Saturday, 3rd January 2009.

⁷²⁵ Lloyd M. Sachikonye, *Restructuring or De-Industrializing?: Zimbabwe's Textile and Metal Industries under Adjustment*, Report Research 110, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1999), pp. 41-42.

business failure and retrenchment in the 1990s.⁷²⁶ The Central Statistical Office estimated that close to 20,000 jobs were lost in the city over a twelve year period between 1990 and 2002.⁷²⁷

Massive retrenchments and working overtime impoverished workers and reduced their bargaining power at shop floor level.⁷²⁸ This increased their vulnerability to abuse by employers. Because of the prevailing unemployment and low wages, the situation became similar to the 1960s scenario in Bulawayo industries when employers threatened workers by saying “I will sack you on the spot. There are many boys round the corner looking for work.”⁷²⁹ ESAP clearly added a new dimension to urban poverty in Bulawayo. It left the poor poorer. This led Preben Kaarsholm to argue in 1995 that Bulawayo townships continued to display old characteristics of poverty and deprivation, and crime persisted as an everyday problem and there was a noticeable persistent segregation between living conditions of the rich and the poor, proper citizens and tolerated citizens. Unemployment, homelessness and destitution continued to be problems, not least in the context of persistent drought and accelerated influx from rural areas.⁷³⁰

In 2000, former middle class professionals like teachers and nurses had firmly joined industrial workers and the unemployed as new classes of the urban poor.⁷³¹ After 2000, the Third *Chimurenga* policies churned out new classes of the urban poor in the form of displaced victims of electoral violence and land occupations among others. The electoral violence that erupted in some parts of Mashonaland provinces following the formation of the MDC in 1999 led to another wave of migration into cities including Bulawayo before and after the 2000 parliamentary elections. Such people had no accommodation and formal jobs. According to Charlton Ngcebetsa Jnr:

⁷²⁶ Mirjam Zaaijer, *Urban Economic Restructuring and Local Institutional Response: The Case of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe*, HIS Project Paper Series, (Rotterdam: Institute for Housing and Urban Development, 1998), p. 23.

⁷²⁷ The CSO, cited in Beacon Mbiba and Michael Ndubiwa, “Decent Work in Construction and the Role of Local Authorities”, p. 12. See also Hansen, Karen Tranberg, Salaula: *The World of Secondhand Clothing and Zambia*, (Chicago, Ill; London: University of Chicago Press, 2000) for the effects of second hand clothing on Zambia.

⁷²⁸ B. Mbiba and Ndubiwa, “Decent Work in Construction and the Role of Local Authorities”, p. 35.

⁷²⁹ *African Home News*, 21 July, 1962, “Municipal African Workers want 25 pounds a month.”

⁷³⁰ P. Kaarsholm, “Siye pambili-Which Way Forward”, pp. 241-242.

⁷³¹ Mary E. Ndlovu, “Mass Violence in Zimbabwe, 2005-Murambatsvina”, in *Development Dialogue*, no. 50, December 2008, p. 219.

That violence forced a number of people from those areas to come to Bulawayo which was relatively calm and peaceful...Most of those people have come to the council offices looking for accommodation and that is the reason why you hear lots of people speaking in Shona language when moving around the streets of Bulawayo.⁷³²

However, it is likely that some of the people mentioned by Ngcebetsa were former farm workers of non-Zimbabwean descent who had been driven off the land by violent farm seizures and drifted into urban centres as they had no rural homes to go.

I traced all these migration, political and economic trajectories to show how they contributed to the growth of new classes of the poor in Bulawayo since 1980. All these classes needed housing but there was a crisis. Before focusing on the housing crisis in Bulawayo, it is crucial to first analyse the impact of the major tenets of the post-colonial government's national housing policy.

5.4 National Housing Policy in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe.

When Zimbabwe became independent in 1980, the new ZANU-PF government inherited a society with serious economic and social inequalities and housing shortage in urban areas was not the least among them.⁷³³ The new government immediately issued a ministerial directive that a high percentage of local authorities' housing programme concentrate on building one or two roomed core houses to enable municipalities to build many houses and thus reduce the number of home seekers on the waiting list. This however, did not lead to any increased output. A severe reduction of capital funds, shortages of building materials and a decline in labour productivity all combined leading to a fall in the annual yield from 4,523 in 1980/81 to 3,869 in 1980/82 in Bulawayo. The reduced yield made the search for shelter even more difficult because the newly built one-to-two roomed core houses were too small even to afford temporary accommodation for lodgers' families. Home seekers in Bulawayo criticised local councillors for authorising the construction of such very small "match box houses" and also that their cost was equal to that of four roomed houses built only two years earlier.⁷³⁴

⁷³² Interview with Charlton Ngcebetsa Jnr.

⁷³³ See Colin Stoneman (ed), *Zimbabwe's Inheritance*, (London: College Press, 1981).

⁷³⁴ Annual Report of the Director Housing and Community Services, June 1982, p. 1.

While the pursuit of providing affordable housing (by reducing stands and sizes of rooms built) was noble, it had a tendency of reducing the quality of housing leading to beneficiaries refusing to pay for such housing thereby destroying the replicability of the housing projects. This was witnessed in Bulawayo in the 1990s where by the one roomed core houses costing about Z\$400 a month were dubbed unsuitable for human habitation by potential occupants who were backed by the high profile local and national politicians.⁷³⁵ A housing project in Bulawayo where each house cost Z\$50,000 had houses that were criticised by councillors as too small, of poor quality and too costly for the low income groups it was intended for and the Minister of Home Affairs even threatened to take a fleet of bulldozers to demolish the 200 houses.⁷³⁶

Therefore, what should be clear from the onset is that the biggest failure of the national government in supporting housing provision has been its inability to stimulate a supply of affordable and officially recognised serviced land to meet the housing needs of low income urbanites.⁷³⁷ Low income earners have been too poor to afford housing. Other efforts by the national government or local authority to get more land serviced for low income earners tended to exclude them by virtue of their failure to bear the required costs. In fact, the major characteristic of the public housing crisis from colonial to post colonial times in Zimbabwe has been the funding deficiencies.⁷³⁸

This has been coupled by the national government's refusal to address the overly high building standards in townships.⁷³⁹ At independence for example, the national government felt that the housing standards in townships were too low and were raised significantly from the pre 1980 200 square metres per house with one bedroom, semi detached terraced superstructure to 312.5 square metres per house with a two bed roomed, one room, one wet core superstructure. In 1992, the national government

⁷³⁵ Amin Kamete, "The Practice of Cost Recovery in Urban Low Income Housing: A Discourse with Experiences from Zimbabwe", *Habitat International* 24 (2000), p. 254. See also *The Herald*, 17 October 1996.

⁷³⁶ Ibid.

⁷³⁷ UN-Habitat, *Housing Finance Mechanisms in Zimbabwe*, p. 34. See also Carol Rakodi, *Harare Inheriting a Settler-Colonial City: Change or Continuity?* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1995).

⁷³⁸ K. H. Wekwete, cited in Amin Kamete, "Continuity with Change: A Review of Zimbabwe's Public Sector Urban Low Income Housing Production System" *Development Southern Africa*, Volume 15, 1, 1998, p. 20.

⁷³⁹ Deborah Potts, "'Restoring Order'? Operation Murambatsvina and the Urban Crisis in Zimbabwe", in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 32, No. 2, 2006, p. 290.

drastically reduced the standards to 150 square metres per house, with one room and a wet core superstructure.⁷⁴⁰ The national government was more pronounced for its rhetoric than sincere action in tackling the housing crisis.

In May 1982 the Minister of Local Government and Town Planning claimed that “in four months’ time ultra low housing and squatting will be forgotten issues.”⁷⁴¹ The Minister then proposed a new three year housing scheme to “allow poor people to buy houses and repay according to their means.”⁷⁴² He highlighted that in the past, rich people bought low cost houses, improved them and leased them to poor tenants. This practice, according to the Minister, was “unworkable in the new social order” just like the ultra low housing that was “out of time and out of place.”⁷⁴³ He argued that “If people live in ghettos they develop a ghetto mentality” and the government was prepared to avert such a crisis from happening by giving the urban poor soft loans to buy houses, ensuring that repayments were related to their incomes.⁷⁴⁴ The new government strongly opposed tied accommodation and vowed to eradicate it because “...it’s a case of classical slavery. What happens to a man when he terminates his services with a company...think of the social disruption that is caused (to children attending a local school)...”⁷⁴⁵ This was the strong populist rhetoric with which the new national government, which proclaimed itself to be a socialist republic following socialist policies when in fact it pursued capitalist economic policies, promised to tackle housing shortages.

The main aim of the national government’s housing policy to provide affordable housing for all failed as the majority of wage earners could not afford the cheapest structure on the market.⁷⁴⁶ While the national government emphasised that the priority target group for housing “must be the poorest in the economic and social scale and only secondarily for the more prosperous members of society”,⁷⁴⁷ many low income earners tended to be excluded from the housing programmes.

⁷⁴⁰ Amin Kamete, “Restrictive Control of Urban High-Density Housing in Zimbabwe: Deregulation, Challenges and Implication for Urban Design”, in *Housing, Theory and Society*, 1999, p. 145.

⁷⁴¹ *Chronicle*, 18 May 1982, “New Govt Plan to Replace Low Cost Housing.”

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁶ C. Mafico, *Urban Low Income Housing in Zimbabwe*, p. 101.

⁷⁴⁷ Zimbabwe, Press Statement, Ref 436/87/BC/MA, by the Minister of Co-operative Development, Maurice Nyagumbo, Causeway, Harare, July 31, 1987. The early years of post colonial government’s

The national government introduced a low-income housing policy known as the Aided Self Help Scheme under which construction of houses was done by prospective house owners with assistance from councils. The targeted applicants were called on to mobilise resources that included savings, building materials, tools, equipment, and transport and so on.⁷⁴⁸ However, the costs of building four roomed new aided self help units was only afforded by those earning above Z\$180 a month, not the majority of lower income applicants, hence the provision of cheaper accommodation remained an elusive goal.⁷⁴⁹ The scheme collapsed in the early 1990s due to the non-availability of funds from the lending institutions as most low income earners could not successfully mobilise all required resources.⁷⁵⁰ To speed up the provision of low cost housing, the national government established a National Housing Fund (NHF) in January 1982 through the amalgamation of two separate housing funds, the Local Government Areas Building Fund and the Provincial Building Fund.⁷⁵¹ The NHF was the country's premier public sector housing financing institution.⁷⁵²

The central government reduced the amounts of NHF loans it advanced to local authorities every year and sometimes provided nothing at all.⁷⁵³ It accused local authorities of sometimes not forwarding the money paid by the beneficiaries to the NHF but preferring to convert them to their own use. As a result, by 1996, the NHF was completely decapitalised. It can be argued that the failure of cost recovery of this fund by local authorities was due to the prevalence of poverty among the low income beneficiaries who then failed to pay back to the local authorities.⁷⁵⁴ The reduction of the NHF loans also appeared to be a deliberate national government move as it prioritised the

housing policy and performance were however characterised by serious managerial and financial deficits. Housing was under the portfolio of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing until 1982 when a separate Ministry of Housing was established. Minister Edison Zvogbo was replaced by Enos Chikowore prior to the splitting of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing in 1982. When the ministry was split, Chikowore was retained as the Minister of Local Government and Town Planning while Simbarashe Mumbengegwi was appointed Minister of Housing. Just before becoming firmly established, the Ministry of Housing was amalgamated with the Ministry of Construction to form the Ministry of Construction and National Housing in a cabinet reshuffle of 1984. See Diana Patel, "Housing the Urban Poor", p. 189.

⁷⁴⁸ Ministry of Housing, Circular no. 8, 1983, p. 1.

⁷⁴⁹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1984, p. 3.

⁷⁵⁰ Annual Report of the Director of Housing Services, 1992/3, p. 3.

⁷⁵¹ Zimbabwe, *The First Decade, 1980-1990*, (Harare: Roblaw Publishers), p. 27.

⁷⁵² Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing (MPCNH), cited in Amin Kamete, "Cost Recovery in Urban Low-Income Housing", p. 252.

⁷⁵³ Annual Report of the Director of Building and Amenities, 1997/8, p. 4.

⁷⁵⁴ Amin Kamete, "Cost Recovery in Urban Low-Income Housing", pp. 252 and 257.

integrated rural development in an attempt to engineer its desired reversal of rural-urban migration to reduce urbanisation pressure. The central government urged local authorities to use own resources and seek donor assistance to supplement little government effort only available in the form of NHF loans.⁷⁵⁵ The table below shows the decreasing central government NHF loans to Bulawayo City Council for the Aided Self Help House construction of shell houses since 1983/84.

Table 5.

Financial Year	Loan to Council (in Zimbabwean Dollars)
1983/84	\$2.3millions
1984/85	\$2.0m
1985/86	\$1.0m
1986/87	\$1.0m
1987/88	Nil
1988/89	Nil
1989/90	\$1.0m
1990/91	\$1.5m
1991/92	Nil

Source: BMRL N6A/24 (0) Building and Maintenance. M. B. Habgood, Director of Building and Amenities, City of Bulawayo, Building and Amenities Department, 2nd February 1993.

However despite such clear evidence that the NHF loans were decreasing, in 1993, Minister Chikowore accused local authorities of failing to utilise NHF loans. He argued that this “contributed significantly to the low delivery of housing” during the 1980s.⁷⁵⁶

The disbursement of the NHF was also characterised by over-bureaucratisation. For example, the NHF was allocated to the Ministry instead of local authorities directly, and the Minister disbursed the funds very late when compared to building schedules drawn up by local authorities.⁷⁵⁷ Such institutional constraints were not only confined to locally-sourced funds but also extended to the sourcing of external funds. For example, in 1983, the Minister of Local Government and Town Planning issued a circular stating that all negotiations and co-ordination for externally funded loans or grants was to be the responsibility of the Ministry of Housing in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance,

⁷⁵⁵ See Assembly Debates Vol. 7, no. 20, col. 935, July 28, 1983.

⁷⁵⁶ Government of Zimbabwe, Press Statement, Ref. 145/93/EB/BC “Chikowore Challenges Local Authorities” by the Minister of Public Construction and National Housing, Enos Chikowore, Harare, May 20, 1993.

⁷⁵⁷ Bulawayo Low Cost Housing, *An Overview Report*, February 1999, pp. 3 and 4.

Economic Planning and Development. No local authority was to enter into direct discussions with any agency other than by arrangement with the Ministry of Housing.⁷⁵⁸ The national government also decreed the creation of building brigades in cities.

5.5 The Birth of and Conflict between the Council and National Building Brigades

To reduce the ever escalating building costs, the national government came up with a politically-motivated answer of substituting “profit-minded” “capitalistic contractors” employed by local authorities with newly formed “building brigades” that were expected to work for no more than subsistence wages and so were expected to be cheaper. They were composed former casual workers in the building industry and formerly unrecognised semi-skilled informal building industry workers employed as municipal workers.⁷⁵⁹ All local authorities were ordered to form the brigades in consultation with the Ministry of Construction and National Housing. The brigades were divided into three groups. The first group was tasked with the production of building materials at low cost, the second group was concerned with the actual construction of the new housing units and the third one was mainly concerned with the renovation and upgrading of existing structures.⁷⁶⁰

Large “capitalistic” building contractors were phased out in Bulawayo in 1982/83 following the national government’s directive but no operational mechanisms were put in place for them, making it difficult for them to begin their work. In Bulawayo, most of the 1982/83 financial year was spent determining with the new Ministry of Housing the criteria for brigade houses concerning the size, number of rooms, calculation of costs and the structure and composition of a building brigade, instead of doing the actual building.⁷⁶¹ The switch from mass house building by large contractors to building brigades therefore contributed to a drop in the number of houses completed from 3,709 in 1982/83 to 452 during the 1983/84 financial year.⁷⁶²

⁷⁵⁸ Ministry of Local Government and Town Planning Circular no. 49, 1983, p. 4.

⁷⁵⁹ H. Ashton, “Housing Policy and Practice 1894-1994” in M. Hamilton and M. Ndubiwa (eds) *Bulawayo: A Century of Development 1894-1994*, (Harare: Argosy Press, 1994)”, p. 63. Also see C. Mafico, *Urban Low Income Housing in Zimbabwe*, p. 72.

⁷⁶⁰ C. Mafico, *Urban Low Income Housing in Zimbabwe*, p. 72.

⁷⁶¹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1983, p. 1.

⁷⁶² Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1984, p. 3.

The engagement of brigades therefore compromised productivity and efficiency in Bulawayo resulting in a decline in the quality and quantity of housing units and costs were therefore not reduced as intended. In 1987, four years after their establishment, the brigades had completed a total of 2,000 housing units in the whole of Bulawayo.⁷⁶³ For the ten years beginning from 1989/90 to 1997/8 the brigades managed to build only 7,905 shell units, a number that the phased out “capitalistic” contractors sometimes surpassed in two financial years during the colonial period.⁷⁶⁴

Since 1982, a permanent unpleasant feature in the history of the Bulawayo Council building brigades was the theft of cisterns from completed houses. Thefts occurred before houses were handed over to the beneficiaries. In 1992 cisterns were stolen from completed houses in Nkulumane 11 and 12 townships. At one point forty cisterns went missing. The Council failed to trace the cisterns and no culprit was caught for a period spanning nearly ten years.⁷⁶⁵ The table below shows the number of housing units that were built by the Housing Brigades in Bulawayo since 1984.

Table 6.

Financial Year	Units Completed
1984/85	977
1985/86	1,077
1986/87	857
1987/88	826
1988/89	869
1989/90	741
1990/91	428
1991/92	329

Source: BMRL N6A/24 (0) Building and Maintenance, M. B. Habgood, Director of Building and Amenities, City of Bulawayo, Building and Amenities Department, 2nd February 1993.

The construction of complete houses by Council brigades was stopped in 1985/1986. The Council then diverted finance from its Housing Revolving Fund into the Aided Self Help Programme in order to continue building cheaper “shell” housing, leading to the

⁷⁶³ Annual Report of the Director of Housing Services, 1986/7, p. 9. In December 1999, residents in Pumula South complained that the workmanship on houses built by housing brigades was poor and certain basic facilities were yet to be put in place, see BMRL N6A/24 (0) Building and Maintenance- Extract from Minutes of the EM and E5- 4/1/2000.

⁷⁶⁴ Bulawayo Low Cost Housing, *An Overview Report*, February 1999, pp. 3 and 4.

⁷⁶⁵ *Chronicle*, 17 September 1992, “Council brigades hit by theft of cisterns.”

prolonged existence of the Bulawayo Council housing brigade. In other urban areas brigades had a short lifespan because of financial difficulties and competition from national government brigades.

The Ministry of National Housing also formed its own national building brigades in July 1992 that were imposed on councils despite the presence of council brigades and the state began to double as a provider and a facilitator.⁷⁶⁶ Motives for this were not clear. Minister Chikowore highlighted that his ministry used national brigades to intervene where a local authority had failed to make meaningful progress to house its people and vowed that such intervention was bound to continue when and wherever necessary but argued that such intervention was not intended to substitute the local authority's housing development mandate.⁷⁶⁷ It was likely that the national government thought that its brigades could be more cost effective as in 1991 it argued that the Council building brigades had not been as cost effective as initially thought.⁷⁶⁸ This however, smacked of the central government's penchant for finding fault with local government operations so as to justify intervention⁷⁶⁹ which only caused more confusion and friction with local authorities.

In 1993, the continued employment of the Bulawayo Council brigades was no longer making any economic sense because of increasing competition from the national brigades and dwindling NHF loans. When brigades were formed in 1982, they were supposed to work continually daily, completing around 880 units per year. In their first six years of existence from 1984 to 1987, they met their basic requirements. From 1990 onwards, the financial situation deteriorated. The Building and Amenities department thus laid off of approximately 100 permanent bricklayers of the Council brigade in

⁷⁶⁶ Amin Kamete, "A Review of Zimbabwe's Public Sector Urban Low Income Housing Production System", pp. 17 and 18.

⁷⁶⁷ Government of Zimbabwe, Press Statement, Ref. 145/93/EB/BC, by the Minister of Public Construction and National Housing, Enos Chikowore, Harare, May 20, 1993.

⁷⁶⁸ Amin Kamete, "A Review of Zimbabwe's Public Sector Urban Low Income Housing Production System", p. 21.

⁷⁶⁹ D. Pasteur and M. Ndlovu, "Good Local Government in Zimbabwe: A Case Study of Bulawayo, 1980-1991", *Unpublished Paper*, Birmingham, April 1992), p.72.

1993⁷⁷⁰ and this was the first retrenchment of permanent staff done since the council brigade was formed.⁷⁷¹

In 1994, the Mayor of Bulawayo Councillor Joshua Malinga complained that the direct involvement of the national brigades in the building of houses was threatening the existence of the council's brigades.⁷⁷² In 1997, the Executive Mayor of Bulawayo Abel Siwela also accused the national government of failing to support the Council's brigades which only built 128 shell houses in Nkulumane 12 in 1996 due to financial problems and complained that:

This is way below our capacity. When building brigades were imposed on councils we were assured of financial support in the form of loans to make the programmes work. Over time we perfected our brigades, but the Ministry of Public Construction for some reason created its own building units (brigades) to compete with ours. Funds that would have gone to council were now diverted to Government building units.⁷⁷³

Siwela urged then Minister of Local Government and National Housing John Nkomo to "correct this anomaly",⁷⁷⁴ but there was very little the national government could do as the NHF had collapsed in 1996.

The involvement of the national building brigades also meant that contrary to the self-help approach, the Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing began participating in actual house construction. The Bulawayo Council complained that the ministry allocated itself most of funds from the NHF and became involved in conventional housing construction instead of assisting the self help process. The Council's major contention was that it could produce more units cheaper than the ministry as it had the capacity to construct.⁷⁷⁵ The losers were neither the national government nor the local authority but prospective low income beneficiaries.

⁷⁷⁰ BMRL N6A/24 (0) Building and Maintenance, City of Bulawayo, Building and Amenities Department, from M. B. Habgood, Director of Building and Amenities, 2nd February 1993.

⁷⁷¹ BMRL N6A/24 (0) Building and Maintenance- Extract from Minutes of Engineering Services Committee, March 1993.

⁷⁷² *Chronicle*, 9 September, 1994, "Council Building Brigades lose out to Ministry."

⁷⁷³ *Chronicle*, Friday, October 3, 1997. "Mayor wants more support for brigades."

⁷⁷⁴ *Ibid*.

⁷⁷⁵ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services Dept, 1994/95, p. 1.

One central feature of the post colonial housing policy has been the national government's call to municipalities in 1980 to convert rental housing to home ownership for low income housing in urban areas.

5.6 Conversion from Rental Housing to Home Ownership Status

In 1980, Minister Zvogbo decreed that all African urban leaseholds should become freeholds. This achieved the main aim of the urban nationalist struggle of having home ownership status. As a result, even in the oldest township, Makokoba, the poor elderly people became property owners, many became landlords and there was a market in township houses.⁷⁷⁶ National government policy was that municipalities should retain only 10 percent of their rental housing. This addressed low income earners' feeling of insecurity for not owning their homes. Rental housing units built earlier were converted to home ownership with tenants given a percentage discount for each of the number of years they rented the property. This led to a high number of rented housing units built during colonial times to be purchased outright by sitting tenants and many obtained complete or sectional title to their properties.⁷⁷⁷ Apart from this, together with the introduction of building brigades, abolition of racism and the widening of target groups beyond the informal sector, there were no radical housing policy and strategic shifts.⁷⁷⁸

In 1974 Bulawayo listed 15,836 houses as being on rental basis and 10,613 as being on home ownership schemes. All in all, the total low cost income housing numbered nearly 18,000 housing units by 1974. At independence, low income rental housing units in Bulawayo peaked at 30,208. In 1995 there were 34,500 home ownership units and 26,464 rental units in Bulawayo. In 2000, home ownership units had increased to 83,403 and rental units reduced to 5,162.⁷⁷⁹ This showed a significant decline of rental units. The conversion from rental home ownership scheme was approved by the

⁷⁷⁶ Terence Ranger, "Myth and Legend in Urban Oral Memory: Bulawayo, 1930-60" in *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 44: 1, p. 78.

⁷⁷⁷ Isaiah M. Magagula, "Low-Income Rental Housing in Bulawayo", Urbanisation and Housing Challenges: Cities in the SADC Region' Conference, Gauteng, South Africa, 6-8 October, 2003. See also Government of Zimbabwe, Ministry of Local Government and National Housing; National Housing Policy for Zimbabwe 2000, p. 6 (7).

⁷⁷⁸ Amin Kamete, "A Review of Zimbabwe's Public Sector Urban Low Income Housing", p. 25.

⁷⁷⁹ I. M. Magagula, "Low-Income Rental Housing in Bulawayo", p. 6.

Bulawayo Council in April 1983 and commenced in the latter half of that year.⁷⁸⁰ The Council noted that the conversion exercise was poised to contribute Z\$690,000 to the overall deficit in the Housing Account for the years 1983/84 and 1984/85.⁷⁸¹

Advantages of converting rental housing to home ownership schemes included first and foremost, beneficiaries' ability to obtain secure tenure (freehold title). The title they obtained could be used as collateral for borrowing money to extend their properties and to venture into other business. The beneficiaries were provided with an opportunity to take advantage of their destiny and have a sense of responsibility and ownership and belonging to the city.⁷⁸²

The Bulawayo Council however, expressed dissatisfaction with the conversion exercise. The Director of Housing and Community Services Isaiah Magagula argued that in the long-term the policy had serious repercussions for the continuation of the production of low income rental housing in the city as it was difficult to replicate a scheme where rentals only went towards maintenance as opposed to loan repayment or building a revolving fund. This was based on the belief that for housing projects to be replicable and sustainable housing finance processes should constitute a cycle where the process of mobilisation, disbursement and recovery of funds are continuously taking place.⁷⁸³ The only hope for accommodation for most low income earners in the city became the Council's rented properties in the older townships.⁷⁸⁴ This was reiterated by Ngcebetsa who pointed out that:

It's a policy that was not based on facts on the ground. The truth is that there are ultra low income people in urban areas, very poor that they will never be able to own a house for a number of decades to come. Those people needed cheaper rented accommodation from the Council. With available rented Council housing dwindling so fast, it meant that the homeless low income earners' chances of getting rented accommodation was systematically reduced and those are some of people found on the streets or other squatter areas around the city. The Bulawayo Council still needs a very big rented township to accommodate many low income earners who will never afford to own a house for decades to come. It will never be possible to have a city like Bulawayo full of residents who are all home owners.⁷⁸⁵

⁷⁸⁰ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1985, p. 5.

⁷⁸¹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1984, p. 4.

⁷⁸² Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 1991, p. 5.

⁷⁸³ A. Kamete, "The Practice of Cost Recovery in Urban Low-Income Housing", p. 242.

⁷⁸⁴ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June 1989, p. 3.

⁷⁸⁵ Ibid. The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee established to assess the progress of Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle Reconstruction Programme in Zimbabwe's major urban areas in 2005 also echoed the same sentiments and

Conversion to homeownership schemes also reduced income to the Council as the one-off sales and discounts emphatically reduced income in a macro-economic environment suffering from inflationary tendencies. At the end, the Council was left with no choice but to increase rates in the face of a reduced revenue base. Staff was laid off, fuelling unemployment. Repayments for housing suffered as a consequence. As more low income earners defaulted on paying for services, council service to beneficiaries suffered leading to poor and shoddy work by council at the end of the day.⁷⁸⁶

Unscrupulous low income earners also made life very difficult for other desperate low income earners who wanted rented accommodation. According to Charlton Ngcebetsa Jnr, most of these low income earners:

have always been knocking at Council offices everyday demanding home ownership status for their houses in Makokoba and Mabutweni Townships and other rented housing. Just two or three months after the house is registered in their name they sell it to middle and high income people and relocate to rural areas or become lodgers again. What they only want after getting tenure-(homeownership) status is to raise money by selling the house. This process contributed to dwindling numbers of Council houses available for rental basis.⁷⁸⁷

The government's resolve to tax local authorities' beer profits, which were used for funding township projects, exacerbated the funding crisis.

5.7 The Council/Central Government Struggle over Beer Profits.

The central/local government struggle over the funding of low income housing spilt over into the post-colonial period and intensified. It signified the precarious financial position of both authorities and prospective beneficiaries for such funds were the eventual losers. In 1980/81, the Bulawayo Council's profit from liquor sales went down to Z\$2,8 million from Z\$3,3million of the previous year as the government's high taxation of its beer profits led it to get Z\$4,7million as excise duty and sales tax, almost double the money

recommended that the government build adequate rented accommodation for low income earners because of the realisation that many of the urban poor will never afford to be homeowners, see Parliament of Zimbabwe, "Second Report of the Portfolio Committee on Local Government" on Progress made on the Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle Programme, First Session, Sixth Parliament, Presented to parliament, June 2006, p. 14, See http://www.kubatana.net/docs/legisl/ppc_locgov_garikai_060606.pdf

⁷⁸⁶ I. M. Magagula, "Low Income Rental Housing in Bulawayo."

⁷⁸⁷ Interview with Charlton Ngcebetsa Jnr.

the council retained as net profit.⁷⁸⁸ The council complained that the “large slice of the cake” was being taken by the national government and argued that while it accepted the role of generating income to fundraise for its community services as recommended by the central government, it was “extraordinarily difficult to establish the kind of large scale income generating projects...from an ecologically marginal area such as Bulawayo and its surrounding country side.”⁷⁸⁹ In that respect however, the Council grew large quantities of *rapoko* and other grains like sorghum and millet for use by the brewery. The 1945 statement by Councillor Donald Macintyre that the Council was going to build more houses “when the natives drink more beer”⁷⁹⁰ continued to haunt the post colonial Bulawayo Council more so now because the Council began to grow large quantities of grains for beer brewing. The Council defended this act by arguing that it would be impossible to provide essential services in townships without funds from beer sales.⁷⁹¹

Taxation on the manufacture and sale of traditional beer was introduced in 1970 when the national government imposed an excise duty of one cent a litre on all beer sold by the municipality. In 1980 the new government increased the excise duty to 2 cents a litre and in February 1981, the duty was increased to 7 cents a litre, increasing to 8.75cents a litre in February 1983. In February 1984, it was increased to 14.75cents a litre, rising to 15.5c a litre in August 1985.⁷⁹² The colonial government never increased the excise duty from one cent a litre for the ten years since 1970 but the post colonial government increased it five times in its first five years in office, thus seriously raiding the “golden egg”⁷⁹³ and this strained relations with the local authorities.

It became clear just a few years after independence that the national government had no capacity to provide low income housing on a national scale. The government then took a back seat and gave itself a limited role in the provision of low income housing. It never seriously analysed and modified the colonial policy whereby there was no direct

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June 1985, p. 2.

⁷⁹⁰ Terence Ranger, “City Versus State in Zimbabwe: Colonial Antecedents of the Current Crisis” in *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Volume 1, Number 2, 2007, p. 177.

⁷⁹¹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1984, p. 2.

⁷⁹² The Matabeleland Chamber of Industries, *100 Years of Industry in Bulawayo*, (Bulawayo: Bulawayo City Council, 1994), p. 71.

⁷⁹³ Phrase adopted from Michael O. West, “Liquor and Libido: “Joint Drinking” and the Politics of Sexual Control in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1920s-1950s” in *Journal of Social History*, Volume 30, No. 3 (Spring 1997), p. 654.

involvement of central government in the provision of housing other than through providing a legal framework within which other stakeholders could provide housing. It just confined itself to exhorting other parties, local authorities and employers in the private sector to devise schemes for the provision of houses to their workers. The national government thus confined itself to the role of campaigner for, instead of being provider of, housing.⁷⁹⁴ This was clearly demonstrated in 1988 on World Habitat Day when the Ministry of Public Construction and National Housing launched “The Minister’s Urban Housing Merit Award” and “The Turnall Rural Housing Merit Award” to encourage better housing development and management both in urban and rural areas respectively. The recipients of “The Minister’s Urban Housing Merit Award” were to be urban councils, that is, municipalities, town councils and local boards established in term of the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 214). The award was a floating trophy and a cash prize equivalent to the current cost of just one standard low cost house. The first award in 1989 went to Bulawayo because it had “successfully implemented the three modes of house construction, that is, aided self help, building brigades and co-operatives” and Bulawayo was also commended for coming up with the “shell house” concept.⁷⁹⁵ The award was very inadequate to act as a serious incentive to push city councils to devise own low cost housing strategies. The national government soon solicited private sector involvement.

5.8 Limitations of Private Sector Initiatives in the Provision of Low Income Housing.

Private sector financiers need to recover the money they invest on housing development if they are to survive and continue operating. Most of them are custodians of investors’ and shareholders’ funds and as such they have an obligation to recover all the funds owed by house builders and buyers since they are in business to make profit. In Zimbabwe, with a history of very low rates of cost recovery processes among low income earners because of the prevalence of poverty, it basically meant that private financiers regarded financing low income housing as a risky and cumbersome business. This was in addition to its

⁷⁹⁴ *The Sunday Mail*, 9 December 1990, “Government must show the way on ending housing blues.”

⁷⁹⁵ Government of Zimbabwe, Press Statement, Ref 187/89/BC/SD, “Government Doing its best in alleviating Shortage of materials-Msika” by the Minister of Public Construction and National Housing, Joseph Msika, Causeway, Harare, June 16, 1989.

being a low yield one and therefore tended to exclude low income earners preferring dealing with middle and high income earners because of their economically necessary but blind obsession and infatuation with the cost recovery approach.⁷⁹⁶

Despite this and in contrast to the national government's populist rhetoric that equated tied accommodation to classical slavery, employers were soon called upon to assist their workers through the Employer Assisted Low Cost Housing Scheme. This led to companies like the Cold Storage Company, National Foods, and Merlin among others coming in to assist workers but the scheme's success also hinged on the availability of funds from lending institutions.⁷⁹⁷

In 1985 the World Bank financed two urban housing projects in Bulawayo and it enlisted the financial support of building societies. Intended beneficiaries were applicants who earned less than Z\$400 a month, with 70 percent of them earning less than Z\$200. The scheme involved seven different agencies and it dragged on for seven years but eventually reached its target of building 2,444 houses.⁷⁹⁸ In 1986, the national government permitted building societies to offer the public a nine percent tax-free investment, provided 25 percent of the funds derived were used for the low-income housing loans. Building societies also reduced interest rates from 12½ percent to 11½ for first time borrowers in townships for bonds up to Z\$12 000.⁷⁹⁹

In 1990/91 building societies assisted in low income housing schemes by providing housing mortgage finance to those earning between Z\$300 to Z\$750 monthly. Under this scheme, the national government gave full loan guarantees to the societies for the loans advanced.⁸⁰⁰ In 1993, the role of building societies as well as their involvement in low income housing schemes was greatly curtailed by the liquidity problems faced by the country during the ESAP era. The problem was worsened by the setting up of minimum building loans, below which building societies would not provide finance. This effectively excluded about 70 percent of low income applicants on the housing waiting

⁷⁹⁶ A. Kamete, "Cost Recovery in Urban Low-Income Housing", pp. 242-243, 256-258 and 247.

⁷⁹⁷ Annual Report of the Director of Building and Amenities, 1980/1, p. 3. Also see C. Mafico, *Urban Low Income Housing in Zimbabwe*, pp. 102-103.

⁷⁹⁸ H. Ashton, "Housing Policy and Practice", p. 63.

⁷⁹⁹ Annual Report of the Director of Building and Amenities, 1986/7, p. 2.

⁸⁰⁰ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June 1991, p. 4.

list in Bulawayo. Sky rocketing costs of building materials reduced low income housing output even further.⁸⁰¹

Four building societies in Bulawayo, namely, Central African Building Society, Beverly, Founders and the Zimbabwe Building Society banded together in 1994 and formed a Management Team to co-ordinate a United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded low-cost housing project. The project was allocated five thousand un-serviced stands for the construction of one and two roomed housing units. However, many low-income earners could not afford to raise the required deposits. Banks could not offer them mortgage facilities and local authorities did not have funds to build cheaper accommodation for them.⁸⁰²

Those earning between Z\$400 and Z\$750 in 1995 and had benefited from a World Bank funded scheme were seriously defaulting in mortgage repayments resulting in the government intervening through the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Sales in Execution to save them from having their houses repossessed which only slowed down the process of capital recovery and limited the societies' ability to on-lend for the purposes of financing housing for low-income earners.⁸⁰³

The role of the building societies in the provision of low income housing was therefore a limited one in the city. Middle and high income earners benefited more as they qualified for loan schemes. Housing demand in Bulawayo has always been measured by the figures in the Council's waiting list, but this method has limitations.

5.9 Limitations of the Housing Waiting List Figures and the Severity of the Housing Crisis in Bulawayo since 1980.

The housing waiting list comprised registered and paid up applicants only. It did not include all aspiring home seekers like those who preferred to buy houses from the open market and low income lodgers and squatters who could not afford to raise funds to purchase a stand, purchase or build a house. In June 1980, 10,715 applicants were on the

⁸⁰¹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1993, p. 3.

⁸⁰² Annual Report of the Director of Housing Services, 1994/5, p. 3.

⁸⁰³ Ibid, p. 4. See also Amin Kamete, "Cost Recovery in Urban Low Income Housing", p. 245-246 on the problem of interference by politicians on cost recovery measures.

Council's housing waiting list. By June 1983 the number had risen to 14,000,⁸⁰⁴ increasing to 23,000 in 1992. These figures were however, believed to be very conservative when one considered that from the 1980s up to 1992 the waiting list was increasing at a rate of one thousand applicants per month. According to the housing department, it was only after the introduction of Z\$60 annual registry fee that the number of applicants dropped drastically from 38,000 in 1991 to 23,000 in 1992.⁸⁰⁵ Nearly 79 percent of the applicants on the waiting list were marginal low-income earners who could not afford to pay the annual registry fee. Therefore, the drop on the waiting list did not suggest that dropouts had been housed. To the contrary, such dropouts were still searching for accommodation but were reluctant or unable to pay the registry fee without any hope of ever getting a house.⁸⁰⁶

In 2002, the Council estimated that the real demand for accommodation from all classes of people in Bulawayo exceeded 100,000 heads of households with the greatest need for accommodation concentrated on the lower income and ultra-low income groups.⁸⁰⁷ The following table shows the applicants on the Bulawayo waiting list from 1988 to 1998.

Table 7.

Year	Waiting List Figures
1988	23 215
1989	26 890
1990	32 326
1991	41 507
1992	40 606
*1993	26 275
1994	24 187
1995	25 376
1996	24 826
1997	23 568
1998	26 455

Source: Bulawayo Low Cost Housing: *An Overview Report*, February 1999.

*The significant drop in the number of applicants on the waiting list was due to the introduction of the registry fees in 1992.

⁸⁰⁴ Annual Report of the Director of Building and Amenities, 1980/1, p. 1.

⁸⁰⁵ Annual Report of the Director of Housing Services, 1990/1, p. 3.

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 4.

⁸⁰⁷ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2002, p.18.

In 2003, the state controlled *Herald* blamed the housing crisis on the neglect by local authorities which had been under the control of the opposition MDC since 2000.⁸⁰⁸ The following table shows the applicants on the Bulawayo Council housing waiting list from 2000 to 2005.

Table 8.

Year	Waiting List Figures
2000	--
2001	34 000
2002	45 000
2003	55 000
2004	65 000
2005	72 754

Source: Figures were obtained from the Annual Reports of the Director of Housing and Community Services, for the 2002, page 17, 2004 page 16 and 2005, page 17.

Therefore, while waiting list figures provide a general guide on the housing shortage, quantifying the housing problem by reference to the waiting list can be problematic because the waiting list can be both an understatement by exclusion and an overstatement by equating the lack of ownership to mean the need to own a house. It does not cater for ultra low income residents who could not afford ownership but only want cheaper rented housing.⁸⁰⁹

In Bulawayo, the greatest need for accommodation was confined to the low income group least able to make any realistic contribution to the cost of housing. The Council urged the national government to consider it socially unacceptable for development to depend on the whims and pockets of the drinking section of the community, the profits of which faced extinction due to high taxation.⁸¹⁰ The severity of the housing crisis was reflected in very high urban density rates, extensive municipal housing waiting lists and inflated prices for the cheapest new low income housing under construction. Housing vulnerability worsened and included inadequate shelter, insecurity of tenure and exploitation by landlords, spending in excess of thirty percent of income on shelter, susceptibility to evictions due to service or house payment arrears among other

⁸⁰⁸ *The Herald*, Wednesday 19 February 2003, "Housing Waiting List Swelling."

⁸⁰⁹ Sithembile L. Nyoni, "Policy Silences and Invisible Women", p. 27.

⁸¹⁰ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1986, p. 1.

factors which affected access to secure, healthy shelter.⁸¹¹ A survey of building projects in Bulawayo reveals a high number of low income earners who never qualified for housing schemes in the city.

In 1986, building materials and labour costs continued to rise so fast that the expression “low cost housing” lost its meaning completely for any acceptable standard of home design. According to the Director of Building and Amenities department M. B. Habgood, efforts became concentrated on “the provision of shelter” as it became accepted that “housing” was no longer a feasible option for the very poor.⁸¹² In June 1986, 17,516 house seekers were registered on the Council’s waiting list but the completed aided self help houses were only allocated to applicants earning between Z\$180 to Z\$299 per month, thus excluding nearly half of all applicants. This was at a time when there was still an influx of people from rural areas where the security situation was still unpredictable.⁸¹³ The table below shows low income earners not catered for by any housing scheme in Bulawayo between 1987 and 1989.

Table 9.

Year Ending June	No. of Applicants	Percentage of Applicants excluded from any housing scheme	Monthly Wages of excluded Applicants in \$Z
1987	18,925	48,03%	\$89,99-149,99
1988	21,966	49,53%	Below \$179,99
1989	24,255	44%	Below \$170

Source: Bulawayo, Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1987, p. 3, June 1988, p. 3, June 1989, p. 3 respectively.

In June 1987, the Council’s housing schemes that included the Nkulumane Council Building Brigade scheme, the World Bank scheme in Nketa and the private developers’ scheme at Tshabalala Extension all excluded low income earners who were left to depend on barely available accommodation arising from evictions on the shrinking rented housing in the older townships.⁸¹⁴ In June 1988, the Council’s World Bank funded low

⁸¹¹ M. Grant, “Social and Economic identities of Urban Youth”, p. 417.

⁸¹² M. B. Habgood, cited in H. Ashton, “Housing Policy and Practice”, pp. 61-62.

⁸¹³ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1986, p. 3.

⁸¹⁴ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1987, p. 3.

income housing scheme at Nkulumane where its building brigades were involved only catered for those earning between Z\$450 and Z\$750 per month. It was operated through Building Societies who never accepted any application from a self employed person, especially informal traders, and those earning less than Z\$200 a month.⁸¹⁵

In June 1989, the excluded 44 percent of the applicants did not qualify for anything else other than the Urban Development Project where due to their meagre wages they were forced not to participate. Twenty three percent of the applicants earned between Z\$180-\$300 and could be covered by the Council as they qualified for “shell” housing scheme in Nkulumane. Still, Building Societies did not accept the self employed and the amount of a loan given to those earning less than Z\$300 a month was so small that beneficiaries could hardly build a house of two rooms yet their monthly repayments were very high.⁸¹⁶ The problem of housing affordability worsened in the 1990s when the national government and local authorities, the principal providers to low income groups, started giving loans on a full cost recovery basis in line with structural adjustment public sector reforms.⁸¹⁷ Besides the poverty of many residents, high housing costs also significantly contributed to the problem of affordability.⁸¹⁸ With the advent of economic reforms, states were being urged to reduce spending on social infrastructure and on housing; they were being urged to change from being providers to become enablers or facilitators even though Zimbabwe always wanted to meddle in low income housing projects.⁸¹⁹ The table below shows low income earners not catered for by any housing scheme in Bulawayo between 1991 and 1994.

Table 10.

Year Ending June	Total Number of Applicants	Number of Applicants excluded from any housing scheme	Income Category of Excluded Applicants
1991	38,900	28%	Below Z\$180
1992	-	-	-
1993	32,524	78%	Below Z\$750
1994	24,110	81,3%	-

⁸¹⁵ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1988, p. 3.

⁸¹⁶ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1989, p. 3.

⁸¹⁷ UN-Habitat, *Housing Finance Mechanisms in Zimbabwe*, p. 32.

⁸¹⁸ Carole Rakodi, cited in A. Kamete, “Cost Recovery in Urban Low Income Housing”, p. 250.

⁸¹⁹ Amin Kamete, “A Review of Zimbabwe’s Public Sector Urban Low Income Housing Production System”, p. 14.

Source: Bulawayo, Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June 1991, pp. 2 and 3, 1993, pp. 1-2 and June 1994, pp. 3-4.

In June 1991, the cost of the standard set in site-and-service areas was quite high and the lowest scheme provided was the 4-roomed shell for residents with incomes ranging from Z\$180 to Z\$300.⁸²⁰ Low income earners increasingly failed to repay their housing loans and cited inflation and ESAP as some factors behind defaulting. As a result of defaulting in loan repayments, twenty three houses in the Nketa area were attached and sold by public auction in 1990/91.⁸²¹

In 1992, the Bulawayo Council had shifted from its 1970s role of being the sole developer and house builder to a position where virtually the whole responsibility for building the superstructure was with the householder or the private developer. It was also clear that the Council was not serving the lowest income group.⁸²² In June 1993, low income earners could not even afford to buy a “shell” house and no housing scheme catered for them. The national government’s dream of “housing for all by the year 2000” was therefore a mockery⁸²³ as the Council was only able to build 314 “shell” houses against a waiting list of 32,524 applicants. The tight monetary policies and high interest rates and a weak national housing policy were blamed for the housing crisis.⁸²⁴

In 1994, low income earners did not qualify for any low income housing scheme in the city. They could not raise required deposits and could not afford laid down repayments. Banks could not offer them mortgage facilities and the city council had no funds to build accommodation for them and the central government was not forthcoming with low interest rate loans for the construction of superstructures.⁸²⁵ The sad truth was that housing momentum was faltering at the very time that it should have at least remained constant if not accelerated.⁸²⁶ The following table shows disparities between the applicants on the waiting list and the number of houses built per annum from 1988 to 1998.

⁸²⁰ David Pasteur, *Good Local Government in Zimbabwe, A Case Study of Bulawayo and Mutare City Councils, 1980-1989*, (DAG: The University of Birmingham, 1992), p. 99.

⁸²¹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June 1991, pp. 2-3.

⁸²² David Pasteur, *Good Local Government in Zimbabwe*, p. 99.

⁸²³ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1993, pp. 1-2.

⁸²⁴ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1994, pp. 3-4.

⁸²⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 3-4.

⁸²⁶ H. Ashton, “Housing Policy and Practice”, p. 63.

Table 11.

Year	*Shell Units Built	Total Housing Units Built
1988	892	946
1989	826	1 114
1990	890	1 203
1991	740	1 825
1992	431	1 438
1993	647	1 695
1994	202	1 729
1995	449	1 680
1996	25	1 918
1997	97	2 210
1998	125	2 756

Source: Bulawayo Low Cost Housing: *An Overview Report*, February 1999.

*Shell units were the cheapest type of houses that the council could build for the urban poor. The unit was built to completion but without fitting in windows, doors and electrical installations which the beneficiaries were expected to fit on their own. The shell house concept had two advantages. It reduced the cost of the house unit to low income earners and meagre council financial resources were spread out to build more of such shell houses for a larger number of house seekers.

In 2000, the Bulawayo Council did not build a single unit due to lack of funds and blamed this on the poor macro-economic environment experienced in the whole country that was characterised by poor fiscal management, increasing budget deficits and the rising unsustainable domestic debt problem that rendered local authorities unable to borrow money for housing development.⁸²⁷ In 2002, 85 percent of the 45,000 applicants were self employed residents. Some informal business people had bank statements that qualified them to buy residential stands in medium and low income density areas but they preferred buying stands in townships citing the need to be close to their market.⁸²⁸ This increased competition for the few available stands in the high density areas and disadvantaged low income informal traders who could not afford buying stands in medium and low density areas. In 2002, the Council repossessed thirty six stands in Pumula South and re-allocated them to applicants on the waiting list after their owners failed to develop them for many years.⁸²⁹

In 2002 the low income social housing at the Emganwini Millennium Village was suspended due to lack of financial resources with about thirty six houses in the area

⁸²⁷ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, December 2000, p. 2.

⁸²⁸ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2002, p. 17.

⁸²⁹ Ibid, pp. 20 and 23.

incomplete and that was the last year when the Bulawayo Council was directly involved in the building of low income housing because it had become senseless to continue proposing more housing schemes without funds to back up such schemes.⁸³⁰ Between 2003 and 2005, the Council's only strategy of meeting the ever increasing demand for houses and stands was through strengthening partnership with the private sector and letting more private companies service the land.⁸³¹ Private developers offered a few stands and or houses at Cowdry Park, Pumula South and at Emgawnini Townships. The low income group found housing development very difficult due to unaffordable, expensive mortgage rates inadequate to construct a house to completion as the cost of labour and building materials rose sharply due to increasing inflation which stood at 800 percent in December 2003.⁸³² This meant that most low income earners were effectively excluded if the history of private sector involvement in housing schemes in the city is considered.

5.10 Other Constraints in the Provision of Low Income Housing.

Low income housing shortages were also fuelled by increasing cases of “downward raiding”, a system whereby higher income groups cashed in on the limited available low-income housing. Some middle and high-income earners approached the directors of housing projects, bribed them and then forged their payslips so that they would reflect income low enough to ensure their qualification for low-income schemes. Some high-income earners owned more than one house in high-density areas which they rented out while living in the low-density areas.⁸³³ Bribery cases involving middle and high income earners were rampant in the allocation of stands or houses in townships like Cowdry Park as many “one-man” companies had sprouted that specialised in producing fake duplicate payslips with figures altered according to one's instructions.⁸³⁴ In 1994 the middle

⁸³⁰ Interview with Mr Mathe, Tower Block, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, December 2007.

⁸³¹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2004, p. 18.

⁸³² Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2003, p. 17. See also Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2004, pp. 17 and 13.

⁸³³ Interview with Mr. K. Ncube, 20 February 2003, Makokoba, Bulawayo. See also C. Mafico, *Urban Low Income Housing in Zimbabwe*, p. 103.

⁸³⁴ Interview with Siphetho Tshuma, Cowdry Park Township, Bulawayo, 24 November 2007.

income group was also desperately buying off houses from the low income groups through funding obtained from the building societies.⁸³⁵

Low-income earners complained of “housing sharks,” rich people who purchased houses through auctions at very low prices from poor and desperate individuals served with eviction orders for either failing to pay rent or services. “Sharks” later sold the same houses at market prices beyond the reach of the urban poor.⁸³⁶ The lack of sympathy for low income earners that was exhibited by middle class Africans during the colonial period seemed to have taken on a brutal form after independence, with high income Africans, some of them politicians, using their wealth to cement their status in a new political dispensation that was favourable to them.

In the 1990s, the mushrooming of many private housing developers co-existed with the rise of fraudulent and exploitative practices and behaviour by suppliers of housing products and services. In 1996, for example, one private developer in Cowdry Park absconded (allegedly to United Kingdom with funds deposited by house seekers. One woman lost Z\$40,000 to this fraudulent developer and she never recovered it.⁸³⁷ Melitha Mpofu was swindled by bogus contractors operating under the name Peppermint Housing Co-operative in Cowdry Park Township. The two directors of this company disappeared with her deposit and that of other house seekers. They suspected that the two directors fled to UK. According to Mpofu, the third director of the company remained in Bulawayo and they suspected that he stayed in Richmond suburb. Mpofu lost all the savings she had made for housing. When she was finally allocated a two roomed shell house through another low income scheme she begged her parents in rural areas for assistance and they sold their only biggest oxen so that she could be able to pay the required minimum deposit.⁸³⁸

In 2002 and 2003 similar fraudulent cases were reported as some home seekers were also conned by dubious contractors who masqueraded as contractors, Council

⁸³⁵ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June, 1994, p. 4.

⁸³⁶ Bulawayo Low Cost Housing, pp. 3-4.

⁸³⁷ Interview with Mrs Moyo, 21 February, 2003, Makokoba, Bulawayo.

⁸³⁸ Interview with Melitha Mpofu, Cowdry Park, Bulawayo, 24 November 2007. This case was reported to the police but it was never finalised and the third director who resided in Richmond suburb was never apprehended by the police. Mpofu and other conned home seekers believed that the investigating police officers were bribed by the director so as to bottle up the investigation as the case just “died” a natural death and they lost the savings of their many years’ sweat.

officials or agents entrusted by the Council with stands and houses to sell but the Council mildly termed this well organised criminal act an “anti-social behaviour.”⁸³⁹

5.11 Response to the Shortage of Accommodation in Townships.

After 2001, the homeless in Bulawayo increasingly resorted to forming housing co-operatives and then requested stands from the Council so that they could build houses for their members. Some co-operatives were work based while others were community based. In 2002, each of the sixty registered groups was offered at least two stands each for the two oldest registered members of the group. Stands were offered to individual members and not to the group as a whole and the group then helped the individual to buy the stand and build a house.⁸⁴⁰ But this was just a drop in the ocean in terms of reducing low income housing shortage.

Copying the forging of payslips by middle and high income people to reflect lower salaries, ultra low income earners, whose salaries were considered too low to qualify for any housing schemes, also forged their payslips to reflect income high enough to qualify them for housing schemes. This is another problem associated with low income housing: that is, in a bid to qualify to meet tough financing requirements, some applicants have been forced to lie about their ability and willingness to pay.⁸⁴¹ In Bulawayo, it was some of these ultra low income earners who later failed to repay their loans and had their houses or stands repossessed and re-allocated.⁸⁴² Siphetho Tshuma argued that under “hungry” politicians:

it’s a “dog eat dog” situation. You have to be innovative to access housing. Don’t expect anyone in authority to feel pity for you...most of these people are just concerned about themselves, they are lining up their pockets. If our national government was a person, we would be referring to it in a Ndebele proverb *wande ngomlomo njengengidi*, translated to mean “one that is only bigger in the mouth like a smoking pipe”, which means being too talkative, only good at talking lies, nothing comes out of it, promises never fulfilled...⁸⁴³

⁸³⁹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2002, pp. 20 and 23. See also Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2003, p. 28.

⁸⁴⁰ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2002, p. 19.

⁸⁴¹ A. Kamete, “Cost Recovery in Urban Low Income Housing”, p. 245.

⁸⁴² Interview with Siphetho Tshuma, Cowdry Park Township, Bulawayo, 24 November 2007.

⁸⁴³ Ibid.

Those desperate for housing included the lowly paid industrial workers, teachers and the unemployed who comprised the increasing population of lodgers in the city. It was common at the beginning of the 1990s for houses to be rented out room by room, with a couple or even a family with children, each taking a room, and all sharing ablution and cooking facilities.⁸⁴⁴ In townships like Tshabalala and Tshabalala Extension, elderly people with problems in paying their rent swapped their houses for flats so that they could get a monetary difference to subsist on,⁸⁴⁵ but this only offered a temporary reprieve in an economy suffering from high inflation.

Economic victims of ESAP, the old, retrenched or those forced into early retirement but who owned houses in townships invested some of their retrenchment or pension money by constructing a few backyard shacks to rent out as a source of income. Some of these were built of concrete blocks or bricks and had planning permission from the Council while others were more like garden sheds of wooden clapboard, or makeshift materials. Some had no water and the inhabitants used facilities in the main house, while others used standpipes and outdoor toilets. The result was that one could find as many as twenty persons living on a single property, contributing to an exceedingly high density of population and pressure on essential services like water and sewage.⁸⁴⁶ In 2000 for example, in Njube Township, the number of illegal structures increased by 58 percent of the 1999 figure. Some structures were built of mud and thatched with either grass (typical of traditional African rondavel) or pieces of asbestos and corrugated iron sheets. This was certainly another version of the ruralisation of the city's townships.

Most unauthorised structures were utilised as lodger rooms, while a few were used by traditional healers as consultation rooms for their clients. In 2000, in Lobengula and Njube townships, there were about 1,592 and 1,650 unauthorised structures respectively, a total of 3,242 structures in all. Unauthorised structures also sprouted in Luveve and Cowdry Park Townships⁸⁴⁷ and in Tshabalala and Tshabalala Extension townships where owners rented them out to desperate home seekers to raise income for

⁸⁴⁴ Mary E. Ndlovu, "Mass Violence in Zimbabwe 2005", p. 219.

⁸⁴⁵ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2002, p. 24.

⁸⁴⁶ Mary E. Ndlovu, "Mass Violence in Zimbabwe 2005", p. 219.

⁸⁴⁷ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2000, p. 3.

survival.⁸⁴⁸ In 2004, more unauthorised structures were built in the Lobengula and Njube housing area, especially the Njube section. Since the majority of the structures did not meet Council requirements, they were therefore a danger to the occupants and a health hazard and Council efforts to eliminate those “unsightly” structures failed due to stiff resistance from the parties involved.⁸⁴⁹ While the Council did not permit such unauthorised structures, it condoned them on “humanitarian grounds” and regularised some of them after asking their owners to submit building plans and modify such structures.⁸⁵⁰ It was these structures that were swept aside by anti-humanitarian clean up operation in 2005.

5.12 Conclusion.

In Bulawayo, while the advent of secure tenure was a dream-come-true for some, availability remained an elusive dream for a majority of the poor. Housing provision faltered while demand ballooned yet some of those already in possession of housing sometimes failed to keep hold of it due to failure to pay bills. The housing crisis led to vagrancy and squatting and the Council failed to eliminate slum conditions and overcrowding.

Lack of financial resources on part of both the national and local authority to service enough land for low income housing projects, together with the prevalence of poverty among low income earners have been the major factors behind the slow delivery of low income housing in Bulawayo. Lack of a clear cut housing policy to specifically meet the needs of low income earners is a symptom of the major financial incapacity of the national government.

At the end, the national government has been rolling out grand housing plans but only backed them with hollow populist slogans and it has therefore been rightly blamed for engaging in excessive rhetoric while not taking earnest positive action.⁸⁵¹ In the 1990s the national government’s dream was that every person must have some form of shelter by the year 2000. Hardly a month passed by without a major comment being

⁸⁴⁸ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2002, p. 24.

⁸⁴⁹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 1989, pp. 8, 9 and 10.

⁸⁵⁰ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2004, p. 17.

⁸⁵¹ *The Sunday Mail*, 9 December 1990, p. 12. “Government must show the way on ending housing blues.”

passed by the central authorities about urban housing crisis in general and while the shortage was there and known there did not seem to be any ready solution either in the short or long term for the majority of the home seekers.⁸⁵² When it was clear that “housing for all” in 2000 was far from being achieved, there were murmurings about “vision 2020” and a roof over everyone’s head.⁸⁵³ The national housing vision of building 1,000,000 houses during the ten years after 2002 was unrealistic when then, both the private and public sectors were only able to produce about 18,000 housing units countrywide annually.⁸⁵⁴

The following chapter analyses some of the undesirable survival mechanisms adopted by the poor in Bulawayo and also highlights how some home owners sold their houses and relocated to rural areas as a survival mechanism of the last resort.

⁸⁵² *The Sunday Mail*, 14 October 1990. “House ownership policy has created more problems.”

⁸⁵³ Alois S. Mlambo, “Historical Antecedents to Operation Murambatsvina” in Maurice Vambe, (ed), *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2008), p. 20.

⁸⁵⁴ *The Herald*, Wednesday 19 February, 2003, “Housing Waiting List Swelling”

Chapter 6

Worsening Unemployment, Informality and the Poor after Independence.

Rapid urbanisation in Africa was characterised by the failure of the urban economy to offer jobs to the flood of new migrants. Yet, in the post colonial period a number of African governments have generally been hostile to urban informality, both self employment and low income housing. Urban planners are rarely in favour of any informality as “it contravenes almost everything, almost by definition.”⁸⁵⁵ This chapter analyses survival strategies adopted by the poor in Bulawayo between 1980 and 2004 in the face of deepening poverty fuelled by worsening unemployment and formal job insecurity. It is argued that one serious difficulty that resulted from the growth of the informal sector was the contradiction between the need for deregulation to promote urban self employment in the small scale and informal sector economy and the need to maintain health, building and environmental standards as required by national and local legislation, leading to the criminalisation of informality. Health and safety regulations, zoning by-laws, traffic laws, and so on were all broken daily by poor urban residents forced to engage in informal economic activities for survival.⁸⁵⁶ As a result, authorities persistently regarded participants in informality as undesirables.

6.1 Worsening Economic Problems after Independence.

Unemployment and poverty intensified in post colonial Bulawayo as various groups of low income earners competed for survival space in the city. Economic hardships were exacerbated by droughts which hit Bulawayo hard. Without providing actual figures, Bulawayo based economists Eric Bloch and John Robertson highlighted that several of the city’s factories were forced to relocate operations, wholly and partially, to other areas

⁸⁵⁵ Deborah Potts, “The State and the Informal in Sub-Saharan African Urban Economies: Revisiting Debates on Dualism”, *Working Paper No. 18*, -Cities and Fragile States-, King’s College, London, October 2007, pp. 6 and 10.

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid.

having lesser water supply constraints.⁸⁵⁷ A number of factories closed down because of water shortages leaving hundreds of wage earners unemployed thereby increasing hardship and destitution among residents. The prolonged 1982-85 drought led to water rationing in the city.⁸⁵⁸ The impact of these droughts was severe on the poor and the overall economy of Bulawayo due to its location in a semi-arid zone.⁸⁵⁹ The second drought of 1986-87 was even greater in magnitude and its effects on Bulawayo residents than the previous one as the subsequent water rationing “adversely affected the development of the city and the living conditions of the people in 1986/87.”⁸⁶⁰

The 1992 drought was even worse as Bulawayo almost ran out of water completely.⁸⁶¹ Residents described it as the worst in living memory, remembered for the severe water restrictions imposed by the Council and the devastating consequences for the poor in Makokoba and other townships. The council imposed surcharges and stiff penalties on domestic and commercial users who surpassed a stipulated limit. Households were left with insufficient water to meet their daily demands for bathing, laundry, cooking and so on.⁸⁶²

Despite pleas for the greater part of the 1991-92 drought, Bulawayo was slowly dying while the national government watched. Residents claimed that the central government ignored them at the greatest time of their need.⁸⁶³ President Mugabe acknowledged that the drought posed a real threat to the sustainability of Bulawayo as the cultural, industrial, and commercial and service centre for the whole Matabeleland, but argued that “contrary to the prophets of doom, Bulawayo is not a dying city. It is alive and full of promise”⁸⁶⁴ but no concrete government action was taken to solve the water crisis.

⁸⁵⁷ E. Bloch and J. Robertson, cited in Muchaparara Musemwa, “Disciplining a ‘Dissident’ City: Hydropolitics in the city of Bulawayo, Matabeleland, Zimbabwe, 1980-1994” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 32, Number 2, June 2006, p. 245.

⁸⁵⁸ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June 1984, p. 4.

⁸⁵⁹ Muchaparara Musemwa, “Disciplining a ‘Dissident’ City”, p. 239.

⁸⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 243.

⁸⁶¹ M. B. K. Darkoh, The Nature, Causes and Consequences of desertification in the Drylands of Africa in Michael. B. Kwesi Darkoh and Apollo Rwomire, (eds) *Human Impact on Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa*, (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), p. 221.

⁸⁶² M. Musemwa, “Disciplining a ‘Dissident’ City”, pp. 243 and 245.

⁸⁶³ *The Insider*, September/October 1992, “Dying City.”

⁸⁶⁴ Message from the President, in Michael Hamilton and M. Ndubiwa (eds), *Bulawayo: A Century of Development, 1894-1994*, (Harare: Argosy Press, 1994), p. 3.

Droughts led the council to ban the use of hosepipes for watering vegetable gardens and sometimes banned vegetable gardens altogether thereby affecting residents' food situation of families who grew their own vegetables. Rita Nkomo, a resident of Cowdry Park boasted that her vegetable garden was her "free butchery," highlighting that:

I just walk into my garden, pluck a few vegetable leaves and cook, even without cooking oil, that together with sadza (thick porridge), would be good food for the day. Remember some people in this township sometimes spend days scavenging for food, hobbling from one neighbour to another borrowing maize meal. Increasing drought conditions and the accompanying water shortages and water rationing in Bulawayo always threaten the viability of my 'butchery' and hence my survival because I think my tongue has forgotten how meat, beef, chicken or pork taste.⁸⁶⁵

The 1991-92 drought coincided with the implementation of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) which led to the closure of many textile firms in Bulawayo. The combined impact was devastating. Food supplies from rural areas shrunk for many workers who depended on them for extra food supplies, especially grains like maize, sorghum, millet and rapoko, rendering the rural-urban linkages that have always been an important part of urbanisation processes (as a survival strategy)⁸⁶⁶ almost useless.

Formal and self employed workers in the city worked extra hours, sometimes without pay, to save their jobs. Beacon Mbiba and Mike Ndubiwa found that employers and employees agreed to reduce the number of working hours (with salaries also reduced accordingly) or worked longer hours without overpay or without pay at all as strategies for maintaining production and avoiding the closure of firms.⁸⁶⁷ The Central Statistical Office (CSO) reported that about 95 percent of workers preferred to work for two more extra hours without overtime pay in order to keep their jobs. After work, most workers headed back to their homes where they engaged in informal economic activities for

⁸⁶⁵ Interview with Rudo Nkomo, Cowdry Park Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 16 January 2008.

⁸⁶⁶ Deborah Potts, "Shall we go Home: Increasing Urban Poverty in African Cities and Migration Processes", *The Geographical Journal*, 161, 3, 1995", p. 250.

⁸⁶⁷ B. Mbiba and Ndubiwa, "Decent Work in Construction and the role of Local Authorities: the Case of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe", *Unpublished Report*, January 2008", p. 26.

survival.⁸⁶⁸ A similar situation led Mkhethwa Zulu to quit his industrial job in 2001. Zulu explained that:

It was clear that I was working for nothing. My wages only lasted a few days into the month and would spend time after working hours and weekends trying to make more money for survival. I know many people who just went to work because they were afraid of quitting, especially those with children. They couldn't bear waking up one day seated at home...but they have to be brave enough to quit and start other small income jobs that can give them much more than the formal jobs they are doing.⁸⁶⁹

This was at a time when “real jobs” and “real work”, professions requiring any form of specialised education and others linked to wage labour⁸⁷⁰ had become less rewarding in the eyes of many Zimbabweans. That is, people had become increasingly used to working in the informal sector and unlikely to view this as unemployment and they had come to accept that they would be poor even if they had a “proper job”.⁸⁷¹ Almost everyone in the country was getting involved in *kukiya-kiya*⁸⁷² when in the past people involved in such activities were looked down upon as either lazy or as *tsotsis* (criminals). Jobs that “real” men were not expected to do like small scale buying and selling, and the selling of tomatoes by the roadside had now almost become a necessity.⁸⁷³ *Kukiya-kiya* seemed to thrive on clever dodging, hiding and wandering⁸⁷⁴ and engaging in games of chance like gambling that were detested by colonial authorities in Bulawayo townships but now they had become a necessity. The impact of the Welfare Society continued to be minimal.

In 1989, the Welfare Society only helped a total of 474 family units with an average of five to eight people per family and this amounted to about 2,370 to 3,792 people. These figures reflected only those who received assistance in the form of rations, a 5kg bag of maize meal a month.⁸⁷⁵ The table below shows the total number of low income earners who visited the council welfare offices seeking help of various kinds

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁹ Interview with Mkhethwa Zulu, Makhumalo Beer Hall, Makokoba Township, 5 December 2008.

⁸⁷⁰ Jeremy Jones, “Nothing is straight in Zimbabwe”: The Rise of the *Kukiya-kiya* Economy 2000-2008, *Unpublished Manuscript*, undated, p. 16.

⁸⁷¹ Deborah Potts, ““Restoring Order”? Operation Murambatsvina and the Urban Crisis in Zimbabwe”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 2006, p. 289.

⁸⁷² *Kukiya-kiya* refers to the desperate exploitation of whatever resources at hand just to survive. See Jeremy Jones, “Nothing is straight in Zimbabwe”, p. 1.

⁸⁷³ Ibid, p. 4.

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 18.

⁸⁷⁵ *Sunday News*, July 30, 1989.

ranging from food handouts, rent, and medical requirements to school fees for their children or dependents, but only about a tenth always managed to receive very minimal assistance.

Table 12.

Year	Total number of Low income visitors to Council offices seeking help
2000	22 337
2001	33 040
2002	55 000
2003	65 641
2004	39 624
2005	49 883

Source: City of Bulawayo, Annual Reports of the Director of Housing and Community Services for the years 2000 to 2005.

The welfare society has therefore never been able to cope with the poverty cases since its inception.⁸⁷⁶

Despite a general influx of the African population into urban areas since 1980, the central government, Non Governmental Organisations and donor agencies focused their poverty alleviation programmes on rural areas as the majority of the socio-economically disadvantaged population resided there.⁸⁷⁷ This blighted focus on the urban poor and there was no pressure on authorities to come up with policies accommodative of vending and hawking and other informal economic activities in urban areas where there were signs of deepening poverty. For example, a survey carried out in 2003 by a civil alliance of Christian organisations Christians Together for Justice and Peace (CTJP) to investigate food supplies in selected Bulawayo townships that included Lobengula, Old Lobengula, Njube, Makokoba, Nguboyenja, Mzilikazi and Barbourfields revealed that more than 55 percent of families survived on one meal a day. Many families had tea in the morning and afternoons and the staple maize meal in the evening. The morning tea was taken with no bread, which was scarce and available in the black market where it was very expensive

⁸⁷⁶ Also see the Annual Reports of the Director of Housing and Community Services 2000, p. 20, 2001, p. 9, and 2004, pp. 7 and 8.

⁸⁷⁷ Bulawayo Municipality Records Library (BMRL) N6A/17 Squatters/Vagrants, by Ben Strydom (Chairman and Director of Combined Churches and Mobile Soup Kitchen), "A Situational Analysis of Urban Poverty Bulawayo" (Not dated), pp. 2-3.

for the poor. Even that one meal a day was not always available in most households because of the severe shortages of maize meal.⁸⁷⁸

The survey followed reports that 179 people had died of malnutrition in Bulawayo in the first four months of 2003. Zimbabwe's galloping inflation, pegged at 400 percent in July 2003, also fuelled crime and prostitution especially among the youth in Makokoba, Nguboyenja, Mzilikazi and Barbourfields townships. The survey reported an increase in the number of child headed households and single parent homes mainly headed by females and also established that overcrowding was worsening in the older townships. The CTJP thus lamented that most food donors channelled their aid to rural areas, ignoring the equally starving urban dwellers.⁸⁷⁹ Generally, two major coping strategies within the urban sector in sub-Saharan Africa towns and cities involved a great increase in informal sector activities and development of food growing by urban households on any available patch of arable land within and around the urban area. A third survival strategy involved the strengthening and adaptation of the rural-urban linkages, part of which involved the "return" of urbanites to their rural "homes."⁸⁸⁰

In Zimbabwe, the post colonial government emphasized the informal sector as an important generator of income for low income people, the unemployed and the destitute but very little was done to support the sector, hence the continuing harassment by police and coercive legislative measures like restrictive trade licensing, artificial health and safety regulations.⁸⁸¹ As Lynette Jackson observed, various campaigns referred to as "clean-up", "crackdown" and/or "blitz" operations ostensibly aimed at cleaning up city streets of prostitutes, squatters, hawkers, beggars and petty thieves and generally preceded an international conference were carried out by the Zimbabwean government since the 1980s and most of the victims of those campaigns were self employed women.⁸⁸²

⁸⁷⁸ *Daily News*, 25 July 2003, "Bulawayo families surviving on one meal a day-Survey." The CTJP was formed in 2001. Its members included the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Catholic Church.

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸⁰ D. Potts, "Shall we go home", p. 250.

⁸⁸¹ B. Ndlovu, *BA Honours Dissertation*, "The Informal Manufacturing Sector in Bulawayo", History Dept, University of Zimbabwe, 1989, pp. 17-19.

⁸⁸² Lynette Jackson, "Stray Women" and "Girls on the Move": Gender, Space, and Disease in Colonial and Post-Colonial Zimbabwe", in Paul T. Zeleza and Ezekiel Kalipeni (eds), *Sacred Spaces and Public*

In the 1980s, when the prospects of employment creation in the formal sector appeared good, national government attitude towards the informal sector was hostile, with stiff and oppressive regulations. The central government and local authorities hoped that the informal sector would eventually disappear but changed their attitude with the downturn in formal employment growth, increasing urban populations and public and private sector retrenchments under the structural adjustment programme. The government behaved as the employer of the last resort until this policy was de-emphasized by ESAP in 1991.⁸⁸³

The Government's approach was problematic because the capacity to create employment started to diminish in the mid 1970s when sanctions began to bite and the war of liberation intensified. The erratic growth of the economy in the 1980s worsened the unemployment problem. Although public sector employment was relatively high, it was not sustainable.⁸⁸⁴ In such circumstances, the expansion of the informal sector was inevitable. Not surprisingly, rising unemployment and dwindling real incomes in the 1980s led to the adoption of various survival mechanisms by low income earners which led to the "industrialisation", "commercialisation" and "agriculturalisation" of residential areas. That is, in addition to letting and sub-letting, small scale industries mushroomed after independence, as did unauthorised tuck shops, street corner vendors, roving vendors and hawkers. This worsened as the macro-economic instability intensified in the 1990s.⁸⁸⁵

This was bound to create serious problems with authorities because physical planning in Zimbabwe tended to be very regulatory. Planning legislation preserved residential areas as places for activities such as relaxing, sleeping, eating and socialising until the passing of Statutory Instrument 216 (Regional Town and Country Planning (Use Groups) Regulations) by the central government in 1994 that partially permitted some mini-industrial activities in residential areas.⁸⁸⁶

Quarrels: African Cultural and Economic Landscapes, (Trenton and Asmara: Africa World Press, 1999), p. 146.

⁸⁸³ Mkhululi Ncube, "Employment, Unemployment and the Evaluation of Labour Policy in Zimbabwe", *Zambezia* (2000), xxvii (ii), pp. 174 and 166.

⁸⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 161.

⁸⁸⁵ Amin Kamete, "Restrictive Control of Urban High-Density Housing in Zimbabwe: Deregulation, Challenges and Implication for Urban Design", in *Housing, Theory and Society*, 1999, 16, pp. 142-143.

⁸⁸⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 138 and 143.

The creation of a ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises was recognition of the importance of self employment in a stagnating or declining formal economy but the usefulness of this sector in promoting the interests of the majority of informal traders in subsistence informal employment has been questionable. For example, in the 1990s when the majority of urban residents suffered severe economic hardships, the national government relaxed its laws and allowed informal business activities. Backyard business and flea market stalls increased while backyard shacks were also condoned to accommodate lodgers and generate income for their owners.⁸⁸⁷ However later on, it was these informal activities and structures that the national government agents destroyed. A closer look at some informal activities below revealed the undesirability of participants in the informal economy in Bulawayo.

6.2 Vending as a Coping Mechanism.

In 1980 the informal economy was relatively small in Bulawayo and accounted for less than 10 percent of Zimbabwe's labour force mainly because of various colonial laws and by-laws that had prohibited free movement of black people from rural to urban areas and on restrictions on the informal sector itself. But it grew steadily after independence due to migration deregulation and also because of the economic stagnation and decline.⁸⁸⁸

In the 1980s, running battles between the municipal police and illegal hawkers in most townships intensified as increasing numbers of families and individuals resorted to unauthorised hawking and vending, and light industrial activities in their backyards and at shopping centres. This was evidence of increasing hardship and destitution among residents.⁸⁸⁹ In 1984/85 for example, there were carpenters, welders, cobblers and car

⁸⁸⁷ Alois S. Mlambo, "Historical Antecedents to Operation Murambatsvina" in Maurice Vambe, (ed), *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2008), p.10. The operation of the Ministry of Small Scale and Medium Enterprises is similar to the operation of the Affirmative Action Group, whose policy of "black advancement" on behalf of the African professional and business strata Michael West equated to the policy of "racial uplift" of African businessmen during the colonial period but in post colonial Zimbabwe black advancement effectively became another policy for promoting the naked self interests of an aspiring ruling class, one targeted exclusively at elite Africans. See Michael O. West, "Pan-Africanism, Capitalism and Racial Uplift: The Rhetoric of African Business Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe", in *African Affairs* (1993), 92, p. 283.

⁸⁸⁸ The ILO cited in Tibaijuka, "Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to Assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe, 18 July 2005", p. 17. Also see pages 13 and 14 of the same report.

⁸⁸⁹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June 1984, p. 4.

repairers and the persistent problem of hawkers despite the risk of arrest in townships like Magwegwe and especially in Njube where illegal vending and hawking had increased greatly.⁸⁹⁰

In June 1989 there was a “multiple” of illegal vendors in the Lobengula housing area, this despite that two vendors’ markets in the area were virtually deserted.⁸⁹¹ However, according to Thoko Ndlovu, a vendor, the problem with a number of markets in some townships and even in the Central Business District (CBD) was that they were located in isolated areas patronised by very few customers. Ndlovu argued that:

take for example the vegetable market in Corner Third Avenue and Lobengula Street, it’s on the outskirts of the city and infested with street thieves. The only people who pass by the market are the residents of Makokoba, Mzilikazi and Barbourfields Townships. Most of them usually do not buy our commodities because they can find cheaper ones in their townships, so we are forced to abandon our stalls and go to trade illegally in areas where thousands of potential customers pass by each day. That is dangerous as we would be risking being raided by the municipal police and having our wares confiscated, losing money and sometimes failing to have enough to continue with the business because of losses. We try to take our goods nearer to many customers, but in the process risk “donating” them to the police.⁸⁹²

This highlights that the officially designated informal trading areas were not popular because of the public health regulations that were effectively enforced and monitored and also because of the attendant financial and market drawbacks, including reduced clientele due to increased distances, payment of rents and costs incurred through strict adherence to health, safety and environmental sanitation by-laws.⁸⁹³

Therefore, towards the end of the 1980s, informal economic activities were rampant in the CBD, townships and at backyards in residential areas in Bulawayo. Amin Kamete rightly argued that:

in an effort to survive, the urban poor disturb the order, prosperity and comfort of the urban environment by engaging in destructive practices such as stream-bank cultivation, street corner vending, illegal subdivisions, unauthorised building and illegal occupation of land and buildings.

⁸⁹⁰ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June 1985, pp. 5 and 10.

⁸⁹¹ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June 1989, p. 9.

⁸⁹² Interview with Thoko Ndlovu, Cnr Third Ave/Lobengula Street Vegetable market, Bulawayo, Saturday 5 April 2008.

⁸⁹³ Amin Kamete, “Restrictive Control of Urban High-Density Housing in Zimbabwe: Deregulation, Challenges and Implication for Urban Design”, in *Housing, Theory and Society*, 1999, 16, p. 141.

They do this by carrying out their activities in violation of such principles as public health, safety and convenience and the urban planning regulations and zoning ordinances to regulate the city.⁸⁹⁴

The city council opposed this scenario which contravened town planning regulations and argued that this destroyed amenities, lowered property values and disturbed the peace normally associated with residential areas⁸⁹⁵ and then descended hard on illegal traders. In the 1987/88 financial year alone, 4,162 illegal hawkers were arrested in the city. 1,423 were charged by the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and about 2,739 had their wares confiscated.⁸⁹⁶ This has been the general trend in post colonial Africa where state and city officials have continued to assert their legal right and superior claim to regulate and impose order on urban spaces and residents through the use of law, police, and prisons to control and punish, their capacity to determine people's movements and access to streets and other amenities.⁸⁹⁷

In the 1990s workers made redundant by ESAP were forced to join the informal sector, especially the business of illegally hawking fruit and vegetables. One serious difficulty that resulted from ESAP was the tension between the need for deregulation to promote urban employment in the small scale and informal sector and the need to maintain health, building and environmental standards, as required by national and local legislation.⁸⁹⁸ Whereas the national government relaxed its laws and allowed informal business activities because of severe economic hardships,⁸⁹⁹ local authorities had no capacity to regulate the mushrooming informal activities. The Bulawayo Council for example, failed to establish more vending sites to legalise the ballooning informal trade which had rendered the municipality police unable to control.⁹⁰⁰

In 1996, about 40 percent of the city's one million residents were regarded as formally unemployed, forcing them to resort to informal activities for survival. Residents

⁸⁹⁴ Amin Y. Kamete, *Governing the Poor in Harare, Zimbabwe: Shifting Perceptions and Changing Responses*, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002), p. 15.

⁸⁹⁵ Interview between B. Ndlovu and Deputy Town Clerk M. Ndlovu, 15 December 1988 quoted in B. Ndlovu, "The Informal Manufacturing Sector in Bulawayo", pp. 24-5.

⁸⁹⁶ Annual Report of the Director of Housing Services, 1988, p. 3.

⁸⁹⁷ Allen M. Howard, "Cities in Africa, Past and Present: Contestation, Transformation and Discourse" in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Volume 37, Numbers 2 & 3, 2003, pp. 201-203.

⁸⁹⁸ David Pastuer, "From Frontier Town Board to a Modern Municipality" in Hamilton and Ndubiwa, *Bulawayo: A Century of Development*, p. 19.

⁸⁹⁹ A. S. Mlambo, "Historical Antecedents to Operation Murambatsvina", p.10.

⁹⁰⁰ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, June 1993, p. 4.

who struggled to cope with rising costs of living and rampant job losses owed the Council millions of dollars in unpaid rents and services.⁹⁰¹ In 1998, reliable figures on the informal sector in Bulawayo were not available or were outdated but estimates showed that at least 40 percent of the economically active population in the city engaged in informal sector activities.⁹⁰² In 1999 to 2000, about 40,837 people were regarded as formal unemployed in Bulawayo and this represented about 25.29 percent of all people regarded as formally unemployed in the country.⁹⁰³

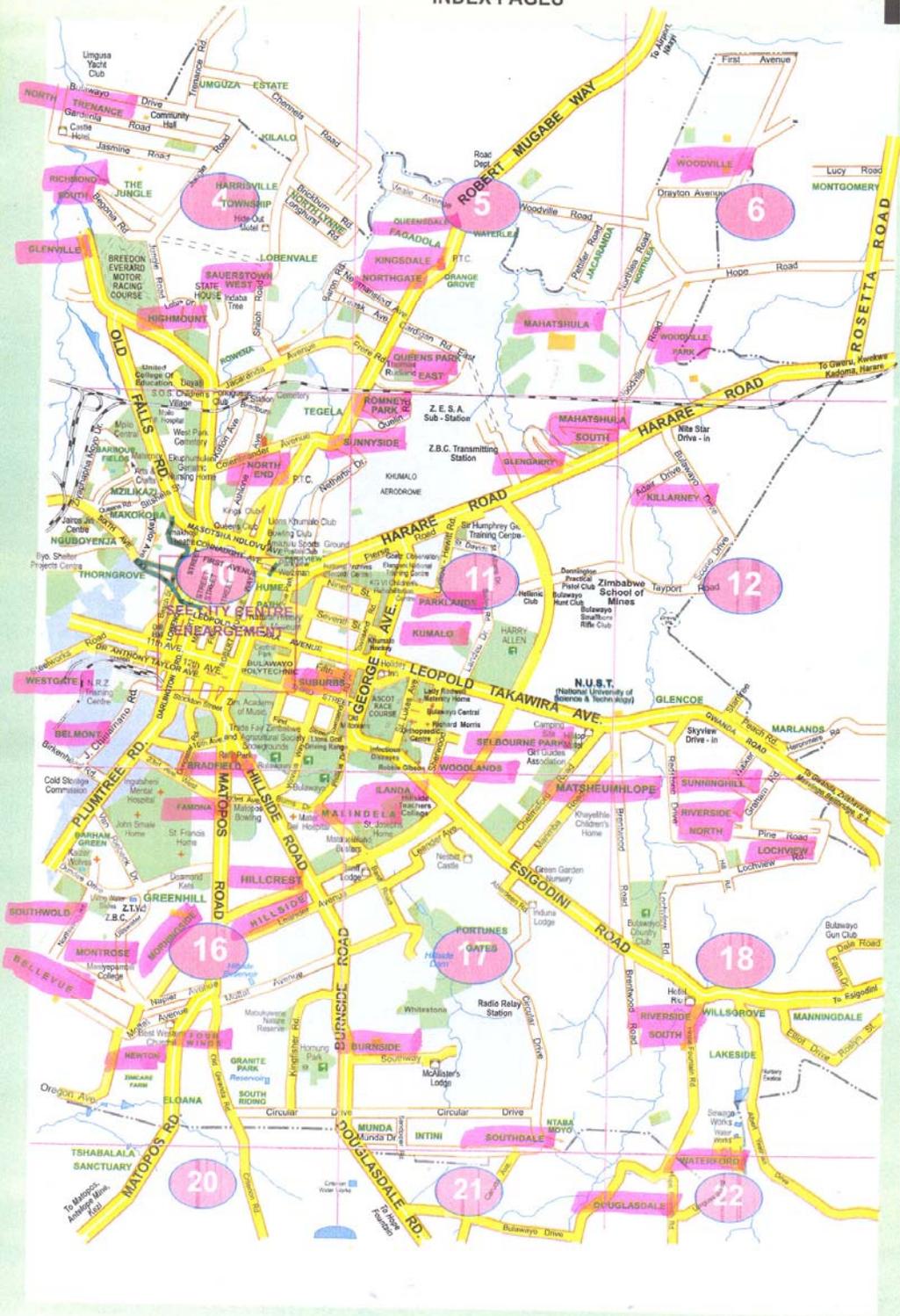
In 2000, a new upsurge in illegal vending activities in Bulawayo led the townships to become a “sea” of poverty, characterised by illegal vendors, with very few “islands” of prosperity. In middle and low density suburbs, “islands” of poverty characterised by clusters of illegal vendors were observed alongside roads and in shopping areas. Below is a map showing some middle and low density suburbs that were invaded by vendors in the 1990s in Bulawayo.

⁹⁰¹ *Chronicle*, 18 July 1996. “Council embarks on job creation venture.”

⁹⁰² Mirjam Zaaijer, “Urban Economic Restructuring and Local Institutional Response The Case of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe”, HIS Project Paper Series, (Rotterdam: Institute for Housing and Urban Development, 1998), p. 26.

⁹⁰³ Census Report of 2002, cited in Mbiba and Ndubiwa, “*Decent Work in Construction and the Role of Local Authorities*”, p. 21.

INDEX PAGES



Source: City of Bulawayo Streets Map Guide, p. v.

Vendors were observed in low density areas like Hillside, Four Winds, Bradfield, Morningside, Hillcrest, Malindela, Famona, North End, Kumalo and Queens Park. Pondo Ncube, a gardener, highlighted that the vendors in low density suburbs also doubled as domestics. “Their employers encouraged them to resort to vending to supplement their income because they could not afford to pay them high wages...”⁹⁰⁴

Between 2000 and 2005 the Bulawayo Council accused many vendors of vending illegally. In low density areas and the CBD, illegal trading activities intensified in almost every corner of the streets and vendors were sometimes rightly accused of impeding pedestrian and vehicular movement and they sold all sorts of commodities that included vegetables, grocery items, motor spares and second-hand clothes.⁹⁰⁵

Unauthorised vending intensified in all townships. Unauthorised tuck shops and kiosks and hair cutting places sprouted everywhere in townships causing health concerns. The most affected townships included Emganwini, Cowdry Park, Pumula, Lobengula, Njube, Mpopoma, Pelandaba, Mzilikazi, Makokoba, Magwegwe, Luveve, Nkulumane, and Renkini Long distance bus terminus area where illegal traders sold goods that included groceries, vegetables, second hand clothes and motor spares.⁹⁰⁶

In all townships, vendors set up stalls at shopping centres and at major road sides. This was despite the availability of designated vending areas. Registered vendors and shop owners cried foul and many were tempted to abandon their vending bays and join illegal traders at undesignated points as they thought that illegal traders managed to operate successfully without licences. In Nkulumane Township for example, registered traders who operated from the eight designated vending centres blamed the Council for the multitudes of unregistered and informal traders who set up themselves on strategic sites along major roads, on store verandas, pavements of existing shops and entrances of beer gardens which affected sales for established legal retailers and some retailers began to drag their feet over the payment of rates and levies to the Council citing low or no

⁹⁰⁴ Interview with Pondo Ncube, Makhumalo (Big Bhawa) Beer Hall, Makokoba, Bulawayo, Sunday 4 January 2009.

⁹⁰⁵ See Annual Reports of the Director of Housing and Community Services, December 2000, pp. 2 and 5, for 2003, pp. 17, 21, 22 and 29, and for 2004, p. 17.

⁹⁰⁶ See Annual Reports of the Director of Housing and Community Services, December 2001, pp. 21 and 36, December 2002, pp. 19, 21, 23, 25 and 27, December 2003, pp. 17, 21, 22 and 29, and for 2004, p. 17.

profit and blamed the Council's failure to control illegal traders as the reason behind, thereby pressurising it to descend hard on illegal traders.⁹⁰⁷

Illegal vending activities overstretched the municipal police force. The housing department bemoaned that it had had the "unfortunate experience" of enforcing Council by-laws by destroying illegal structures built without approved plans and lacking in compliance with the city's building by-laws and standards.⁹⁰⁸ It registered and issued vending licenses and vending bays to some informal traders but the demand for bays outstripped supply and this was partly the reason why some traders resorted to illegal trading.⁹⁰⁹

The Bulawayo Council blamed the surge in illegal vending on the reduction in the Council's policing activities due to staff shortages. This was not true. Illegal trading activities were exacerbated by the increasing unemployment and poverty among the majority of residents in the city. Whether or not the police were present, desperate residents would resort to informal activities for survival, more so in a macro economic environment where the formal sector was shrinking and paying inadequate wages. According to Nheti Nkomo, a vendor at Makokoba market:

No amount of policing can prevent a hungry person from trying to raise money for food. The last decade has taught me that the stomach rules our daily activities, if you are hungry on a daily basis there is very little you can do.⁹¹⁰

Jimmy Ncube noted that the last few years in the city have taught him a "hard lesson", that is:

A person or anything that makes it possible for you to 'visit' a toilet regularly is your king, (I mean going to the toilet to defecate). If you see yourself visiting the toilet regularly in a normal way, it means your stomach will be full and you have to thank that person or be committed to that activity that allows you to lead a normal life. Otherwise, I have witnessed a horrible situation myself, that is, going for days on an empty stomach, and believe me, I could not fall asleep every night when my

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁸ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, December 2002, pp. 19, 21, 23, 25 and 27.

⁹⁰⁹ See Annual Reports of the Director of Housing, Amenities, Social and Community Services, December 2003, pp. 17, 21, 22 and 29, and for 2004, p. 17.

⁹¹⁰ Interview with Nheti Nkomo, Makokoba Market, Bulawayo, Saturday 12 April 2008.

stomach was empty...Vending has been our “King”, I mean the sole provider for the majority of people in townships...who can stop this?...⁹¹¹

Gift Ncube was forced into vending by his mother when still going to school but he later realised the necessity of vending as a survival mechanism. His mother use to threaten him that:

if you don't want to sell the drinks (and sweets and biscuits), you won't get any food in this house.' Sometimes my mother would accuse me of failing to account for all the cash raised from the trade, the truth was that sometimes I would just take some cash to use as pocket money when I went to school, that's why my mother disliked me and favoured my sister who was always honest.⁹¹²

Therefore, in many African cities, the harsh macro-economic environment inevitably forced the explosion of the informal sector. This led Potts to argue that urban people remaining in the cities must work, “if the formal sector cannot provide, self-employment is the answer, and if city by-laws and government policy and development agencies deem this “informal” and “illegal”, so be it.”⁹¹³ The multiplicity of petty traders in towns was itself a sign of poverty as the poor consumers could only buy in minute quantities and poor sellers would compete relentlessly for minute rewards.⁹¹⁴

Another contested coping mechanism for low income earners in Bulawayo was urban agriculture.

6.3 Urban Agriculture as a Coping Mechanism.

Initial official views of urban agriculture in many African countries emphasized the environmental and health risks of the activity, the violation of town planning zoning and these were used as a basis to harass or prohibit urban cultivation⁹¹⁵ despite the increase in poverty and the collapse of the formal economy pushing urban residents into the practice. In Zimbabwe, the official attitude towards urban agriculture was not favourable over

⁹¹¹ Interview with Jimmy Ncube, Tote Club, 6th Ave Extension, Makokoba, Bulawayo, Saturday 12 April 2008.

⁹¹² Interview with Gift Ncube, Thursday 11 December 2008, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

⁹¹³ D. Potts, “The State and the Informal in Sub-Saharan African urban Economies”, p. 9.

⁹¹⁴ John Iliffe, *The African Poor: A History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 174. Iliffe was referring to colonial towns but this is also true of post colonial towns.

⁹¹⁵ Beacon Mbiba, *Urban Agriculture in Zimbabwe*, (Aldershot and Brookfield: Avebury and Ashgate, 1996), p. 2.

many years. Urban agriculture was viewed as an insignificant or trivial activity in the urban economy and it was either neglected by local authorities or treated with hostility in some cases. It was considered illegal and affecting the environment adversely. It was thus common in towns and cities for councils to slash vast amounts of crops grown by residents under the guise of protecting the environment and the health of the people. This happened despite that urban agriculture, especially the cultivation of staple foods by urban households, is as old as the human settlements themselves in Zimbabwean towns and cities.⁹¹⁶ The hostility to urban agriculture was portrayed by the director of Natural Resources Board James Chitauro who for example, 19 years after independence, reminded the Bulawayo Council not to tolerate urban agriculture. Writing to the Town Clerk, he highlighted that:

I wish to remind you that we are close to the rain season once again. This is the time of the year when stream bank cultivation and cultivation of unsuitable areas by residents take place in most urban areas leading to siltation of rivers and dams down stream-ensure that this does not occur.⁹¹⁷

Urban agriculture as a way of reducing urban poverty was given serious emphasis during the Earth Summit held in Brazil in 1992. The idea was pursued in Manchester in 1994 at the Global Forum where Bulawayo was one of the few African cities invited to attend. The Bulawayo Environment Forum chaired by the Town Clerk embraced the idea of urban agriculture and felt that there was need to introduce a revolutionary approach to the concept by embarking on an awareness campaign.⁹¹⁸ It was however, not until 2002 that the Council adopted a policy on urban agriculture. Residents practiced urban agriculture on any open spaces along Luveve and Khami roads between the CBD and townships, in townships around their residential areas and even on the outskirts of the city.

Willie Ncube from Nketa Township heavily participated in “the ruralisation of urban space”⁹¹⁹ in Nketa Township. He had seven children in 2005. His family had three

⁹¹⁶ BMRL G13A Urban Agriculture, Extract from Minutes of the Town Lands and Planning Committee-Annex A 2001-07-16, “Urban Agriculture in Bulawayo-issues and an inception on policy guidelines for its sustainable development”, p. 1.

⁹¹⁷ BMRL G13A Urban Agriculture, Letter from The Natural Resources Board Chairman J. J. Chitauro to the Town Clerk-Bulawayo, 22 November 1999, (Stream bank and Vlei Cultivation in Urban Areas.)

⁹¹⁸ BMRL G13A Urban Agriculture, Notes for the Town Clerk-Information on Urban Agriculture.

⁹¹⁹ Paul T. Zeleza, “The Spatial Economy of Structural Adjustment in African Cities”, in Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Ezekiel Kalipeni (eds), *Sacred Spaces and Public Quarrels*, pp. 43-71.

sizeable fields along the Nketa and Emganwini railway line where they farmed since 1990. On a good year, the family harvested nearly half a ton of maize grain which lasted them for months without having to worry about buying the staple maize meal.⁹²⁰ He was one of the many residents in Nketa Township who practiced urban agriculture which offered their families some form of food security.

Around 30 percent of the Bulawayo population was involved in urban agriculture during the 1994/95 agricultural season. In 1997, this figure had risen and this prompted the Council to identify four sites between Nketa and Emganwini Townships for the purpose of reducing illegal cultivation.⁹²¹ In 2000, the illegal cultivation had spread all over the city. Alderman C. S. Lumsden voiced concern that the press portrayed the Council as inhuman because its staff slashed maize planted on undesignated areas. He suggested that disadvantaged groups be allocated land, noting that the level of unemployment in the city meant that all land allocated by Council for urban farming would fall within the ultra low income group like the destitute grandmothers from Makokoba and Mzilikazi identified by Council case workers and allocated plots they had utilised for many years.⁹²²

An emerging problem was that several wealthy people encroached on land meant for low income earners in the city. Such people allocated themselves large tracts of land and hired tractors to till it, planted and harvested some crops which they sold and made some profit leaving landless poor residents who wanted to grow maize for survival stranded.⁹²³

The Bulawayo Council argued that it was certainly not its core business to be involved in such a large scale adventure (urban farming) for the Bulawayo residents, highlighting that:

Perhaps what should be clear is that council is merely exercising its moral consideration (not moral obligation) based on the typical African conscience that an African has always to have a field of

⁹²⁰ Informal discussion with Willie Ncube, Nketa Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, December 2007.

⁹²¹ *Chronicle*, March 4, 1997, "Council maps out farming strategies."

⁹²² BMRL G13A Urban Agriculture, Letter from Alderman C. S. Lumsden, (Paddenhurst) to the Executive Mayor-Re: Urban Agriculture, 23 January 2000.

⁹²³ *Ibid.*

maize...This is a terrible premise or belief and we should not be driven by such thinking as we embark on this exercise.⁹²⁴

The Council wanted to use urban agriculture as a source to boost its dwindling revenue base than a way of helping destitute residents. It noted that:

The Council should be guided by the quest to broaden council's resource base for its finances. That is, urban agriculture, on the part of the council should be viewed and understood as part of its overall topping up of finances required to run council affairs.⁹²⁵

In 2000, a Council committee for urban agriculture recommended that the city formalise urban agriculture, register all pieces of land where maize would be grown.⁹²⁶ Registration of pieces of land would ensure that the Council taxed the beneficiaries. Taxation was resented by poor residents. Pondo Ncube, who practised urban agriculture in the North End suburb area nearer to one of the houses where he worked as a gardener explained that:

whenever you hear the Council talking about this, it's all about tax they want, I can't afford to pay tax to anyone, all I want is food, that is the reason why I plant in the open space nearer to where I stay, I don't want to be given a piece of land that would be many kilometres away from where I stay, where I will require bus fares to reach the place...⁹²⁷

The slashing of maize grown on un-authorised areas by Council rangers caused serious tensions between some councillors and Council officials on the one hand and residents and councillors on the other. This was because councillors were elected by residents and knew about the poverty problems experienced by residents, so they condoned illegal urban farming, yet other Council staffs were only motivated by the desire to maintain Council by-laws irrespective of their impact on the poor. Bulawayo councillors therefore questioned the wisdom of slashing maize planted on unauthorised areas by Council rangers. Councillor Charles Mpofu for example, argued that it was sad that while the

⁹²⁴ BMRL G13A Urban Agriculture, City of Bulawayo, Internal memorandum from Housing and Community Services Dept to Director of Engineering Service, 7th November 2000, (Urban Agriculture: Pilot Projects).

⁹²⁵ Ibid.

⁹²⁶ BMRL G13A Urban Agriculture, Minutes of a Committee meeting on Urban Agriculture held on the 24th March, 2000 on 7th Floor, Conference Room.

⁹²⁷ Interview with Pondo Ncube.

Council failed to cut grass (where deadly mosquitoes which spread malaria bred) it had enough manpower to slash maize grown by poor residents.⁹²⁸ Councillors thus sometimes intervened politically to frustrate the attempts by urban managers to enforce planning regulations because these elected officials “know where their votes come from and would not want to jeopardize their chances of being re-elected.”⁹²⁹ In 2000, growing tensions and the apparent inevitability of the activity forced the council to soften its stance and it noted that “since urban agriculture appears to be a growing phenomenon, it is only proper to plan for it properly and set up proper structures and land.”⁹³⁰

The Council now argued that most developed countries viewed urban agriculture as a significant and vital activity in the urban economy; hence it also sought for a deliberate and environmentally friendly policy on urban agriculture.⁹³¹ City policies were not pro-poor and that this made it difficult for the Council to find ways to work with the communities of the urban poor who approached them.⁹³²

On 17 December 2002, the Council confirmed that it had adopted a policy on urban agriculture to embrace ongoing activities where residents grew vegetables and maize.⁹³³ This was to exist alongside nutritional gardens in Makokoba, Mabutweni, Nguboyenja, Greenspan, Luveve, Nketa 6 and Renkini areas where disadvantaged residents were offered pieces of land with water facilities to produce crops to augment their food supplies.⁹³⁴

Before the adoption of the policy of urban agriculture, the Council used the 1943 by-law that empowered it to slash maize grown on undesignated areas.⁹³⁵ This also

⁹²⁸ *Chronicle*, March 4, 1997, “Council maps out farming strategies.”

⁹²⁹ *The Herald*, 1998, cited in Amin Kamete, “Restrictive Control of Urban High-Density Housing in Zimbabwe”, p. 143.

⁹³⁰ BMRL G13A Urban Agriculture, Memo for the Town Clerk to Acting Chamber Secretary, 12 January 2000.

⁹³¹ BMRL G13A Urban Agriculture, Health Services Dept; Internal Memorandum to Director of Engineering Services from the Director of health Services, (Urban Agriculture: Pilot Project).

⁹³² The Africa Platform for the Urban Poor: Proceedings of the Cape Town Conference May 2006.

⁹³³ BMRL G13A Urban Agriculture, Letter from the Town Clerk, cc Acting Director of Housing and Community Services (Mr M. T. Ncube)-Re: Urban Agriculture, 17 December 2002.

⁹³⁴ BMRL G13A Urban Agriculture, Extract from Minutes of the Town Lands and Planning Committee-Annex A 2001-07-16, “Urban Agriculture in Bulawayo and the Peri-urban area.”

⁹³⁵ *Chronicle*, March 4, 1997, “Council Maps out Farming Strategies.”

happened in Nairobi where Freund argued that the destruction of crops only happened in order to sustain questionable urban ordinances belonging to the colonial period.⁹³⁶

Pondo Ncube highlighted that even harvests from their urban fields were never guaranteed:

If the maize crop was not slashed by the council rangers, thieves sometimes pounced on the crop when it matured. Sometimes we bought green maize cobs right here in this beer hall not knowing that it had been stolen from our fields. Surviving has always been tough in this city. One always suffered head-ache from the day the maize plant germinated up to the day when you finally harvested the crop. The day of harvesting is a day of great joy because in some years it never arrives!⁹³⁷

Urban farmers therefore fought a “war” for survival on two fronts, against city authorities and secondly, against thieves. Kizito Dube, a resident in Emakhandeni Township who practiced urban agriculture highlighted that every year when the maize crop was about to reach maturity stage he:

was forced put some wool and bottles full of traditional herbs right round my small field so as to scare the would-be thieves. Many of them are afraid of the effects of traditional herbs and when they found evidence of anything that looked like the herbs, they sometimes avoided stealing from my field...⁹³⁸

In Bulawayo, demand for urban land increased as urban poverty deepened, and gained intensity in the 1990s when ESAP led to retrenchment of many workers. This was similar to experiences in other African cities where Paul T. Zeleza, who labelled the expansion of urban agriculture as “the ruralisation of urban space”, argued that while this system was not new and not confined to the third world, its scale and intensity expanded mainly due to increasing urban poverty because of SAPs.⁹³⁹ African women are known to resort to illicit brewing of alcoholic drinks, some of whom combined it with prostitution as sources of income in many poverty stricken African cities.⁹⁴⁰ I highlight the high prevalence of these activities in Bulawayo to point out the difficulties faced by those engaging on them as survival mechanisms.

⁹³⁶ Bill Freund, *The African City: A History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 160.

⁹³⁷ Interview with Mr. Pondo Ncube.

⁹³⁸ Interview with Kizito Dube, Emakhandeni Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Friday 23 November 2007.

⁹³⁹ Paul T. Zeleza, “The Spatial Economy of Structural Adjustment in African Cities” pp. 43-71.

⁹⁴⁰ Anthony O’Connor, *Poverty in Africa: A Geographical Approach*, (London: Belhaven Press, 1991), p. 114.

6.4 The Politics of *Shebeening* and Prostitution as Coping Mechanisms.

Colonial discourses of public health and social order, of gender, space and disease are still alive in post colonial Zimbabwe and have been used to clamp down on women engaging on *shebeening* and prostitution. In the 1990s for example, single and mobile women remained the scapegoats, public health the objectifying discourse.⁹⁴¹ All attempts that have been made to remove them from, or curtail their informal activities in urban areas have been made on the basis of them not conforming to one of the discourses cited above. *Shebeening* is associated with unemployed women who engage on this activity as a source of living though it is debatable that all shebeen queens can be classified as low income earners because of the vast capital some possessed. However, there is evidence that some women depended on this activity for survival.

Shebeening was one of the informal activities that the new post colonial government of Zimbabwe was determined to crush soon after independence.⁹⁴² In 1981, Minister Edison Zvobgo challenged shebeen operators that if they only wanted to sell beer, they should form co-operatives, pool their resources together, and then ask the Council for a building so that their business can be subjected to taxation by the ministry of finance. Zvobgo argued that Prime Minister Mugabe disliked people who sold beer “under the beds in their rooms”, because “There are various inequities. Apart from being nefarious, there has been some form of corruption associated with them.”⁹⁴³ *Shebeen* operators resented the idea of having their business registered because they made minute profits that would make it difficult for them to have any profits if they paid for licences.

The ZRP also viewed shebeens seriously not only because they sold liquor illegally, but also because they believed *shebeens* were often venues for unlawful gambling and other crimes (which they did not mention). They stated that “Police have closed *shebeens* in the past and would continue to do so whenever they are notified of their existence or come across them.”⁹⁴⁴

⁹⁴¹ Lynette A. Jackson, “When in White Man’s Town: Zimbabwean Women Remember Chibeura”, in Jean Allman, Susan Geiger and Nakanyike Musisi (eds), *Women in African Colonial Histories*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press: 2002), p. 209.

⁹⁴² *The Herald*, Monday, March 30, 1981, “Municipal Shake-up-Zvogbo.”

⁹⁴³ *Chronicle*, Friday, April 3, 1981, “Shebeens foster Crime: Police.”

⁹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Shebeen operators in Bulawayo were defiant. One operator said; “*Shebeens* are illegal but still operate. I don’t see what type of law can now succeed in closing them down”, while another one argued that “we do not operate *shebeens* because we enjoy the business, but because we are trying to support ourselves. We depend on *shebeens* for our very existence.”⁹⁴⁵ Another operator suggested that “It would be better for the government to pass a law creating a new type of liquor licence under which the breweries could supply us so that we could act as their agents.”⁹⁴⁶ The Bulawayo Council however, opposed any law legalising the sell of beer by *shebeen* operators. The Director of Housing and Community Services Eric van der Meulen argued that:

If government agreed to pass such a law, every city resident would qualify, and that would lead to a very chaotic situation indeed...As we use liquor undertaking profits for the community’s benefit, it would not be in the community’s best interests to license all and sundry to sell liquor.⁹⁴⁷

In May 1981, 150 women in Bulawayo who claimed to be *shebeen* queens protested against the government clampdown and handed in a petition to the Bulawayo Town Clerk. One woman from the group, who claimed to be a widow with nine children and operating a *shebeen* in Gwabalanda Township, argued that:

many of us are without husbands and too old now to marry again. We have children to support and we need the money to educate them, buy food and pay our rent..... Jobs are not easy to find and it will be expensive for many of us to rent a proper house for the evenings and buy licences to sell beer.⁹⁴⁸

During the same month police in Bulawayo started to clamp down on *shebeen* operators. Six women from Makokoba, Thorngrove, and Entumbane townships paid heavy fines ranging from Z\$40 or 40 days in jail to Z\$150 or 150 days in jail for operating *shebeens*.⁹⁴⁹ However, nearly a year after the banning of *shebeens*, the business still thrived in townships. In the first four months of 1982 police prosecuted 56 women and imposed fines ranging from Z\$40 to Z\$100 per person.⁹⁵⁰ On 6 June 1984, a 70 year old woman was fined Z\$100 for operating as a *shebeen* queen. Two weeks earlier, she had

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁷ Eric van der Meulen, cited in *Chronicle*, Friday, April 3, 1981, “Shebeens foster Crime: Police.”

⁹⁴⁸ *Chronicle*, Friday, 8 May, 1981, “Shebeen queens speak out.”

⁹⁴⁹ *Chronicle*, Wednesday 20 May, 1981, “Heavy fines for shebeen owners.”

⁹⁵⁰ *Chronicle*, Wednesday 28 April 1982, “Shebeens still thriving.”

been arrested for a similar offence and she admitted that *shebeening* was her only source of income.⁹⁵¹

Other residents in townships reported *shebeen* operators to the city authorities. For example in 1994, Pumula residents informed the Town Clerk of a *shebeen* in Pumula North with illegal rooms for prostitution where “people book to sleep for sexual activities.”⁹⁵² The house was owned by a *shebeen* queen who was a divorcee and “she keeps small girls to attract men; to practice prostitution, to spread STD/HIV/AIDS and men pay rent for those illegal activities. Married couples are not happy about what is happening. Save Pumula residents and save the Nation.”⁹⁵³

Police raids in *shebeens* have at times brought the best out the patrons in an attempt to avoid arrest. According to William Phiri, all sorts of tricks have been employed to avoid arrest, including hiding behind deep freezers, curtains, in bathrooms, jumping into bed fully clothed and pretending to be the father of the house. Despite the threat of arrest, Phiri says the *MaMkhizes* (referring to *shebeen* operators), “being survivors that they are” would always come up with new strategies to ensure that their businesses were not affected by police raids.⁹⁵⁴

In 2004, the Resident Minister and Governor of Metropolitan Bulawayo Cain Mathema called for the legalisation of *shebeens* in Bulawayo because:

it was well known that many citizens of the city of Kings have at their houses of residence leisure facilities known as “*Amatshabhini*” (*shebeens*) which provide drinks and food for customers because of lack of bars, lodges and hotels near their homes other than the council owned dirty and filthy noisy beer gardens which to all intents and purposes were created during the colonial days for African compounds whose patrons were not supposed to be good enough for clear beer and spirits and quieter secluded and social facilities with friends and family.⁹⁵⁵

Mathema argued that *shebeens* were:

⁹⁵¹ *Chronicle*, June 6, 1984, “Shebeen queen fined \$100.”

⁹⁵² BMRL N6A/48 Sheebens- Stand No. “Letter from Pumula Residents Association to the Town Clerk”, 10 March 1994.

⁹⁵³ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁴ William Phiri, “Ibhave yemalokitshini”, Here and there with William Phiri, 30 August 2005, see http://www.inkundla.com/forum/ubbthreads.php/topics/30358/ibhave_yemalokitshini

⁹⁵⁵ BMRL N6A/48 Shebeens, “Letter from Ambassador N. G. G. Mathema, Resident Minister, Bulawayo Metropolitan Province to Mr Japhet Ndabeni Ncube-Executive Mayor, City of Bulawayo, 23 April 2004.

sources of income for many our citizens, especially when the country is facing a hard economic environment caused by local economic saboteurs working hand in hand with the racist neo colonial British and US governments that have imposed unjustifiable sanctions against our mother land.⁹⁵⁶

He also added that during the “colonial and racist days of Rhodesia” the *shebeens* were not legalised and they have never been legalised using the excuse such as “they are centres of crime...I do not know of any legal lodge, hotel, bar which is not used for illegal activity anywhere in the world, so legalise the “*Amatshabhini*” (*shebeens*) in Bulawayo.”⁹⁵⁷ The Mayor of Bulawayo reminded Mathema that shebeens were illegal under the Zimbabwean law and that socially, *shebeens* caused a lot of noise for neighbours and were not a good environment for the upbringing of children.⁹⁵⁸

Interestingly, Mathema wanted the opposition (Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) controlled Council to legalise the *shebeens* now because the country was facing economic problems caused by local enemies (presumably the MDC) who worked in collaboration with “neo-colonial” British and US governments. This reveals that public policy related to alcohol in Africa has been “a sensitive area with a panoply of vested interests and that alcohol mixed business, pleasure and politics in a heady cocktail of public and private affairs.”⁹⁵⁹

Mathema’s rants against the Bulawayo Council were not surprising given the circumstances surrounding his appointment as Governor and Resident Minister of Bulawayo. He was appointed by President Mugabe outside the provisions of the Urban Councils Act in Zimbabwe. The government invoked the Provincial Councils and Administration Act in December 2003 to appoint provincial governors, provincial administrators and district administrators for Bulawayo and Harare.⁹⁶⁰ The politically motivated appointments of the metropolitan governorships in Bulawayo and Harare were meant to counter the opposition MDC control of the two largest councils in Zimbabwe through the implantation of the ruling ZANU PF government functionaries disguised as

⁹⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁸ BMRL N6A/48 Shebeens, “Letter from the Mayor of Bulawayo to Resident Minister Mathema”, 4th August 2004.

⁹⁵⁹ D. Bryceson, “Pleasure and Pain: The Ambiguity of Alcohol in Africa” in D. Bryceson (ed), *Alcohol in Africa: Mixing Alcohol, Pleasure and Politics*, (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002) p. 283.

⁹⁶⁰ Amin Y. Kamete, “The Return of the Jettisoned: ZANU PF’s Crack at ‘Re-Urbanising in Harare”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 32, Number 2, June 2006, p. 261.

provincial officials. Amin Kamete rightly pointed out that these appointments were just one of the attempts by ZANU PF to “re-urbanise” itself by imposing its protégés in administrative posts in urban areas after being jettisoned by urban voters during the 2000 parliamentary and 2002 presidential, mayoral and council elections respectively.⁹⁶¹ Mathema’s demands were unlawful. His comments should not be viewed as representing a shift in state policy on shebeens but just a populist rant aimed at gaining the sympathy of Bulawayo residents who always voted against his ZANU PF party and the comments were prompted by political disputes between the MDC and ZANU PF which branded the MDC collaborators of “imperialists” Britain and America.

None-the-less, *shebeens* were sources of income for Bulawayo residents faced with acute economic difficulties since the colonial period. According to Sheila Ncube:

shebeening has always been attractive to many unemployed, widowed, and single women. It’s one business where one will always make a profit. Women in that business usually started it by borrowing the initial capital from friends and relatives. After sometime, one is usually able to pay back the money and still remain with some cash to continue with the business. Whatever happens there should not be anyone’s concern because that’s what makes it possible for many women and their children to have food on their table. We are tired of people who tell us how to live when they do not care where we get money for food, clothes and so on....⁹⁶²

Prostitution is one of the survival strategies known to be practised by low income women in African cities. In Bulawayo, prostitution intensified in the post colonial era with many cases of prostitutes loitering around the city, especially along Lobengula Street and Railway Avenue and that can be attributed to worsening poverty. Loitering at night in the city was a crime that women could be arrested for. Bulawayo men also believed that all women who patronised beer halls were prostitutes. One of them was Pondo Ncube who argued that:

All these women in the beer hall are prostitutes. They are not even shy to solicit sex in broad daylight. Just a few weeks ago, that woman (he pointed to a woman who was in Makhumalo Beer hall drinking beer) was caught red handed having sex with another man who is not her husband.... After all, these township prostitutes are dirty. They are all diseased. They can kill you...⁹⁶³

⁹⁶¹ Ibid.

⁹⁶² Interview with Sheila Ncube, Nguboyenja Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 5 November 2008.

⁹⁶³ Interview with Pondo Ncube.

Ncube's belief that prostitutes were diseased can be viewed as the extension of the colonial/race and patriarchal/gender power relations that considered all single, unattached women in Zimbabwe as diseased leading to anti-venereal disease campaigns that lasted around 1958.⁹⁶⁴ Secondly, Ncube's view revealed that the belief that women, especially single ones, could not have a legitimate place in urban public spheres was still deeply rooted even in post colonial Zimbabwean gender constructions as was also evidenced by the notorious "round-ups" of single women from the streets in the 1980s.⁹⁶⁵ This was similar to post colonial Tanzania where African male nationalists identified single urban women as the most virulent group of "bloodsuckers" and were suspected to be prostitutes, "ticks", and accused of relying on male providers instead of going to work for themselves in rural areas.⁹⁶⁶

Other Bulawayo residents believed that serious factors forced women into prostitution. According to Mrs Khumalo:

When you see a normal person beginning to behave like an owl that sleeps by day and start moving around at night, there will be serious reasons behind that. Most of the girls I know from the Location (Makokoba) are forced into prostitution by severe poverty conditions. A number of them are orphans and some of them stay with very rough guardians. I don't think that a normal person could just venture into prostitution with all the risks that include AIDS, arrest by police and even the abuse that can be inflicted by some of their clients.⁹⁶⁷

Lillian Moyo of Njube Township argued that she does not condone prostitution but:

People have to understand circumstances forcing people to do these bad things. Look now everyone is selling tomatoes and vegetables and so on. People no longer buy these, they go bad because almost everyone is selling them and you can't raise enough money from them. So others with nice bodies think they can use them to get money...Its bad but what can they do...?⁹⁶⁸

While the two women cited above agreed that prostitution was bad, they condoned it because of the poverty situation forcing women into it.

⁹⁶⁴ Lynette Jackson, "Stray Women" and "Girls on the Move", p. 162.

⁹⁶⁵ D. Jeater, "No Place for a Woman: Gwelo Town, Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1920" in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 26, Number 1, March 2000, p. 41.

⁹⁶⁶ James R. Brennan, "Blood Enemies: Exploitation and Urban Citizenship in the Nationalist Political Thought of Tanzania, 1958-1975", in *Journal of African History*, 47, 2006, p. 404. See also B. Freund, *The African City*, p. 149.

⁹⁶⁷ Informal discussion with Mrs Khumalo, Bulawayo City Centre, Bulawayo, Saturday 5 April 2008.

⁹⁶⁸ Interview with Lillian Moyo, Njube Township, Bulawayo, Monday 5 January 2009.

Most urban residents generally opposed prostitution and rebuked prostitutes for their “lack of morality.” One such member of the public to rebuke prostitutes was Paul Damasane, a poet, in a poem titled in Ndebele language “*Babuthiwe*” (They have been arrested), that was published in 1990 and later own included in the curriculum taught in all high schools where Ndebele was offered as a subject. Damasane began his poem by expressing a surprise why suddenly Bulawayo and particularly its drinking spots like Waverly (*eWevali*) (where prostitutes loitered) were deserted. The poet seemed to be seeing men only and teased them why they were drinking alone at night, why they had not managed to “catch” “anything” when it was month-end time (supposedly when they had money) for “catching” those who “will truly quench their hunger” (*Omaqed’ iphangogobo*), in stanza 3 line 5.

Apparently, the poet knew the answer. The city was quiet because prostitutes were arrested and being held in prisons. He said prostitutes survived like a big squirrel (that flashes its red anus open to trap fowls and catch them when they perk on it thinking that it was good food) (Stanza 6). The poet blamed them for “selling” what “they were given for free”, and which they were supposed to “give it for free.” He however, also noted that prostitutes were only able to “sell” because of the presence of men (who supposedly wanted to buy) and warned men looking for prostitutes to be careful not get arrested for “buying food that is not supposed to be bought.” The poet called for the arrest of prostitutes so that they will learn to get married.⁹⁶⁹ It is clear that the poet was partly celebrating the notorious “round-ups” of single women from the streets in the 1980s,⁹⁷⁰ roundups that have always been carried out ever since then.

Poverty-induced prostitution intensified following the collapse of the formal economy and droughts after 2000 when the country was deep in the throes of the third *Chimurenga* policies, with the government telling people to *rambai makashinga* (heroically persevere, remain steadfast) in the face of deepening poverty. Most families in Bulawayo were being “decimated by extremely high unemployment, runaway inflation,

⁹⁶⁹ Paul Damasane, “Babuthiwe” in *Giya Mthwakazi, Iqoqo Lezinkondlo*, (Harare: Longman, 1990), pp. 47-48.

⁹⁷⁰ D. Jeater, “No Place for a Woman”, p. 41. Street walkers in general have been subjects of condemnation and ridicule, for example Goldman *et al* argued that their “income, blatant solicitation, promiscuity and impersonal sexuality combined to offer them little comfort” and that their work was “at the bottom of the social scale,” see Goldman, Rosen and Finnegan quoted in Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 14.

drought, food shortages, political instability, and growing personal insecurity, in addition to the devastating impact of the AIDS pandemic.”⁹⁷¹ Poor teenagers prostituted themselves to supplement family income by soliciting money in exchange for sex; some even received groceries for sexual services.⁹⁷² Themba Mguni, a pastor with a Pentecostal church whose organisation tried to raise awareness to the plight of child commercial sex workers highlighted that:

pushed out of their families by worsening hunger and the realisation that their parents can no longer afford to put the next meal together, the new generation of commercial sex workers have “colonised” every nightspot, and linger around major hotels in search of customers.⁹⁷³

Most adolescent prostitutes were victims of food shortages running away from hunger in their rural villages. The girls, who operated in small gangs of up to ten each, did not care who they slept with as long as they got food on their tables.⁹⁷⁴

The impact of HIV/AIDS complicated the dimension of poverty in Bulawayo. Grant and Palmiere’s research revealed that already weakened by the devastating impact of ESAP in the 1990s, the poor, powerless and marginalised groups in Nketa and Mpopoma townships households had to contend with the unemployment problem. While the HIV/AIDS illness did not cause poverty, it worsened it. Families who lost relatives due to the HIV/AIDS tended to be more vulnerable to poverty because most victims were the economically active breadwinners.⁹⁷⁵

While Lynette Jackson argued that the association of single, mobile African women with disease has continued in post colonial Zimbabwe, and that now they are represented “as angels of death in the age of HIV/AIDS”⁹⁷⁶, in Bulawayo at least there was evidence that some men were viewed as HIV/AIDS transmitters. Cases of prostitutes’ clients refusing to wear condoms when having sex were common in Bulawayo and they paid extra money as a “reward” for that. Prostitutes gave in to the demands because of the

⁹⁷¹ M. Grant, “Difficult Debut: Social and Economic Identities of Urban Youth in Bulawayo Zimbabwe”, in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 37, 2-3, 2003, p. 411.

⁹⁷² *The Standard*, 15 September 2003, “Sex for groceries as Bulawayo teens resort to prostitution.”

⁹⁷³ *News from Africa*, July 2004, “Food shortages push young girls into prostitution”, in http://www.newsfromafrica.org/newsfromafrica/articles/art_6081.html

⁹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁵ Miriam R. Grant and A. D. Palmiere, “When Tea is a Luxury: The Economic Impact of HIV/AIDS in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe”, *African Studies*, 62, 2, December, 2003, pp. 213-241.

⁹⁷⁶ Lynette Jackson, “Stray Women” and “Girls on the Move”, p. 162.

desperation for money but in the process exposed themselves to sexual transmitted diseases and the HIV/AIDS.⁹⁷⁷ Pondo Ncube also believed that some prostitutes who operated in the city centre at night were “clean” because “they never allow a man to touch them without a condom...”⁹⁷⁸

Grant and Palmiere’s study also revealed the feminisation of poverty. Infection rate tended to be higher among men, leaving many households female-headed and due to their limited access to resources, many households were increasingly becoming vulnerable. Most dependants, women and girls were more likely to resort to commercial sex work or engage in transactional sex with sugar daddies to gain access to resources.⁹⁷⁹ The irony was that while there was evidence of men in Bulawayo spreading HIV/AIDS, women have always remained the subjects of round ups and arrest by police under the charge of loitering at night that seemed to be applied to them only in most cases.

While the various urban livelihood adaptations discussed above have been extremely important in large towns of Sub-Saharan Africa, they have not been sufficient to prevent further adaptations that include increased out-migration to escape urban poverty.⁹⁸⁰

6.5 Relocating to Rural Areas as Coping Strategy.

Unemployables, especially the old, no longer able to successfully participate in vending for survival, relocated to rural areas where they could survive with little financial obligations as the only way of escaping biting urban poverty. Freund aptly argued that if making ends meet while working was hard, surviving afterwards became even more difficult. In general, for all the important linkages that urban Africans kept with the countryside, returning there was not an attractive option in phases of economic decline.⁹⁸¹

In the 1980s authorities in Zimbabwe were worried by the prospect of towns being flooded with unemployed rural dwellers in search of employment, but there was a noticeable reversal in population movement around 2000 in Bulawayo. A harsh economic

⁹⁷⁷ Interview with Moffat Nkomo, Bulawayo City Centre, Bulawayo, Friday 12 December, 2008.

⁹⁷⁸ Interview with Pondo Ncube.

⁹⁷⁹ Miriam Grant and Palmiere, “When Tea is a Luxury”, pp. 213-241.

⁹⁸⁰ Deborah Potts, “Recent Trends in Rural-Urban and urban-Rural Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa: the Empirical Evidence and Implications for understanding Urban Livelihood Insecurity”, *Environment, Politics and Development Working Paper Series*, Paper 6, Department of Geography, King’s College London, 2008, p. 11.

⁹⁸¹ B. Freund, *The African City*, p. 152.

climate forced a sizeable number of home owners to sell their properties and relocate to rural areas. The transfer of properties was very high in townships and the council's housing department statistics revealed that many voluntary sellers preferred living in rural areas as opposed to the city where the cost of living was becoming astronomical especially for the old, retrenched and retired especially in older townships. In 2001, many house owners in Old Pumula, Pumula East and Pumula North townships were forced to sell their properties and relocate to communal areas because of economic problems.⁹⁸² The situation worsened in 2002 when 133 houses were sold in the three Pumula townships and their owners re-located to rural areas. The Zimbabwean diasporas tended to cash on the situation, buying stands or houses in the low, medium and high density areas of the city.⁹⁸³

In 2004, 105 houses were sold in the Mzilikazi/Makokoba area while 122 and 106 houses were sold in the Sizinda/Tshabalala and Pumula areas respectively. 134 houses were sold in the Magwegwe/Luveve/Cowdry Park cluster, while 36, 47 and three houses were sold in Mpopoma, Matshobana and Iminyela townships respectively.⁹⁸⁴ In 2005, the transfer of properties intensified in townships with 76 and 194 property transfers in Sizinda/Tshabalala and Emganwini/Nketa areas respectively. One hundred and twenty seven and 140 houses were transferred in Pumula and Magwegwe townships respectively, while 178 properties were transferred in the Lobengula/Njube housing area.⁹⁸⁵

Some old people who remained in Bulawayo around 2005 were those with children or close relatives working abroad who sent them remittances. Mr. Maseko for example, noted that:

I have got a son in the United States of America who has been sending me money for many years. I have come across many old people in the townships who now wish to die or commit suicide because of the serious economic difficulties they are facing. They are saying it's better to die than to be subjected to unprecedented suffering and hunger they have endured especially during the last two decades.⁹⁸⁶

⁹⁸² Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2001, p. 27.

⁹⁸³ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2002, pp. 19 and 23.

⁹⁸⁴ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, 2004, pp. 16 and 19.

⁹⁸⁵ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services Department, December 2005, pp. 18, 19, 20 and 22.

⁹⁸⁶ Interview with Mr. Maseko, Old Long Distance Bus Rank Terminus, Saturday 3 January 2009.

Maseko bought a rural homestead in Lower Gweru where he spent most of his time since his retirement in 1996. He asked this author “How do you expect the 60 year olds and those older to survive? We no longer have any power to compete with the young in vegetable hawking.”⁹⁸⁷ Juma Maseko-Phiri bought a rural homestead in the Matobo area through the financial assistance of his children who worked in South Africa.⁹⁸⁸

In 2004, *The Standard* also reported that biting economic hardships forced more urban people, including the retrenched to go to rural areas where the cost of living was relatively low. Some terminally-ill people also went back to rural areas. The CSO highlighted that:

Although we have not done a study on that, there are indications that more and more people are leaving urban areas to settle in rural areas due to economic problems...This is clearly a reverse of the situation in the early 80s and 90s when nearly everyone falling in the working bracket wanted to go and look for employment in the formal sector.⁹⁸⁹

The Famine Early Warning System Network (Fewsnet) noted that:

...the migration from rural to urban areas has begun to switch directions in Zimbabwe, and significant urban to rural migration is occurring. Some households are relocating to informal settlements on farms surrounding urban centres.”...Households unable to migrate are forced into the growing informal sector and, if they are lucky, are able to earn enough to get by...In addition, increasing numbers of people are looking for opportunities to leave the country altogether in search of better standards of living.⁹⁹⁰

This urban-rural migration trend was observed in the 1980s in African countries that gained independence in the 1960s.⁹⁹¹

While other destitute parents did not sell their houses in Bulawayo, they deserted their children and returned to their rural homes but were unable to send money to support

⁹⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁸ Interview with Juma Maseko-Phiri.

⁹⁸⁹ The CSO, cited in *The Standard*, 28 November 2004, “Urban dwellers return to roots as poverty bites.”

⁹⁹⁰ Famine Early Warning System Network, quoted in *The Standard*, 28 November 2004, “Urban dwellers return to roots as poverty bites.”

⁹⁹¹ Hardoy and Satterthwaite cited in Potts, “Shall we go home”, pp. 250-51. Potts also aptly argued that although there is abundant evidence that many, and often most, African rural-urban migrants plan to return “home” at the end of their working career in town, it was difficult to establish that the economic difficulties which became typical of urban Africa in the 1980s and 1990s greatly reinforced such plans, and encouraged their realisation, see D. Potts, “Shall we go home”, p. 260.

their dependents left in urban areas.⁹⁹² Therefore, as Freund observed, for many unemployed parents in general, there seemed to be more despair than skilful opportunism in straddling between town and country in most African cities.⁹⁹³

Youths abandoned by their parents were left in despair as one of them highlighted that “My parents are in the rural areas. I feel I have lost them since there is no support or guidance.”⁹⁹⁴ A similar case was highlighted by Charlton Ngcebetsa Jnr, a former council case worker who indicated that when following up cases of rent arrears in townships they sometimes found children abandoned by their parents. When they enquired about the whereabouts of parents, they always got similar responses, the answer was:

my father was recalled by our grandmother/father, uncle or another close relative in rural areas. The father would sometimes go for more than a month or many months in rural areas leaving their children behind with no food or even money for bills. My observation was that most parents who did that were of Ndebele origin (who had rural homes they could return to). Most of them were shy to approach the Council whenever they were in financial difficulties. A number of them would just return to rural areas.⁹⁹⁵

Most parents who deserted their children were of local origin with rural homes where they could return to and such people never approached the council’s welfare offices for help. Ngcebetsa noted that “The Ndebeles would rather return to rural areas than be seen to be begging for food in an urban area.”⁹⁹⁶

6.6 Other Coping Mechanisms.

Petty thieving and pilfering from employers was widespread during the colonial period and even in the post colonial era. Engels described theft as the most primitive form of protest.⁹⁹⁷ While disgruntled workers may have had other motives when stealing from their employers, there is evidence that some workers stole as a survival mechanism. Bulawayo men recalled buying goods stolen from employers at very low prices in

⁹⁹² M. Grant, “Social and Economic Identities of Urban Youth in Bulawayo”, p. 421.

⁹⁹³ B. Freund, *The African City*, pp. 154 and 152.

⁹⁹⁴ M. Grant, “Social and Economic Identities of Urban Youth in Bulawayo”, p. 433.

⁹⁹⁵ Interview with Charlton Ngcebetsa Jnr, Bulawayo Tower Block, Bulawayo, Wednesday 7 January 2009.

⁹⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁷ Engels, quoted in A. Burton, *African Underclass: Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam* (Nairobi: The British Institute in Eastern Africa, 2005), p. 123.

Makokoba Township. For Moffat Nkomo it was difficult to resist the temptation of buying such goods and this encouraged a culture of reckless spending as:

everyday after work there were “thieves” moving around, I mean those residents selling goods stolen from their employers in factories or homes. Somehow one was always tempted to buy those goods because they were very cheap and at the end of the day discovered that you would have spent almost all of your money on those goods. As a result very few people in Makokoba ever entertained any idea of saving. The environment always encouraged impulse buying, and then showing off your new items during public events such as music shows.⁹⁹⁸

Nkomo argued that a thriving market of goods stolen from workplaces still exists in townships like Makokoba.

Mr. Maseko, who worked for the Cold Storage Company in Bulawayo from 1960 to 1996 witnessed many instances of colleagues dismissed for stealing meat and he always encouraged them to ask for meat from the bosses instead of stealing that resulted in their dismissal and serious financial problems when they failed to secure other jobs.⁹⁹⁹

Bhoqo Mpala from Makokoba Township worked in a factory and retired a few years before 2005. He condoned stealing from employers, noting that:

How could people have survived with the wages they were getting? That’s how most factory workers survived. It may be worse now because of the worsening economic conditions. In Ndebele society there is a proverb that says “*Idla lapho ebotshelwe khona*” translated to English means “a cow or goat eats and survives around the place where it has been tied.” That means one has to subsist from where they are based. Having worked in an industry for the whole of your life and for you to be man enough to survive and bring up your family your employer should bear the cost which-ever way. But that’s a very dangerous practice, we knew that if we got caught that was going to be the end of work and it would be difficult to get another job with no recommendation from your previous employer. Sometimes some of your colleagues could blow the whistle to the manager and that will be your end. Fortunately, that never happened to me.¹⁰⁰⁰

Mpala refused to explain how they managed to get out of the factory with stolen goods since when they knocked off they were checked by a manager/supervisor or security detail at the exit door. Juma Maseko-Phiri argued that it was easy to get out of factories with stolen property because there were no professional security guarding companies like Safeguards and Fawcett. “I think these companies are a post independence creation.

⁹⁹⁸ Interview with Moffat Nkomo.

⁹⁹⁹ Interview with Mr. Maseko, Renkini Old Long Distance Bus Terminus, Saturday 3 January 2009.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Interview with Bhoqo Mpala, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, Friday 23 November 2008.

However workers still steal from industries with those professional guards at factory exits every day.”¹⁰⁰¹

Ken Ncube, who worked as a messenger supplemented his food by getting a pint or two of fresh milk and some sugar illegally from his employer’s kitchen. The “game” was played with the tea boy/woman at the workplace who put those commodities in big envelopes, sealed and gave them to the messenger. When Ncube got out of the company premises for his daily delivery errands, he took that opportunity to deliver his “loot” to his home. Ncube “fleeced” the company because it paid him “peanuts”, and he was not worried about the prospect of being caught and dismissed from the job because that was what most of them did to survive.¹⁰⁰² While Ncube justified his thieving as a “revenge” for being paid “peanuts”, his actions were mainly fuelled by economic need. Ncube was also being “fleeced” by his unemployed neighbours who sometimes engaged in illegal vending for survival. He and his children always left keys for the house under a big slab in front of the house so that anyone who returned home first would get them to access the house since they did not have spare keys. One day he caught his neighbour stealing sugar, cooking oil and the staple maize meal when he unexpectedly returned from work during working hours.¹⁰⁰³

Therefore, as the three cases of theft cited above happened during the colonial and post colonial periods, the basic motivation was more likely simple economic need, unaccompanied by any form of political consciousness as were most cases in Dar es Salaam.¹⁰⁰⁴ Meanwhile, many cases of pick pocketing were also reported in the city.

Pick pocketing in most African cities has sometimes been singled out as a direct result of poverty.¹⁰⁰⁵ In Bulawayo, pick pocketing cases have always been rampant especially in over crowded areas like a bus terminus and Lobengula Street which used to be a den of shoppers and vendors. Low income earners and other shoppers from rural areas frequented that street, perhaps because it is located just next to local buses and emergency taxi ranks on the western boundary of the city. Lions Supermarket was a

¹⁰⁰¹ Interview with Juma Maseko-Phiri, Makhumalo (Big Bhawa) Beer Hall, Makokoba, Sunday 4 January 2009.

¹⁰⁰² Informal discussion with Ken Ncube, Manwele Beer Hall, Mzilikazi Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 24 November 2007.

¹⁰⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁴ A. Burton, *Urbanisation, Crime and Colonial Order in Dar es Salaam*, p. 123.

¹⁰⁰⁵ O’Connor, *Poverty in Africa*, p. 114.

popular destination for many shoppers. The other reason was that many shops in the street were run by Indian traders who entertained bargaining for low prices from shoppers. Street thieves always pounced on unsuspecting shoppers in Lobengula Street. In the 1990s, hardly a day passed by without hearing some shoppers, especially women, crying hysterically and shouting “ooh my bag...my bag...catch him...” and you will see a young man or a group of them bolting away towards Makokoba and Mzilikazi townships after snatching a purse and or other valuables.

Other low income earners in Bulawayo resorted to becoming “perpetual mourners” (those who attend funeral gatherings (uninvited) almost everyday) as a way of accessing food. According to Ngcebetsha:

Such people move from township to township identifying homes where there will be bereavement. They just join the funeral gathering until the funeral is over and they move on. They will be assured of food because food is given to everyone attending a funeral gathering and in most cases it's always difficult to know the identity of all people in a funeral gathering, but many people have now become aware of such people (professional mourners) because they always see them every time they attend funeral gatherings of their relatives.¹⁰⁰⁶

Interestingly, when the perpetual mourners approached a home with a funeral gathering, they:

“Wear” very sombre faces and can sometimes be seen shedding tears and sometimes even be heard saying words like ‘Oh! Our good relative has departed now, surely how are we going to survive now that they are no more’, when it will be clear that they never knew the dead person before. Sometimes the dead person will be a child. Those mourners just try many antics that could make other mourners accept them as either a neighbour or just one of the distant relative in the never ending relatives in Africans’ extended family linkages. Those people will be hungry. Their main attraction will be the moment when food distribution starts. Some are however known to help with manual work like cutting firewood in every funeral gathering they attended. That will be secondary to them though.¹⁰⁰⁷

Pondo Ncube, a gardener in low density areas, owed his survival to the “mercies” of his employers [white] who provided him and his family with food. He highlighted that low income earners frequented beer halls not because they had money for beer everyday but to “hide” away from their hungry wives and children. Ncube indicated that:

¹⁰⁰⁶ Interview with Charlton Ngcebetsha Jnr.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid.

We go to beer halls as a way of running away from your family because you would have left them without food. Just imagine spending the whole day at home when your wife and children would be hungry and staring at you! Sometimes I have known of people who say they just drink this opaque beer (*amasese*) to keep their stomachs full, they would have gone for a day or more without eating a decent meal and then come to the beer hall to look for friends to buy them beer. They also returned the favour on a day when they got money.¹⁰⁰⁸

This revealed links between drinking and male underemployment, unemployment and poverty whereby drinking became compensatory, a way to while away free time and forget one's circumstances, a kind of social lubricant that was highlighted by Deborah Bryceson.¹⁰⁰⁹ For S. Lunga however, hiding away in the beer hall was no longer safe because:

On several occasions we have seen wives coming here to embarrass their husbands, accusing them of enjoying drinking when they left their family without food. In extreme cases, we have witnessed serious fights between couples over that issue. That is the reason why some men end up deserting their family altogether...¹⁰¹⁰

Therefore, pressure faced by men because of poverty was sometimes too difficult to bear.

Walking long distances to work was another coping mechanism. Khiwa Dlomo, who stayed in Emakhandeni Township and worked in the city's industrial sites walked to work almost everyday during the last two decades. Dlomo indicated that:

I simply can't afford transport costs. If I boarded buses I would have saved nothing at all for my family, so everyday I walk for more than two and a half good hours to work and the same back home. On days when I wake up late, I run very fast and arrive at work sweating like a donkey carrying a sack on its back on a very hot afternoon. Sometimes we walk hours on very rainy weather. I only take comfort from that I won't be the only one. I join hundreds and hundreds of other workers in a similar position. You just need to go to Luveve Road or Khami Road early in the morning or after five in the evening on any working day to see to see the swarms of workers walking to and from work everyday. I have walked with some of them for nearly two decades now...¹⁰¹¹

¹⁰⁰⁸ Interview with Pondo Ncube.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Deborah Bryceson, "Pleasure and Pain", in Deborah F. Bryceson (ed), *Alcohol in Africa: Mixing Business, Pleasure and Politics*, pp. 278 and 285.

¹⁰¹⁰ Interview with S. Lunga, Makhumalo Beer hall, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, Sunday 4 January 2009.

¹⁰¹¹ Interview with Khiwa Dlomo, Emakhandeni Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 3 January 2009.

In 2005, William Phiri, a roving *Chronicle* photographer captured some residents of Matshobana Township doing a *dabulap*¹⁰¹² from the city centre due to the high transport fares and noted that more and more people were joining the “walking clubs”, popularly known as *Sihube*¹⁰¹³, or staff buses. Phiri mocked that while the idea of saving on transport sounded appealing; one had to weigh the economics of endlessly replacing shoe soles more-so with the disappearance of cobblers after Operation Murambatsvina. He thus suggested that it was perhaps time to revert to the use bicycles which have been part of townships for a long time.¹⁰¹⁴

Other coping mechanisms in some households ranged from children dropping out of school and being sent to rural areas to participate in farming activities, engaging in multiple economic activities thereby lengthening their working day, to outright begging, while over 60 percent of households affected by HIV/AIDS disposed of assets like bicycles, furniture, radios and tools to survive.¹⁰¹⁵

Juma Maseko also highlighted that:

Some young people run away to neighbouring countries to look for employment. The result has been that older people have been left with many grandchildren to look after. Some of our children are only brought back from the neighbouring countries, especially South Africa in coffins, that is, already dead. ... The result has been more suffering amongst many such families...¹⁰¹⁶

A disturbing report on the history of diasporisation and its effects on Bulawayo and the surrounding Matabeleland areas was produced by the Solidarity Peace Trust which chronicled how among other things, youth in the region stole property of their parents, then ran away to *eGoli*, (Johannesburg) and many of them never remitted anything to their parents. In most cases, they returned seriously diseased or in coffins dead.¹⁰¹⁷

¹⁰¹² *Dabulap* referred to a system whereby migrants from Bulawayo travelled the long distance from the city to the neighbouring South Africa on foot in search of greener pastures, but now was euphemistically used to refer to the long distances workers in the city walked between their living and work places.

¹⁰¹³ *Sihube* was a long distance bus that travelled between Bulawayo and rural areas. In this case city workers who travelled to and from work daily on foot had also been nicknamed *Sihube*, (the long distance bus).

¹⁰¹⁴ William Phiri, “The Importance of Bicycles”, Here and there with William Phiri, 3 October 2005, see http://www.inkundla.com/forum/ubbthreads.php/topics/30358/ibhave_yemalokitshini

¹⁰¹⁵ M. Grant and Palmiere, “When Tea is a Luxury”, pp. 230-233.

¹⁰¹⁶ Interview with Juma Maseko-Phiri.

¹⁰¹⁷ Solidarity Peace Trust, “Gone to Egoli”, Economic Survival Strategies in Matabeleland: A preliminary study, 30 June 2009.

6.7 Conclusion

In 2005, vending was a key (though risky and unreliable) source of livelihood in Bulawayo. “Everyone has become a vendor” was an oft-cited phrase, despite the risk of harassment for illegal vendors.¹⁰¹⁸ The *kukiya-kiya* economy had firmly established itself in almost all urban areas of the country as the formal sector had nearly collapsed. Those not able to partake in daring economic activities for survival relocated to rural areas.

It was under this scenario that the Zimbabwean government unleashed a “clean-up” operation that targeted all informality in urban areas in 2005 thereby destroying informal housing and vending activities for most poor urban residents. The following chapter explores this assault on the poor in Bulawayo during the urban crisis and draws examples from a post OM “reconstruction” programme to argue that the poor have no guarantee to permanent residency in the city.

¹⁰¹⁸ Kate Bird and Martin Prowse, “Vulnerability, Poverty and Coping in Zimbabwe”, *Research Paper* No 2008/41, 2008, p. 17.

Chapter 7

The Urban Poor and the ‘Curse’ of the Two ‘Operations’ in 2005.

In 2005, the assault on the urban poor and the attempt to banish them from urban areas intensified when the government embarked on an unprecedented “clean up” that led to the demolition of the informal homes, informal business premises and vending sites, and left hundreds of thousands of them homeless and without a source of livelihood.¹⁰¹⁹ The government immediately launched Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle (OGKH), a “reconstruction” programme purportedly to solve the severe shelter and informal trading crisis it had just created. This chapter analyses this urban crisis through the lenses of these two operations in Bulawayo and it is argued that the unprecedented blitz was an attempt by the state to purge the city of the defenceless, undesirable residents because of the government failure to provide a solution to their housing, unemployment and increasing poverty problems at a time when their “usefulness” to the state was perceived to have almost ceased to exist. The conduct and outcomes of the two operations highlighted the fragility of the urban poor’s claims to the right to permanent urban residency in the city.

7.1 Towards the Urban Crisis in 2005: A Shattered Economy and the Politics of Desperation.

When under threat from the opposition MDC party in the late 1990s, the ruling ZANU PF government increasingly relied on the liberation war history for popular support. ZANU PF was articulated as impersonating the spirit of the anti-colonial struggle, veterans of the war, and therefore genuine heirs to the governance of Zimbabwe.¹⁰²⁰ The divide between rural and urban Zimbabwe became instrumental once again as ZANU PF’s power base was in rural areas while the labour movement and its political counterpart, the MDC were predominantly urban. “Rural Zimbabwe” was viewed as “true Zimbabwe” while the

¹⁰¹⁹ A. Tibaijuka, Report of the Fact Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to Assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe, 18 July 2005, p. 7.

¹⁰²⁰ Brian Raftopolous, cited in Lene Bull-Christiansen, *Tales of the Nation: Feminist Nationalism or Patriotic History? Defining National History and Identity in Zimbabwe*, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2004), pp. 58-59.

urban population was perceived with increasing suspicion. President Robert Mugabe sided with war veterans and supported their violent takeover of white owned commercial farms in what later became known as the fast track land resettlement programme. Violent farm take-overs were depicted as fulfilling the spirit of the first and second *Chimurengas*.¹⁰²¹ Under the third *Chimurenga*, many urban based opposition groups were termed enemies and these included the labour movement, the MDC, farm workers who defended their employers [white], the independent media, human rights NGOs and churches who were all proclaimed agents of the neo-colonial British enemy¹⁰²² and the imperialist United States of America.

In an attempt to explain the exclusive nature of the authoritarian nationalism in Zimbabwe especially after 2000, Terence Ranger aptly argued that the Zimbabwean crisis was not merely a ruthless struggle for wealth and power, “but also an ideological combat, partly powered by and partly reflected in ideas, mainly about the past and called by the regime and its publicists “patriotic history.”¹⁰²³ This “patriotic history” was very different from the older “nationalist historiography” and even more different from the more recent “historiography of nationalism.” Whereas “nationalist historiography” proclaimed the nationalist movement as inclusive and non-racial, and nationalism as emancipatory, Ranger argued that “patriotic history” emphasized the division of the nation not only into races but also into “patriots” and “sell-outs” amongst its African population. It justified an authoritarian government in order to repress and punish “traitors”, both in urban and rural areas. Nationalist historiography also involved projects on modernisation and reform, sometimes with radical versions of Socialist and egalitarian visions but “patriotic history” calls for “authenticity.”¹⁰²⁴

¹⁰²¹ Meredith, Sylvester, cited in Lene Bull-Christiansen, *Tales of the Nation*, p. 59. The First *Chimurenga* refers to the 1896/7 Ndebele and Shona uprisings and the Second *Chimurenga* refers to the war of liberation against the white rule in colonial Zimbabwe that began in 1966. The Third *Chimurenga* refers to the period from 1999 characterised by chaotic farm invasions and portrayed by government as a way of achieving economic independence.

¹⁰²² *Ibid*, p. 59. For more information see Raftopoulos 2000: 38-46, Meredith 2002: 191-193, Sylvester 2003: 41-43.)

¹⁰²³ Terence Ranger, “The Uses and Abuses of History in Zimbabwe”, in Mai Palmberg and Ranka Primorac (eds), *Skinning the Skunk-Facing Zimbabwean Features*, Discussion Paper 30, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2005), p. 7.

¹⁰²⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 7-8.

On the other hand, according to Ranger, the historiography of nationalism sought to enquire into the nature of nationalism and about the course of its development and to offer alternative versions of challenges and struggles within the nationalist movement. In contrast, “patriotic history” offered a highly selective and streamlined version of the anti-colonial struggle with its doctrine of “permanent revolution” “leaping from *chimurenga* to *chimurenga*. It did not offer time for questions or alternatives, and it was basically a doctrine of violence because it saw itself as a doctrine of revolution.”¹⁰²⁵ Under the third *Chimurenga* discourse, the most important people to ZANU PF were no longer urban workers but war veterans.¹⁰²⁶ This was the political context under which the 2005 urban crisis occurred.

In 2000, not surprisingly, then Vice President Joseph Msika, a former nationalist leader, labelled Bulawayo residents “*imigodoyi*” (useless dogs) for supporting the opposition MDC.¹⁰²⁷ This revealed the former nationalist leaders’ continuing lack of respect for the rights and choices of the urban based masses. In 2005, politically, the government’s authoritarian nationalism, built on a growing exclusivity, had come full trot in its permanent identification of enemies both without and within,¹⁰²⁸ and the urban population that had voted for the opposition since 2000 was perhaps high on its list of enemies.

Economically, policies of third *Chimurenga* precipitated the collapse of the fragile formal sector in Zimbabwe. The majority of Zimbabweans literally became scavengers, laying their hands on anything just to get by in the informal economy under the *kukiya-kiya* (exploiting whatever resources are at hand just to survive) economy that firmly gripped the nation since 2000. In 2004, unemployment stood at 80 percent, and the worsening economic crisis forced more company closures. Eight hundred manufacturing companies closed down since 2002, while twenty-five were struggling and eight faced

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁰²⁶ Terence Ranger, “Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History, and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe” in *Journal of Southern African History*, Vol. 30, No. 2, 2004, p. 233.

¹⁰²⁷ See <http://www.newzimbabwe.com>, 04/08/2009.

¹⁰²⁸ Brian Raftopolous, “Union Bashing is as old as Nationalism on Zimbabwe’s Political Agenda”, *Unpublished Paper*, Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, (Not dated), pp. 2-3.

closure in 2004.¹⁰²⁹ This left many urban workers without any means of survival. In June 2005, about three to four million Zimbabweans earned their living through informal sector employment, supporting another five million people, while the formal sector employed about 1.3m people.¹⁰³⁰ Over 70 percent of the population lived below the poverty line¹⁰³¹ and the country was stuck in an urban crisis characterised by high unemployment and severe shortage of low cost housing. It was at this moment that the government sanctioned an assault on the urban poor.

Official launching the operation on May 19 2005, the Chairperson of the Government appointed Harare Commission, Sekesai Makwavarara argued that Operation Murambatsvina (OM) was “to enforce by-laws and stop all forms of illegal activities.”¹⁰³² She cited the rampant violations of Council by-laws in areas of vending, traffic control, illegal structures, touting/abuse of commuters by rank marshals, street life/prostitution, vandalism of property infrastructure, stock theft, illegal cultivation, and so on which led to the deterioration of standards and negatively affected the image of the city. She expounded that the assault on illegal activities was an attempt to reclaim the city’s cleanliness, decency, peace and tranquil environment for business and leisure.¹⁰³³ Prior to her speech, the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Gideon Gono also refereed to various forms of corruption and indiscipline in the economy and the need for the re-orientation of the law enforcement systems in fighting such challenges.¹⁰³⁴

It baffled the mind why the government assumed the moral high ground by labelling all Zimbabweans and their informal survival activities immoral when the *kukiya-kiya* activities, some of them illegal and backed by some “big men”-politicians for their enrichment, demanded that people do anything to survive. As Jeremy Jones rightly noted, there was nothing inherently immoral about trying to survive, more-so at a time

¹⁰²⁹ *The Standard*, 28 November 2004, “Urban dwellers return to roots as poverty bites.” A. Tibaijuka estimated that 75 percent of Zimbabweans were unemployed in 2005. See A. Tibaijuka, “Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe”, p. 17.

¹⁰³⁰ Tibaijuka, “Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe”, p. 17. Also see pages 13 and 14 of the same report.

¹⁰³¹ *Ibid*, p. 17.

¹⁰³² See Annex 3, “Press Clip of Speech by the Chairperson of the Government-appointed Harare Commission, Ms. Sekesai Makwavarara” in Tibaijuka, Report of the Fact Finding Mission to Zimbabwe”, p. 94.

¹⁰³³ *Ibid*.

¹⁰³⁴ Dr. G. Gono, cited in Tibaijuka, Report of the Fact Finding Mission to Zimbabwe”, p. 12.

when what was legal could not become a measure of what was moral.¹⁰³⁵ The collapse of the formal sector, together with droughts, had engendered a situation where for many, survival became the ultimate and often the only ethical end as people argued that “we *kiya-kiya* in order to eat and survive.”¹⁰³⁶ OM was therefore launched when the economy was in shambles.

Murambatsvina is a Shona word meaning “discarding the filth.” The operation started in the Zimbabwean capital, Harare, evolved into a nationwide demolition and eviction campaign carried out by the police and army. The crushing operation reached Bulawayo on 22 May, 2005.¹⁰³⁷ The Minister of Local Government, Public Works and Urban Development Ignatius Chombo highlighted that all costs of OM were to be borne by every local authority and to that effect, the Bulawayo Council was requested to provide front-end loaders, low beds, bulldozers, caterpillars, graders, trucks and manpower to be used during the demolition exercise and the Council was asked to make special arrangements with the government fuel supplier National Oil Company of Zimbabwe to ensure the availability of fuel for the demolition exercise,¹⁰³⁸ at a time when local authorities were reeling under serious fuel shortages for critical services.

Tibaijuka, Head of the United Nations fact finding mission and author of the most authoritative damning report disliked by the government of Zimbabwe, aptly argued that OM had to be understood within the broader context of rapid and chaotic urbanisation crisis in Africa which had occurred in an environment of consistent economic decline over the past thirty years.¹⁰³⁹ This was characterised by lack of inclusive perspective in city visions, the mismatch between old standards, and lower levels of affordability, all leading to unsustainable urban development and growing exclusion, compounding the proliferation of slum and squatter settlements. According to Kajumulo, whatever the myriad reasons behind this urbanisation, it has been characterised by worsening access to

¹⁰³⁵ Jeremy Jones, “Nothing is Straight in Zimbabwe”, pp. 19 and 20.

¹⁰³⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰³⁷ Bulawayo Municipality Records Library (BMRL) P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, City of Bulawayo, Report of the City of Bulawayo to the Fact Finding Mission of the United Nations on the Demolition/Clean Up by the Government of Zimbabwe, 6 July 2005, p. 1.

¹⁰³⁸ BMRL P4/1 Letter from I. M. Ndebele (Acting Provincial Administrator, Bulawayo Metropolitan Province to the Town Clerk, Bulawayo City Council, 15 June 2005. (Operation Clean Up and Facelift Programme: Bulawayo City Council).

¹⁰³⁹ A. Tibaijuka, “Report of the Fact Finding Mission to Zimbabwe”, p. 10.

adequate shelter and security of tenure, and all the problems of overcrowding, by growing vulnerability to environmental health problems, and natural disasters, growing inequality and increasing violence and crime among women and the poorest of the poor.¹⁰⁴⁰

Large scale forced evictions and mass scale forced displacement have been part and parcel of the political and development landscape for decades in the Third World as cities seek to “beautify” themselves, sponsor international events, criminalise slums and increase investment prospects for international companies and the urban elite. The practice of forced evictions is carried out on a wide scale in many countries without proper legal procedures, resettlement, relocation and or compensation. Conflict and disaster, as well as urban regeneration and gentrification measures can be a source of eviction. The most frequent cases of forced evictions however are the small scale ones which also cause untold suffering for the communities, households and individuals concerned.¹⁰⁴¹ Forced evictions always targeted the poor. In any forced evictions, evictees tended to end worse off than before eviction and evictions compounded the problem that they were ostensibly aimed at solving.¹⁰⁴² This was similar to Zimbabwe where OM worsened the destitution of the urban poor but what was unique was the scale and ferocity of the operation.

7.2 Possible Reasons behind Operation Murambatsvina vis-a-vis the Poor in Urban Areas.

The Government stated that the real purpose of OM was not to destroy and cause pain, but to deal with crime, squalor, and fight poverty (not the poor) by rebuilding and reorganising urban settlements and micro, small and medium enterprises in a way that would bring dignity, order and prosperity to the stakeholders and the nation at large.¹⁰⁴³

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 80-81.

¹⁰⁴¹ UN-Habitat, *Enhancing Urban Safety and Security: Global Report on Human Settlements* (London & Sterling, VA: EARTHSCAN, 2007), p. 124-125. Examples of evictions included those in Luanda, Angola since 2001, Malabo and Bata, Equatorial Guinea since 2004, in neighbourhoods around Nairobi, Kenya since 2000, in Legon Village, Accra, Ghana in May 2006. See Mondli Hlatshwayo, “Urban Evictions and Political Mobilisation in Angola” in *Khanya: a Journal for Activists*, January 2007, p. 38.

¹⁰⁴² Ibid, p. 124.

¹⁰⁴³ Response by the Government of Zimbabwe to the Report by the UN special Envoy on Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order, August 2005, p. 20, in <http://www2.uni.int/Countries/Zimbabwe/1152250806.pdf>

However, OM destroyed, and caused pain and as such there appeared to be other underlying reasons behind the blitz.

The urban poor have at times been perceived as a nuisance and a threat to the order and prosperity of urban areas. The very presence of hungry, formally unemployed, uninformed and uneducated masses, with no way to earn an honest living, frightens authorities in charge of the urban areas. There is fear that these desperate people can do anything, including resorting to violence in order to make a living.¹⁰⁴⁴

Sometimes slums and squatter settlements, which invariably house the poorest sections of the urban communities, have often been regarded as havens of crime, political instability and other forms of deviance.¹⁰⁴⁵ The Zimbabwean government also labelled informal housing and shacks in townships as havens for criminals and argued that it destroyed them to rid townships of criminal elements. For example, soon after destroying illegal buildings belonging to the poor in Makokoba Township, police spokesman Inspector Smile Dube stated that “There are no sacred cows. Criminals have been hiding in the shacks and we are after them. They shall face the wrath of the law. “We are continuing with the manhunt for criminals who have been terrorising the residents. Cases of theft have gone down.”¹⁰⁴⁶

Those deemed poor were not expected to possess certain household property which the police believed can only be owned by well to do urban residents. For example, during OM in Makokoba Township, police confiscated goods such as television sets, digital video disc players, stoves and radios believed to have been stolen from other suburbs so that the well to do residents would be given a chance to inspect them. Interestingly, four weeks after the launch of the operation, not even one criminal was arrested in Bulawayo.¹⁰⁴⁷

This reminded Pondo Ncube of his experience in 1975 when his white employers gave him a T-shirt they had imported from South Africa. He was stopped by two white police men (*amajoni*) outside a beer hall in Makokoba Township and they demanded to know where he got it from:

¹⁰⁴⁴ Amin Y. Kamete, *Governing the Poor in Harare, Zimbabwe: Shifting Perceptions and Changing Responses*, (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet no. 122, 2002), p. 15.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Inspector Smile Dube quoted in *Chronicle*, 13 June 2005, “Makokoba illegal structures removed.”

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Chronicle*, 13 June 2005, “Makokoba illegal structures removed”, p. 1.

Once I told them (the police) that I was given by my “Baas”, they took down his address, visited him and when I returned to my work place later, he asked that I surrender the T-shirt to him and he burnt it. I was not sure whether it had a political message or because it was just too beautiful. During OM, I know of many Makokoba residents who were questioned about the source of the beautiful blankets they possessed that were clearly of foreign origin. The police told the affected residents that they were too poor to afford such expensive blankets. The implication was they stole those blankets from other people who could afford them.¹⁰⁴⁸

The Bulawayo based national government controlled *Chronicle* stated that the “Clean Up” was meant to reverse the long established culture in cities whereby municipal authorities’ by-laws were “flouted with reckless abandon to a point where some people now feel it is within their right to disregard local government regulations.”¹⁰⁴⁹ It expounded that leaders sometimes have to make difficult and painful decisions, and “the clean up operation was one such decision taken in order to restore “order” in towns and cities.”¹⁰⁵⁰ The editorial added that the operation spelt agony for those who had lived on the wrong side of the law for many years and hailed the government’s vision of “orderliness.”¹⁰⁵¹ This brings to mind the age old discourse of restoring order.

Joost Fontein’s ethnographic study of two townships in Harare highlighted that the national government hoped to exploit the fairly recognisable and salient (to people living in Zimbabwe’s urban areas) reassertion of “order” and formal planning procedures’ arguments to legalise the operation since this resonated with “memories of past clearances, or with longstanding and divergent aspirations for respectability, urban “order”, and a functioning, bureaucratic state.”¹⁰⁵² However, it appears that the restoration of order argument obscured far deeper economic and political causes for the politically threatened authoritarian ZANU PF government. As Deborah Potts rightly argued, part of the root causes involved the desire to punish the urban constituents for voting overwhelmingly for the opposition MDC since 2000, the desire to decrease the

¹⁰⁴⁸ Interview with Pondo Ncube, Makhumalo (Big Bhawa) Beer Hall, Makokoba, Bulawayo, Sunday 4 January 2009.

¹⁰⁴⁹ *Chronicle*, Monday 13 June 2005, “Expedite allocation of alternative land.”

¹⁰⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵¹ *Ibid.* Also see BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, “Letter from Executive Mayor of Bulawayo to Minister of Local Government, Public Works and Urban Development, Re: The Operation Restore Order, 28 June, 2005.

¹⁰⁵² Joost Fontein, “Anticipating the Tsunami: Rumours, Planning and the Arbitrary State in Zimbabwe”, in *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute*, Volume 79, Number 3, 2009.

presence of the poorest urban people by ruralising them and an ideological adherence to modernist planning intertwined with the image of a modern city.¹⁰⁵³ The execution and outcomes of the post OM “reconstruction” programme, examined later in this chapter, also negates the restoration of order argument.

The government invoked discourses of immorality, cleanliness and dirt, rooted in colonial, post colonial and nationalist constructions to attack informal housing and informal businesses. However, while a number of the victims of OM also suffered from HIV/AIDS, Ashleigh Harris’s attempt to link the discourses as an attack on those who suffered from HIV/AIDS and this as outlining a potentially dangerous version of nationhood in which those who “belong” are morally “clean”, and thus not “tainted” by the implied moral dirt of HIV/AIDS¹⁰⁵⁴ is clearly not convincing. It is difficult to believe that the moral “cleanliness” that the government had in mind referred to not being “tainted” by HIV/AIDS.

Wilbert Sadomba *et al* argued that OM was unleashed to destroy the emerging class alliance the war veterans were building between the urban working poor and peasants, highlighting that the formation of the MDC party in 1999 further distanced urban workers from rural peasants and farm workers only for them to be united by the land occupations as war veterans started mobilising urban workers for land occupations in 1998. Sadomba *et al* thus argued that OM therefore destroyed a budding “industrial revolution” that had been triggered by a “revolutionary redistribution of land,”¹⁰⁵⁵ which I think was not revolutionary in any way. Their argument is unconvincing as it exaggerates the role and influence of war veterans in the political economy of Zimbabwe in 2005. When talking of a budding “industrial revolution”, Sadomba, a war veteran himself, perhaps had in mind the planned invasion of businesses owned by Asians in Zimbabwe, contained in a document titled “Operation Exterminate Asians” said to have been authored by another war veteran, Andrew Ndlovu. Invading business in the same way as farms owned by white farmers was never going to be an industrial revolution but

¹⁰⁵³ Deborah Potts, “‘Restoring Order’? Operation Murambatsvina and the Urban Crisis in Zimbabwe”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 2006, abstract and p. 291.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Ashleigh Harris, “Discourses of Dirt and Disease in Operation Murambatsvina” in Maurice Vambe (ed), *The Hidden Dimensions of Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe*, (Harare: Weaver Press; Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2008), p. 40.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Wilbert Z. Sadomba, K. Mujeyi and G. Siziba, “Nipped in the Bud: Zimbabwe’s War Veterans-led Land and Industrial Movements, Class and State (1998-2008), *Unpublished Paper*, pp. 7-8.

just one of those lawless activities modelled along the invasion of Asian business in Uganda in 1972 and it is very hard to see how that was going to benefit the poor in Bulawayo and other cities.

Before OM there was some bad blood between the government and participants in the informal economy over the latter's refusal to be taxed. Increasing unemployment rates since the early ESAP years reduced the government's revenue base, hence its determination to widen its tax base by taxing participants in the informal economy, and since 1998, the government increasingly moaned about the growth of informal unregistered businesses and the resulting loss in tax revenues.¹⁰⁵⁶

In January 2005, the labour body Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZTCU) fiercely objected to acting Finance Minister Herbert Murerwa's proposal to tax all those involved in the informal economy. ZTCU Secretary General Wellington Chibhebhe argued that this was unreasonable because formal manufacturing concerns were increasingly ceasing operations and in the process churned thousands of workers out of formal employment who then increasingly found some safety nets in informal employment and that the government's plans to tax the informal economy were bound to "strangle the sector to death."¹⁰⁵⁷ Chibhebhe also opposed taxation because the government had not done much to support the informal sector. He explained that "These are people who are trying to grow. You tax where you have made an input."¹⁰⁵⁸ This was reiterated by Godfrey Kanyenze, director of the Labour and Economic Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe who argued that taxing the informal economy was "...tantamount to milking a cow without feeding it. It will bleed to death."¹⁰⁵⁹ Kanyenze also noted that taxing the informal economy amounted to the government reaping where it did not sow.

The Zimbabwean government however, argued that OM was launched in keeping with the Millennium Development Goal number seven, targets 10 and 11 that deal with water and sanitation and slum upgrading. President Robert Mugabe blamed ESAP for causing illegal social and economic activities highlighting that:

¹⁰⁵⁶ Latham Shinder, *International Report*, March 1998, Volume 121, No. 3.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *The Standard*, Sunday 9 January 2005, "Battle looms over taxation of the informal sector."

¹⁰⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Thus developed an alarming number of illegal outbuildings, shacks and other forms of unplanned and unhygienic structures used as residential accommodation and illicit business premises. Sadly the unapproved structures throughout the urban areas provided sanctuary to perpetrators of such crimes as illegal dealings in foreign currency, black marketeering, thefts, robberies and prostitution.¹⁰⁶⁰

The government clearly equated all informal activities to criminal activities to justify the draconian intervention but it is unthinkable that 70 to 80 percent of the Zimbabwean population that subsisted from the informal sector were all criminals or economic “saboteurs” as they were not a homogenous group. Mugabe argued that his government embarked on OM “in close consultation with local authorities to rid our urban settlements of unsanitary and substandard developments...”¹⁰⁶¹ Whereas the government claimed that OM was carried out by local authorities who enlisted the support of the ZRP and that in most cases people pulled down their structures,¹⁰⁶² this was denied by the Bulawayo Council which argued that OM took it by surprise¹⁰⁶³ and that the national government should have known better the difference between voluntarily pulling down structures and forcing people to pull them down.

While the national government invoked the Regional Town and Country Planning Act that allowed it to regulate townscape and landscape in regions, districts and local areas to promote health, safety, order, amenity convenience and general welfare among other issues,¹⁰⁶⁴ it violated some of the provisions of this Act before its implementation in Bulawayo. The Act requires that notices of at least 21 days should be given and this is to be followed by an enforcement order if there is no response from the affected person. The enforcement order is issued by a court of law and only after this legal process can demolition be done but this was ignored.¹⁰⁶⁵

¹⁰⁶⁰ Mugabe, quoted in *Chronicle*, Friday 25 November 2005, “Mayor Ndabeni Ncube told to co-op.”

¹⁰⁶¹ Speech by President of the Republic of Zimbabwe Cde R. G. Mugabe at the Launch of the Occupation of the Cowdry Park Houses Bulawayo on: 24 November 2005 Reconstruction Programme Phase One in [<http://www.mlgpwud.gov.zw/garikai.htm>]

¹⁰⁶² Response by the Government of Zimbabwe to the Report by the UN Special Envoy, pp. 42-43.

¹⁰⁶³ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services, December 2005, p. 16.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Response by the Government of Zimbabwe to the Report by the UN Special Envoy, on Operation Murambatsvina/Restore Order, August 2005, pp. 35-37, in <http://www2.uni.int/Countries/Zimbabwe/1152250806.pdf>

¹⁰⁶⁵ Bulawayo Municipality Records Library (BMRL) P4/1 Public Health General/Clean UP Campaign, City of Bulawayo, Report to the Fact Finding Mission of the United Nations on the Demolition/Clean-Up Operation by Government of Zimbabwe: 6 July 2005, p. 3.

Operation Murambatsvina was therefore rightly seen as a vindictive measure by the ZANU PF party repeatedly snubbed by urban voters during the 2000 parliamentary, 2002 presidential, mayoral and council and 2005 parliamentary elections respectively. According to Amin Kamete, the governing ZANU PF party, having failed to “re-urbanise” itself (since people now regarded it as a rural party because it only won elections in rural areas), it was now bent on “ruralising” the urbanites by “emptying the cities” to avert civil strife among other things.¹⁰⁶⁶

This was echoed by Bratton and Masunungure who argued that OM was a pre-emptive strike to nip protest in the bud and disperse prospective demonstrators to the rural hinterland.¹⁰⁶⁷ This was very likely because under Zanu PF’s third *Chimurenga*, the labour movement and the urban population that supported the MDC became one of the central targets of its authoritarian nationalism and the loss of all elections in urban areas in 2005 was enough to convince the ZANU PF government that urban areas were full of enemies to be dispersed. Action Aid aptly argued that the government:

resorted to using colonial era measures of social control and repression. What emerges is a crisis in governance, a panicking government whose record of policy failure...is now so evident and has created so much paranoia that it seeks to use...colonial measures to deal with its unhappy people simply to retain power and sustain an otherwise unpopular rule...¹⁰⁶⁸

Logically, the defenceless urban poor were the easy targets of this project of “ruralising” urbanites even though OM failed in “ruralising” the urban populations on a massive scale.¹⁰⁶⁹ Government officials repeatedly argued that a major expected outcome of OM was the “return” of affected people to rural areas. For example, two weeks after the launching of OM Vice President Mujuru was quoted saying that:

Women in rural areas have a habit of running to urban areas to seek employment. However, they are greatly disappointed when they discover that life in urban areas is not so easy. We want people in

¹⁰⁶⁶ Amin Y. Kamete, “The Return of the Jettisoned: ZANU PF’s Crack at ‘Re-Urbanising’ in Harare”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 32, Number 2, June 2006, p. 271.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Michael Bratton and Eldred Masunungure, “Popular Reactions to State Repression: Operation Murambatsvina in Zimbabwe” in *African Affairs*, Vol. 106, No. 422, January 2007, pp. 25 and 26.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Action Aid, quoted in Terence Ranger, “City Versus State in Zimbabwe: Colonial Antecedents of the Current Crisis” in *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Volume 1, No. 2, July 2007, p. 162.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Bratton and Masunungure, “Popular Reactions to State Repression”, p. 22.

urban areas to leave their homes and come and invest in rural areas because this is where the money can be generated.¹⁰⁷⁰

This was similar to the colonial period when, claiming that they were lured by the prospect of an easy life and the love of finery, officials accused African women of leaving the rural areas on the slightest pretext and flocking to the cities and other economic hubs.¹⁰⁷¹

Police Officer commanding Harare province Edmore Veterai argued that “No one in Zimbabwe comes from nowhere. Everyone belongs somewhere.”¹⁰⁷² As Tibaijuka rightly observed, this “rural absorption” view was a very misinformed assumption. The history of rural-urban migration shows that it is always driven by economic factors. In a process known as “urbanisation of poverty”, more and more people are seeking a better life in towns and cities. This is premised on the search for better livelihoods and escaping rural poverty. Worse still, since 2000, Zimbabwe suffered several years of continuous drought and serious food shortages making it unlikely that urban people would just happily relocate to rural areas and victims of OM rightly believed that the government wanted to engineer a reverse urban-to-rural migration process, on the wrong belief that this was good for the national development of the country.¹⁰⁷³ This motive could also be deduced from the national government’s determination that victims of OM not be granted any assistance while still in urban areas.

Five months after the beginning of OM for example, the national government still refused attempts to provide victims with emergency shelter. Many victims were still living under makeshift plastic sheeting. When the UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland pressed upon President Mugabe the urgent need for emergency shelter for the thousands of families with no shelter, no food and no income, especially the supply of tents, Mugabe responded by saying “Keep your tents, we do not need them...We want to give real houses to our people...”¹⁰⁷⁴ Mugabe argued that to him

¹⁰⁷⁰ *The Herald*, 31 May 2005, “Take up projects in rural areas, create employment.”

¹⁰⁷¹ Michael O West, “Liquor and Libido: “Joint Drinking” and the Politics of Sexual Control in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1920s-1950s” in *Journal of Social History*, Volume 30, No. 3, 1997, p. 647.

¹⁰⁷² *Financial Gazette*, June 9-15, 2005, “Evictees’ meekness stuns the world.”

¹⁰⁷³ A. Tibaijuka, “Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe”, pp. 35 and 20.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Jan Egeland, *A Billion Lives: An Eyewitness Report from the Frontlines of Humanity*, cited in *The Standard*, 23 March 2008 to 29 March 2008, “Tents are for Arabs-Mugabe.”

the word shelter had wrong connotations of “impermanency” and therefore not acceptable as this would “create an image of refugee camps here.”¹⁰⁷⁵ While he claimed his government only wanted to build permanent houses, he also indicated that “Everyone in Zimbabwe has somewhere to go, everyone is rooted somewhere in the country, in rural areas...”¹⁰⁷⁶

The view of a home, of belonging, held by the authorities was similar to views on African communities that existed around a century ago when, according to Diana Jeater:

For the African communities...the idea of belonging, of where counted as home, was linked not to consumer items and department stores, but to cosmology, ancestry and control over land. One could live in the town, but one did not “come from” town. People “came from” their lineages; lineages were linked to ancestors; and however flexibly, ancestors were linked to land.¹⁰⁷⁷

The assumption that everyone in urban areas had a rural home where they could return to was problematic. There is evidence of generations of urbanites born and bred in Bulawayo, some with very little or no rural contact as pointed out in the first chapter of this thesis. Therefore, as Sara Dorman argued, what was striking about the post colonial government of Zimbabwe was the determination to send people “to the land”, even when the reality was that those who had formal jobs in the city may not have had anywhere to live in rural areas.¹⁰⁷⁸ The dominant and self internalised assumption within ruling elites that “all” Zimbabweans had a rural home therefore severely weakened the ability of urban Zimbabweans to claim a right to life in the city.¹⁰⁷⁹

For many urban workers, communal land rights were not always about production but for other cultural and religious needs. As Beacon Mbiba observed, productive agricultural land, or the inputs to make it productive, has always been in short supply or beyond the reach of most poor workers. In addition, a significant urban population had no desire to access rural land rights whose notion the state maintained as a framework for

¹⁰⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Robert Mugabe quoted in Jan Egeland, *A Billion Lives*.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Diana Jeater, “No Place for a Woman: Gwelo Town, Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1920” in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 26, Number 1, March 2000, p. 37.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Sara Dorman, “Running from the Land?": Urban Development and the Zimbabwean State in Historical Perspective”, *Unpublished Paper* presented at British Zimbabwe Research Day, Oxford University, 9 June 2007, p. 19.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 20.

social sanction and control.¹⁰⁸⁰ In 1990, Potts and Mutambirwa alluded to existing appalling overcrowding and environmental degradation in communal areas which made land more unproductive.¹⁰⁸¹ Potts therefore rightly observed that this misguided view about “land” stemmed from the fact that for many, the major contributor to the urban workforce and its consequent need for employment was rural-urban migrants, who are then “blamed” for urban problems and the size of the unwanted informal sector. As she stated, “this characterisation of Africa’s urban problems is old and tired but it will not lie down.”¹⁰⁸²

Those whose houses were being destroyed in Zimbabwe’s urban areas were referred to as “refuse” and “maggots” by the Commissioner of Police Augustine Chihuri, a language used by those who turn their enemies into “others”, non humans, who are being deliberately dehumanised so that they then do not need to be treated as human beings.¹⁰⁸³ According to Mary Ndlovu, the end result of this man-made disaster (OM) was “equivalent to the result of a natural disaster on a mammoth scale, homelessness, destitution, disease, illiteracy, and above all, the creation of extreme poverty in a large number of families which were already poor.”¹⁰⁸⁴ The scale and breath of OM against “informality” in all its forms, and the impact on poor urban residents surpassed all other campaigns like in Zambia in 1999, and Malawi in 2006.¹⁰⁸⁵

7.3 Effects of Operation Murambatsvina on the Urban Poor in Bulawayo.

The most devastating and immediate effect of the blitz was that it rendered hundreds of thousands of people homeless when the winter season had just set in and without any

¹⁰⁸⁰ Beacon Mbiba, cited in Mbiba and Ndubiwa, “Decent Work in Construction and the Role of Local Authorities: The Case of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe”, *Unpublished Report*, January 2006, p. 29.

¹⁰⁸¹ Deborah Potts and Chris Mutambirwa, “Rural-Urban Linkages in Contemporary Harare: Why Peasants need their Land”, in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1990, p. 679.

¹⁰⁸² Deborah Potts, “The State and the Informal in Sub-Saharan African Urban Economies: Revisiting Debates on Dualism”, *Working Paper No. 18, -Cities and Fragile States-*, King’s College, London, October 2007, p. 17.

¹⁰⁸³ Mary E. Ndlovu, “Mass Violence in Zimbabwe 2005-Murambatsvina”, in *Development Dialogue*, No. 50, December 2008, p. 227.

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 222.

¹⁰⁸⁵ D. Potts, “The State and the Informal in Sub-Saharan African Urban Economies”, p. 15.

viable form of livelihood and many did not have a rural home to return to.¹⁰⁸⁶ The dwellings that were destroyed were not only shacks made of plastic and corrugated aluminium or traditional mud and pole huts found in the backyards of some townships like Lobengula and Njube, the majority were one or two-roomed houses of bricks or concrete blocks and some were even big and had taken quite a fortune and a number of years to build.¹⁰⁸⁷

The livelihood of all directly affected households was either destroyed or placed in serious jeopardy. In most cases, there was compounded suffering as homeless and displaced people were unable to pursue their occupations or maintain their source of income. All households accommodated in transit centres were left entirely dependent on emergency relief for their survival. Landlords increased rents sharply due to the sudden upsurge in demand of accommodation, increasing the pressure on tenants and making it more difficult for evictees to find alternative accommodation.¹⁰⁸⁸ The loss of rent from such illegal dwellings and backyard shacks on legal stands represented a major loss of the informal livelihoods in the city.¹⁰⁸⁹

Street people were also forcibly removed, and many street children were rounded up and transferred to transit camps or overcrowded centres for delinquents.¹⁰⁹⁰ While arbitrary evictions also take place in several African countries, OM rendered people homeless and economically destitute on an unprecedented scale. Most of the victims were already among the most economically disadvantaged groups in society, and were pushed into deeper poverty and were left more vulnerable. The scale of suffering was immense especially among widows, single mothers, children, and orphans, the elderly and disabled persons.¹⁰⁹¹

The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) in Bulawayo also raided licensed flea markets during OM that included Unity Village, City Flea market, Lobengula Bazaar Flea market and other backyard shops around the city. Tuck shops and hair saloons were not spared as were shebeens. Food Cart, telephone shop and pay telephone operators

¹⁰⁸⁶ A. Tibaijuka, "Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe", pp. 13 and 7. Also see *Chronicle*, 24 June 2005, "Residents demolish own structures."

¹⁰⁸⁷ Mary E. Ndlovu, "Mass Violence in Zimbabwe", p. 219.

¹⁰⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸⁹ Deborah Potts, "The State and the Informal in Sub-Saharan African Urban Economies", p. 15.

¹⁰⁹⁰ A. Tibaijuka, Report of the Fact Finding Mission to Zimbabwe, pp. 35-36.

¹⁰⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

were also affected. Flea markets were attacked because they “had become havens for criminals.”¹⁰⁹²

State agents invaded the decades-old Makokoba vendors market and ordered all the vendors to pull down the shades built to cover their stalls which were then burnt. According to N. Nkomo, a vendor in the same market:

the state agents only respected the beds in market where traditional healers spread their traditional herbs. The state agents probably became afraid that if they tempered with the herbs, they could be harmed and as a result they never touched the herbs when all other vendors who had been selling items in the market since the colonial period had their legal businesses brought to halt. I can not think of anyone in this market who was not affected by that operation.¹⁰⁹³

The indiscriminate assault on all vendors was despite the fact that since independence the Bulawayo Council has always been instructed by various Local Government ministers to allow informal traders into the city centre. While the Council initially resisted the practice, highlighting the likely negative results of the policy which results partly gave rise to OM, because of national government pressure, it constructed eleven vending sites, nine of them in the city centre. Traders who were allocated the sites were vetted and duly licensed, and were selected on the basis of need, among them the poor, widows, single mothers and those struggling to maintain their families. During OM, these registered vendors who operated within Council by-laws were rounded up, their stalls dismantled and their wares confiscated.¹⁰⁹⁴

The ZRP raided vendors on their own without consulting city authorities, when the norm was that the city council always conducted raids to flush out illegal vendors in conjunction with the ZRP. In the process, the ZRP demolished shelters, confiscated wares and chased away licensed vendors from designated sites. Some vendors had their stores/lockers broken into by the police and their wares confiscated while others had their

¹⁰⁹² *Chronicle*, 13 June 2005, “Makokoba illegal structures removed.” See also Report of the City of Bulawayo to the UN Fact Finding Mission, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹³ Interview with Nheti Nkomo, Makokoba Market, Bulawayo, Saturday 12 April 2008.

¹⁰⁹⁴ BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, “Letter from Executive Mayor of Bulawayo to Minister of Local Government, Public Works and Urban Development, Re: The Operation Restore Order, 28 June, 2005.

licences were torn by the police.¹⁰⁹⁵ A Chief Police Superintendent Maphosa said 12,000 people were arrested in Bulawayo.¹⁰⁹⁶

In its defence, the national government argued that under the Zimbabwean law, a vendor could be guilty of an offence either for operating without a licence, or for operating at undesignated places. This implied that legal vendors whose goods were confiscated operated at undesignated places. The national government also noted that councils had constructed vending bays which traders abandoned in order to avoid paying rentals and that the victims also violated rights of others, for example, registered shop owners in the CBD were infringed upon by hawkers who blocked their shop entrances. The central government thus concluded that the issue of “illegally forced evictions” was irrelevant as vendors affected were not legally entitled to be at such places.¹⁰⁹⁷

This reveals that urban “informality”, both in employment and low income housing, has been regarded negatively and that the issue of “criminality” (rather than “illegality”) as a feature of the informal sector has frequently been used to demonise the sector and justify draconian interventions. As Deborah Potts correctly observed, the problem arises because, by definition, criminal activities are illegal. Since much of the informal sector is typically unlicensed, it is also “illegal.” The logical fallacy that all too often follows is that, therefore, criminal activities are “informal sector.”¹⁰⁹⁸ According to Potts they are not and the association is therefore fallacious. Poor people in African cities know how to distinguish between criminality and “informality”, for example, between one who steals cars (a criminal) and one who drives an informal, unlicensed taxi cab (a legitimate livelihood).¹⁰⁹⁹

In June 2005, one church Minister Reverend Gegana cried when narrating the ordeal of some victims of OM. The Minister noted that some victims of OM indicated that this was the third time that their property had been razed in their lifetimes. The first time was during the war of liberation in the 1970s, the second time was after

¹⁰⁹⁵ BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, Report of the City of Bulawayo to the Fact Finding Mission of the United Nations on the Demolition/Clean-Up Operation by Government of Zimbabwe: 6 July 2005, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰⁹⁶ A. Tibaijuka, “Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe”, p. 88. Also see *Chronicle*, 24 June 2005, “Residents demolish own structures.”

¹⁰⁹⁷ Response by the Government of Zimbabwe to the Report by the UN Special Envoy, pp. 34-5 and 38-9.

¹⁰⁹⁸ D. Potts, “The State and the Informal in Sub-Saharan African Urban Economies”, p. 6.

¹⁰⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

independence during the *Gukurahundi* killings.¹¹⁰⁰ After losing their property to OM, some victims lost all hope for survival more so because OM was carried out at time when the country was in the middle of an unprecedented economic crisis.

At least one hundred and thirty five Bulawayo Council workers were directly and indirectly affected by the operation. Those affected directly had their dwellings demolished and those affected indirectly were forced out of the rooms they were lodging to create room for the landlord's relatives affected by the same operation. A number of Council workers became homeless and of no fixed abode, while some had belongings scattered all over the city among sympathetic relatives and friends' houses. A number of married Council workers lived separately from their spouses and children because they were accommodated in houses that did not allow married people together due to overcrowding.¹¹⁰¹ Workers then requested the Council to avail its rented accommodation to its employees instead of ordinary residents, a suggestion that was bound to create more problems as the Council could not dare to "evict" residents from its rented accommodation without any justification.

The table below shows the number of structures that were destroyed and the number of people who were affected by OM in Bulawayo townships. Although the figures were compiled while the operation was still in progress, they nonetheless are useful in indicating the incidence of this state organised demolition exercise.

Table 13.

¹¹⁰⁰ This was witnessed by this author at Amp Theatre Hall in Bulawayo in 2005.

¹¹⁰¹ BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, Letter to Town Clerk, Zimbabwe Urban Councils Workers Union, Bulawayo Branch, 'Request for Accommodation of Council Employees', 31st August 2005.

AREA	No. of Structures	No. of People Affected
Entumbane/Emakhandeni	1 415	9 905
Mpopoma, Mabutweni, Iminyela/Matshobana	1 091	7 637
Luveve/Cowdry Park	141	987
Lobengula/Njube	2 494	17 458
Mzilikazi/Makokoba/Thorngrove/Barbourfields	3 264	22 848
Pumula	814	5 698
Nkulumane	169	1 133
Tshabalala/Sizinda	170	1 190
Nketa		
Ngozi Mine	200	1 400
Killarney	205	1 435
Magwegwe	632	4 424
Total	10 595	74 165

NB. These figures were compiled when the clean up exercise was still in progress.

Source: BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, Report of the City of Bulawayo to the Fact Finding Mission of the United Nations on the Demolishing/Clean Up Operation by Government of Zimbabwe: 6 July 2005.¹¹⁰²

Figures compiled by the ZRP, the state agents who carried out the demolition job, showed fewer numbers of the victims in Bulawayo townships (see table below). This could be interpreted as a ploy by the police to downplay the effects of the operation.

Table 14.

	No. of Structures	No. of People Affected
Killarney	205	2 000
Ngozi Mine	200	1 000
Makokoba	801	1 345
Mzilikazi	804	1 474
B/F	499	985
Thorngrove	92	154
Njube	1 162	1 585
Njube/Lobengula	200	431
Mabutweni	139	232
Iminyela	415	715
Old Pumula	364	576
Old & Pumula North	73	115
Magwegwe	185	255
Total	5 139	10 867

NB: Figures were supplied by ZRP except for Number of people at Killarney and Ngozi Mine which were supplied by a previous enumeration.

¹¹⁰² Also see BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, "Memorandum to Town Clerk from Director of Housing and Communities, 21st March 2006.

Source: BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, “Memorandum to Town Clerk from Director of Housing and Communities, 21st March 2006.

Before 2005, the Bulawayo Council allowed some illegal structures to be used as kitchens and extra bedrooms if neatly built because of the acute shortage of low cost housing in the city. House owners with illegal structures that met building by-laws were asked to submit their plans for regularisation. When Joseph Msika was Minister of Local Government, Urban and Rural Development, he allowed families occupying one roomed houses in then his Iminyela/Mabutweni constituency to build extra (illegal) rooms for additional accommodation. However, during OM there were several reports of legal extensions of structures that were demolished by the police despite the fact that plans were produced and that some of them were initially sanctioned by leading politicians.¹¹⁰³

Victims of OM who had rural homes returned to them while others sent their children there while they remained behind looking for another place to stay. Occupiers of destroyed backyard dwellings moved into the main house, leading to serious overcrowding. Others moved in with friends or relatives, with the same overcrowding results. Thousands lived for varying periods in the open, trying to protect their property until they found a place to move it to, or because they were simply too traumatised or too destitute to afford a relocation. On June 22, 5,000 people were vetted and provided temporary shelter by the Red Cross with the help by World Food Programme (WFP).¹¹⁰⁴

The national government only managed to successfully alter the survival and living space of the urban poor.¹¹⁰⁵ Samuel Ndlovu argued that:

we heard that the national government said our cities were dirty and Operation Murambatsvina was meant to clean up the dirty. But the brooms that the government brought forward were bulldozers and armed security personnel, was that right? Do you clean by destroying? What about chasing away people? That also meant that people were regarded as the dirty that was supposed to be cleaned up? Oh! When will poor people be tolerated by this government?...¹¹⁰⁶

¹¹⁰³ City of Bulawayo, Report to the Fact Finding Mission of the United Nations, pp. 4-5.

¹¹⁰⁴ A. Tibaijuka, “Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe”, p. 88. Also see *Chronicle*, 24 June 2005, “Residents demolish own structures.”

¹¹⁰⁵ A. Tibaijuka, “Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe”, p. 47.

¹¹⁰⁶ Interview with Samuel Ndlovu, Emakhandeni Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Friday 23 November 2007.

Other victims of OM appeared traumatised and refused to discuss “politics.” Khefasi Dube said to this author:

Please do not ask me about the Entumbane war, Gukurahundi and about OM. I had very bad experiences about these three events. We are tired of this government of unending “operations.” We, the poor and powerless people are now forced to impose upon ourselves yet another operation, that is, “Operation *Chimumumu*¹¹⁰⁷” or “Operation *Chinyarara*” interpreted to mean “Operation Keep Quiet.” Since OM my experience has been that even if you complain about houses destroyed or the harassment (of vendors) by police, even if you go to the courts of laws, you will come out a loser, no one will ever listen to you. Even if the courts rule in your favour, the police can decide not to implement the court’s ruling and nothing happens to them. Sometimes if you are seen by the authorities to be talking too much, you can just be eliminated. So the issue is that we are not supposed to complain about anything, but just die in our poverty and die silently for that matter. I don’t want to discuss much with you; I just want to enjoy my beer for now.¹¹⁰⁸

While OM was still on, the government immediately launched a housing “reconstruction” programme meant to solve the severe shelter crisis it had just created. Based on the statements of senior government officials during OM and the outcomes of OGHK, I argue that the rebuilding programme was merely a smokescreen meant to cover up the government brutality on the urban poor.

7.4 Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle: A Reconstruction Programme for the Urban Poor in Bulawayo?

Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle was translated to mean “Operation Live Well”.¹¹⁰⁹ It was a “Government programme designed for the homeless with preference given to those whose structures were demolished during the clean up operation.”¹¹¹⁰ It was a wholly state initiated, state implemented (and to be state funded) housing reconstruction programme launched on 29 June 2005.¹¹¹¹ The government stated that its new policy aimed at providing large scale delivery of low cost housing and creating an enabling and conducive environment that promoted small and medium scale business enterprises by

¹¹⁰⁷ *Chimumumu* is a Shona word referring to a person who is deaf and dumb.

¹¹⁰⁸ Interview with Khefasi Dube, Makhumalo Beer Hall, Makokoba, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 3 January 2009.

¹¹⁰⁹ Solidarity Peace Trust, *Meltdown: Murambatsvina one year on*, 30 August 2006, p. 14.

¹¹¹⁰ BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, Letter form S. M. Sibanda, Acting Director Housing, Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and Urban Development to Director of Finance and Administration, Chairmen of Provincial Taskforces-Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle, Provincial Administrators, Public Work Officers, 28 July 2005.

¹¹¹¹ Speech by R. G. Mugabe at the Launch of the Occupation of the Cowdry Park Houses Bulawayo.

providing small and medium business sites, the overall aim being to restore the dignity of victims and meet their hopes for a better future by building homes for them and bays where they could earn their livelihood.¹¹¹² It argued that OGHK was going to transform the Zimbabwean cities, towns and growth points by drastically reducing the housing backlog and thereby greatly improve the lives of a significant part of the population.¹¹¹³ However, given its longstanding departures from developmental activities and the actual outcomes of the programme, this was merely a smokescreen and its real intentions were to cover up the gross human rights violations it had committed.

Worse still, OGHK was launched when the country was in the middle of an unprecedented economic crisis and without resources to build housing for the urban poor on such a massive national scale. Local mining, agricultural and manufacturing production were falling precipitously. Internationally, the government was increasingly becoming isolated; it had no foreign direct investment and no balance of payment support. Because of this, Mary Revesai correctly argued that OGHK was “stillborn”, that is, it was clear from its inception that it was a life-less programme and just one of the national government’s many “forms of subterfuge” to buy time while pretending to tackle problems so as to keep the masses hoping that things will improve when they were actually getting worse.¹¹¹⁴

This could also be deduced from that after the destruction of informal homes that housed hundreds of families as Killarney squatter camp and a week before the launch of OGHK, Bulawayo Governor Mathema, a ZANU PF government appointee through whose office the programme was to be implemented in Bulawayo stated that “We are working hard to find where we can allocate land to people who are living at Ngozi Mine and Killarney squatter camps. We want them to own a piece of land just like any other Zimbabwean.”¹¹¹⁵ He did not indicate that the national government was lining up a massive housing programme to cater for them but that they wanted them resettled somewhere on the land, in rural areas.

¹¹¹² Response by Government of Zimbabwe to the Report by the UN Special Envoy, pp. 15-16 and 7.

¹¹¹³ Press Statement, Murambatsvina/ Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle by Chen Chimutengwende (MP) , Minister of State for Public and Interactive Affairs in the Office of the President and the Cabinet, 22 August 2005, [<http://www.public.gov.zw/press%20release/min%20-%20operation%20garikai.htm>] (22 February 2009).

¹¹¹⁴ Mary Revesai, “Regime resorts to more ploys to buy time”, [<http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/mary3.15603.html>] (22 February 2009).

¹¹¹⁵ *Chronicle*, 13 June 2005, “Makokoba illegal structures removed.”

Another indication that OGHK was not meant for the victims of OM was that in late July, around a month after the launch of OGHK, the police swooped on thousands of OM victims that were accommodated and fed by seventeen churches in Bulawayo and forced them into the trucks in the middle of the night and dumped them at a farm from where they were transported to various rural centres.¹¹¹⁶ The urban poor thus also became pawns in the larger fight between the government and NGOs and churches.

Eleven families, part of the squatters that were evicted from Killarney Squatter camp in 2005 were dumped at a transit camp at the Agricultural and Rural Development Authority's Balu estate. The families were again forced off the transit camp and some were dumped in the Chief Sigola area on the outskirts of Bulawayo. Some were dumped at Spring Farm, once occupied by a successful white farmer before the chaotic 2000 farm invasions.¹¹¹⁷ Most of the former squatters lived at Spring Farm temporarily as they had not been allocated land there. Josephine Mhlanga, one of the ex-Killarney squatters indicated that "We were once addressed by the police, state security agents and representatives of the local authority who promised us land but eight months later, there is no hope that we will get the land."¹¹¹⁸ She noted that they were totally dependent on churches from Bulawayo that provided makeshift shelter and food to the abandoned families.

As if OGHK was a genuine programme, the national government instructed its Provincial Taskforces to ensure that the programme benefited the victims of OM who did not own any houses in their area of residence.¹¹¹⁹ In Bulawayo, the national government sought and was allocated un-serviced stands in Cowdry Park where a massive housing scheme with an initial target of seven hundred stands was started at the end of June 2005.¹¹²⁰ The Chairman of the Inter-Agency Provincial Operations Committee (IPOC) in Bulawayo responsible for directing OGHK in Cowdry Park Township was Lieutenant Colonel Matavire from the Zimbabwe National Army, not any specialist in the provision of housing.

¹¹¹⁶ M. Ndlovu, "Mass Violence in Zimbabwe", p. 221.

¹¹¹⁷ *The Standard*, 8 January 2006, "We've lost hope-Evicted squatters."

¹¹¹⁸ Josephine Mhlanga, quoted in *The Standard*, 8 January 2006, "We've lost hope-Evicted squatters."

¹¹¹⁹ BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, Letter from S. M. Sibanda, 28 July 2005.

¹¹²⁰ Annual Report of the Director of Housing and Community Services Department, December, 2005, pp. 15-6.

The provincial governorships and administrators (under which IPOC fell) did not have any specialised departments essential for the implementation of any housing policies. The army played a critical role in implementing or enforcing implementation of government policy, after all, during the third *Chimurenga* era, ZANU PF social programmes were becoming increasingly militarized.¹¹²¹ OGHK therefore worsened the already strained relations between the central government and local authorities.¹¹²²

The first phase of OGHK was to include the construction of 700 houses between June 2005 and August 2005.¹¹²³ This was not achieved as the first 100 houses were only allocated to the beneficiaries in Bulawayo in November 2005 by the Minister of Local Government Ignatius Chombo even before their completion and keys were handed over to ten beneficiaries, seven of whom had their houses temporarily serviced in anticipation of the handover. The Council was not informed about when the other 600 stands/houses of the initial 700 were going to be allocated to beneficiaries¹¹²⁴ although it was later given a list of 606 beneficiaries but it did not know what was going to happen to the other 94 houses that were not allocated to any beneficiary.¹¹²⁵

Because of the failure to deliver the 700 houses promised between end of June and August 2005, in October of the same year, *SoKwanele* described the OGHK programme as:

a cruel deception, no more than window dressing, which to date has not provided one single dwelling to any of those whose homes and businesses were destroyed in the first brutal, unlawful, assault. What is more, despite official denials and every effort made to cover the tricks by this callous and calculating regime, the fact is that Operation Murambatsvina is continuing with repeat demolitions wherever the internally displaced persons (IDPs), out of sheer desperation, dare to return to the sites of their original homes.¹¹²⁶

¹¹²¹ For example “Operation Maguta”, aimed to increase food production in Zimbabwe’s rural areas and launched by Vice President Joyce Mujuru in November 2005 was also spearheaded by army officials.

¹¹²² Solidarity Peace Trust, “*Meltdown*”, p. 9.

¹¹²³ BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, “Extract from Minutes of the Town Lands and Planning Committee, 25-11-22.

¹¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹²⁵ BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, City of Bulawayo, Memorandum to Town Clerk- ‘Un-procedural Allocation of Houses and Stands in Cowdry Park’ from Director of Housing and Community Services, 24th January 2006.

¹¹²⁶ *Sokwanele*, 24 October 2005 “This time a thrashing; next time the dogs”: persistent harassment of Zimbabwe’s poor, [<http://www.sokwanele.com/taxonomy/term/66>]. In July 2006, a year after OM, the ZRP raided again the Killarney squatter settlement in Bulawayo and took into custody a number of squatters who had returned to the site after OM. See <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2006-07/2006-07-18-voa57.cfm>. In 2006 during the Easter holidays more than 60 vagrants, mostly males of different ages and

The second phase of OGHK was launched on 29 October 2005 by Bulawayo Governor Cain Mathema whose role and that of his whole entourage of staff was just a duplication of the roles of the mayor and his staff, hence this was bound to cause friction between the two competing bodies. After all, in June 2004, Minister Chombo told Bulawayo residents that the man in charge of the city was the appointed Governor Mathema and not the elected mayor, Ndabeni-Ncube.¹¹²⁷ This was another form of the governance crisis that was experienced in Bulawayo since the appointment of Mathema as Governor in January 2004. Urban residents in general identified the Urban Councils Act as the core of the problem since “on the one hand it bestows a degree of local autonomy to residents through local elections, yet on the other it confers almost dictatorial power upon the Minister of Local Government...”¹¹²⁸

Under phase two of OGHK, the 3,000 stands were allocated to individuals “with a capacity to build on their own.”¹¹²⁹ Such individuals were therefore not the intended poor victims of OM. On his visit to Bulawayo in early November in 2005, Minister Chombo also directed that in the next phase of OGHK, stands be allocated to individuals with a potential to build on their own,¹¹³⁰ clearly not the poor victims of OM. This effectively excluded the victims of OM and the stated national government objective that OGHK was meant for victims of OM rang hollow.

At the same time, while it was clear that the national government had no capacity to build permanent housing for all victims of OM, Mugabe refused to accept provision of emergency shelter to the victims of OM by the United Nations in 2005 protesting that the term “shelter” sent wrong connotations:

The word connotes impermanency. We want permanent housing here...When I was a boy herding my grandfather's cattle and it rained I looked for “shelter” where I could find it-under a tree or in a nearby

race, were arrested by the police in Bulawayo under the Vagrancy Act. See *The Zimbabwean Independent*, April 20-26, 2007, “Detention of Vagrants riles rights activists.”

¹¹²⁷ *The Insider*, June 2004, “Chombo Heading for a Showdown with Bulawayo City Council.”

¹¹²⁸ Terence Ranger, “City Versus State in Zimbabwe”, p. 161. When Chombo went to Mayor Ndabeni Ncube to introduce Governor Mathema he was accompanied by War veterans and ZANU PF youths members, a move the Council interpreted as an attempt to frighten the council into political submission. See *The Standard*, 24 March 2004, “Chombo spells out governors’ role.”

¹¹²⁹ BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, City of Bulawayo, Memorandum to Town Clerk- ‘Un-procedural Allocation of Houses and stands in Cowdry Park’ from Director of Housing and Community Services, 24th January 2006.

¹¹³⁰ “Extract from Minutes of the Town Lands and Planning Committee”.

hut. That is shelter. You can provide food if you want to and build permanent houses with us, but not provide 'shelter' in the form of tents.¹¹³¹

The urban poor thus also became pawns in a larger conflict involving the national government and its perceived international enemies. Mugabe's stance highlighted his government's lack of sincerity in tackling the housing crisis it had created.

The implementation of OGHK broke all known conventional low income housing delivery norms in Bulawayo. It was the first time in the history of the Council that a housing programme in an area under its jurisdiction was directed by army personnel. The programme also flouted the traditional low income housing allocation procedures. Houses were built on unserviced land and houses were occupied without running water and sewer reticulation systems thereby exposing the occupants to the threat of major disease outbreaks that included diarrhoea and respiratory infections. This was very much against the Council's public health by-laws. The impasse intensified the longstanding council/state struggle over the provision of housing services to low income earners.¹¹³² The provision of houses did not materialise during promised times.

One major problem with the allocation of houses and stands was that although most beneficiaries were picked up from the Council's waiting list, the register sequence was not followed. While it is appreciated that most victims had been scattered by the clean up operation and therefore could not be contacted at their old addresses and that the waiting list would obviously not be useful in this respect, it was imperative that the OGHK directors liaised with the Council because the Council had established a sub-committee called Displaced Persons Sub-Committee that constantly reviewed conditions of displaced persons in the city and also kept contact with various groups of the displaced included those at Killarney squatter camp.¹¹³³ The Council was therefore aware of whereabouts of some displaced residents. The national government was also aware of the whereabouts of thousands of other low income victims who were dumped at farms where they stayed there for months before being dispersed again.¹¹³⁴

¹¹³¹ Robert Mugabe quoted in Jan Egeland, *A Billion Lives*, p. 18.

¹¹³² For more on city/state struggles in Bulawayo see Terence Ranger, "City Versus State in Zimbabwe."

¹¹³³ Report by the City of Bulawayo to the UN Fact Finding Mission, p. 5.

¹¹³⁴ See for example, *The Standard*, 8 January 2006, "We've lost hope-Evicted squatters."

There is also evidence that many victims of the blitz remained in the same place as they resisted the national government's suggestion that they relocate to rural areas. Some victims who formerly resided in squatter camps rebuilt the structures that were razed and remained in the same place. A year after the destructions, most victims had still not left the towns. A survey in some Bulawayo townships showed that in 90 percent of the backyard homes that were demolished, those displaced remained in even worse conditions. Married couples were forced to sleep apart, and single people continually lived on the move, moving from one tiny house to another.¹¹³⁵ It was therefore possible to find thousands of victims of the blitz even if the register sequence was not followed.

The tradition has been that all urban low-income housing projects are required to get beneficiaries from the council's housing waiting lists. According to Kamete, presumably, this ensures procedural equity (first come first served) and substantive equity (right people for right housing projects). The process of interviewing, assessment and selection of prospective homeowners is the exclusive reserve of the local authority and financiers and developers get to know prospective homeowners only after the council recommend them.¹¹³⁶ However, in Bulawayo the opposite was true, the national government, as the prospective financier and developer, was at the forefront in choosing beneficiaries.

Initially, when the list of beneficiaries was drawn up, Council officials were involved. However, the list was amended several times without consultation with the Council, and it was not notified about the criterion used in amending and re-amending the list. The Council discovered that a number of the beneficiaries already owned houses in the city.¹¹³⁷ The Parliamentary Portfolio Committee established to assess the progress of Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle Reconstruction programme also reported the allocation of houses to people who were neither affected by OM nor in the Council's waiting list in Bulawayo.¹¹³⁸ Unknown co-operatives and companies also applied for stands for their

¹¹³⁵ Solidarity Peace Trust, "*Meltdown*", p. 8.

¹¹³⁶ Amin Kamete, "The Practice of Cost Recovery in Urban Low-Income Housing: A Discourse with Experiences from Zimbabwe", *Habitat International* 24 (2000), p. 252.

¹¹³⁷ "Extract from Minutes of the Town Lands and Planning Committee" See also City of Bulawayo, Memorandum to Town Clerk- 'Un-procedural Allocation of Houses and stands in Cowdry Park'

¹¹³⁸ Parliament of Zimbabwe, Second Report of the Portfolio Committee on Local Government on Progress made on the Operation Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle Programme, First Session, Sixth Parliament, Presented to

employees directly to the OGHK officials, bypassing the Council. The Parliamentary Committee also discovered that 528 stands were allocated co-operatives and company groups and it was not even clear whether such companies were based in Bulawayo or not.¹¹³⁹

The Town Clerk confronted the Acting Bulawayo Provincial Administrator's Office over the names of beneficiaries who already owned houses in the city and also queried why new house seekers who registered in December 2005, including young student nurses, some of them new arrivals in Bulawayo, were allocated houses ahead of people who registered in the 1970s and 1980s.¹¹⁴⁰ While Council records showed that 74,165 low income earners lost their accommodation in the city due to OM, there were only 600 names of the victims of OM on the waiting list. The Council initially submitted 346 names of the 600 OM victims to the OGHK committee for allocation, but only 36 had been allocated stands in March 2006. The Council thus called for transparency and fairness in the allocation process and for respect for the waiting list dating back to the colonial period before 1980¹¹⁴¹ and then resolved that those who were on the Council's waiting list but already owned houses be removed from the list and have their stands repossessed¹¹⁴² but this was bound to cause serious friction with the OGHK committee headed by the army personnel.

The reason why so many people, some of them who already owned houses but were on the Council's waiting list was that as soon as the national government announced during OM in June that it was going to provide stands and houses many went to the Council offices to register in the waiting list. This was reflected in the income collected by the Council as registration fees which jumped from Z\$38m in June to more than

Parliament, June 2006, pp. 8-10 in http://www.kubatana.net/docs/legisl/ppc_locgov_garikai_060606.pdf, retrieved on 20 February 2009.

¹¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 10. See also City of Bulawayo, Memorandum to Town Clerk—"Un-procedural Allocation of Houses and Stands in Cowdry Park" from Director of Housing and Community Services, 24th January 2006.

¹¹⁴⁰ BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, "Letter from the Town Clerk to the Acting Provincial Administrator-Re Operation Garikai Hlalani Kuhle, 20 February 2006. See also City of Bulawayo, Memorandum to Town Clerk—"Un-procedural Allocation of Houses and stands in Cowdry Park" from Director of Housing and Community Services, 24th January 2006.

¹¹⁴¹ BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, "Letter from the Town Clerk to the Acting Provincial Administrator, Bulawayo—Un-procedural Allocation of Houses and Stands at Cowdry Park-Cases of Dual Ownership", 7th March 2006.

¹¹⁴² "Extract from Minutes of the Town Lands and Planning Committee".

Z\$57m in July 2005.¹¹⁴³ New registration continued throughout the year as the national government continued rolling out new phases of the reconstruction programme. It was these new entrants on the waiting list, most of them not victims of OM and most them suspected to be related to the directors of the programme or their colleagues at work or relations of the ruling party members that benefited from the housing programme. Only the directors of this programme knew the true identity of the people they allocated houses and stands.

The chairperson of the OGHK programme in Bulawayo Lt Col. Matavire explained that this was because from a list of 130 victims of OM only 43 had taken up offers of housing despite the advertisements in the national press. It was unthinkable to expect the poor victims of the blitz to have access to newspapers when most of them did not have food and accommodation. Matavire also argued that other displaced victims of OM were transported to their rural homes while others failed to raise the funds required to take up the houses.¹¹⁴⁴ The major hindrance among other victims of OM towards taking up allocated stands appeared to be the failure to raise the required deposits.

Some beneficiaries did not have the council's housing waiting list forms, some of them were only referred to the Council after allocation. The OGHK officials then demanded that Council register these people, some of them producing their late parents' registration forms.¹¹⁴⁵ The Bulawayo Council refused to process these allocations because of the anomalies as only its central registry had the authority to amend registry forms. The OGHK officials had many "special cases" that were allocated houses or stands. The mayor was never asked to submit his special cases, as it was his council that kept records of many deserving cases in the city. In January 2006, the Council temporarily suspended the processing of allocations to beneficiaries who registered in 2005 in order to address these anomalies.¹¹⁴⁶

¹¹⁴³ Memo by City Treasure to the Chairmen and Members of the Finance and Development Committee, 18 August 2005.

¹¹⁴⁴ Parliament of Zimbabwe, Second Report of the Portfolio Committee on Local Government on Progress made on the OGHK, pp. 8-10.

¹¹⁴⁵ City of Bulawayo, Memorandum to Town Clerk-"Un-procedural Allocation of Houses and Stands in Cowdry Park" from Director of Housing and Community Services, 24th January 2006.

¹¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

The central government responded by threatening the Bulawayo Council with unspecified stern action if it continued to frustrate the ongoing OGHK. President by Mugabe argued that:

We had to fight hard to ensure that the council co-operates with the Government...When we launch such programmes, we will have sat down to plan as government and when we bring them up, we know what we want to do. This is a national programme and it must be accepted. The politics of the MDC must be set aside....There can never be two Governments in Zimbabwe but one, so let's not be driven to take action...¹¹⁴⁷

This was reminiscent of the 1940s state/city struggles over the provision of housing to Africans when Prime Minister Godfrey Huggins complained that "There is far too much bickering between central and local governments. Some municipalities, particularly Bulawayo, would have to learn to accept "No" for an answer."¹¹⁴⁸ Then, the Bulawayo Council was resisting the national government's orders to provide housing for Africans. The dramatic difference in 2005 was that the authoritarian national government had lost control of all urban areas to the elected opposition MDC officials, and there was a strong reason to believe that the central government had unleashed OM to rid urban areas of some residents for their support of the MDC and there was thus an equally strong reason to suspect that the "reconstruction" programme imposed on councils was just a smokescreen to cover the central government's injustices.

Days after Mugabe's threat, Mayor Ndabeni-Ncube confronted the Chairman of IPOC over the accusations. Ncube stated that:

I have been hearing rumours of non-co-operation by council with respect to the Hlalani Kuhle Project and I have been dismissing that as being mischievous. Last week that allegation was more pronounced and this disturbs. Kindly indicate and catalogue instances of "non-co-operation" and I want to presume that "non-co-operation" is done by council staff at whatever level. This cannot be council "non-co-operation" as council resolved to assist as much as possible.¹¹⁴⁹

¹¹⁴⁷ *Chronicle*, Friday 25 November 2005, "Mayor Ndabeni Ncube told to co-op" See also "Speech by President Mugabe."

¹¹⁴⁸ Godfrey Huggins quoted in Terence Ranger, "City Versus State in Zimbabwe" p. 179.

¹¹⁴⁹ BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, Letter from J. G. Ndabeni-Ncube, Executive Mayor to Colonel Matavire, 28th November 2005, (Cowdry Park Hlalani Kuhle Project: Council Co-operation).

Bulawayo mayor Ndabeni-Ncube bemoaned that various ad hoc army headed housing committees, with overriding powers in urban areas under the jurisdiction of local authorities and not accountable to anyone had been established by the government which assumed statutory roles of the Council. Ndabeni-Ncube thus argued that it was “critical and right that, for the sustainability of any programme, role space and role actors are clearly defined and followed.”¹¹⁵⁰

There were bound to be differences in opinion and clashing views between the MDC dominated Bulawayo Council and the ZANU PF government over the implementation of the rebuilding programme, more so because the later imposed the programme on the Council and usurped the roles and duties of the Council. Juma Maseko Phiri argued that:

...In our culture there is a proverb that means “no two bulls can rule in one kraal”, that is simply not possible. Homeless people were not amused to see army elements (agents of the government) usurping the duties of the council in allocating houses and stands, more so at a time when their “brothers in law” the ZRP, had just destroyed their homes. In this region, we know that the involvement of the army always spells disaster for the residents. I never expected any good to come out of it, see what happened, who is living in those Garkai/Hlalani Kuhle houses in Cowdry Park”,
Hee! Tell me...¹¹⁵¹

By directly allocating stands and houses to house seekers within the areas under the jurisdiction of city council, the national government clearly usurped the role and responsibilities of councils, highlighting a lack of clear definition of and respect for the respective roles and competencies between central and local spheres of government and this was a symptom of policy failure by the national government to come to terms with rapid urbanisation, its chaotic manifestations, and people’s “Right to the city.”¹¹⁵² With the exception of Harare which was run by a government appointed commission, all local authorities were not consulted prior to the blitz and OM was launched before alternatives could be found.¹¹⁵³ This had catastrophic effects on the poor because of the disregard of standards.

¹¹⁵⁰ BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, “Letter from Executive Mayor of Bulawayo to Minister of Local Government, Public Works and Urban Development, Re: The Operation Restore Order, 28 June, 2005.

¹¹⁵¹ Interview with Juma Maseko (Phiri), Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 4 January 2009.

¹¹⁵² A. Tibaijuka, “Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe, pp. 71, 74-5 and 8.

¹¹⁵³ Ibid.

Housing standards were firstly introduced in the Western society in the nineteenth century to protect weaker members of the community against overcrowding and ill health by setting minimum requirements of hygiene, safety and privacy.¹¹⁵⁴ In post colonial Zimbabwe the trend has been that the public sector provides serviced land and a core, and allow the beneficiaries to develop the rest of the superstructure according to their requirements and ability.¹¹⁵⁵ Installation of running water supply and reticulated sewerage systems in low income housing has been another standard practise in Zimbabwe.¹¹⁵⁶

In 2005, while the national government stated that OM was undertaken to stem chaotic urbanisation that hindered it and local authorities from enforcing national and local authority by-laws and providing service delivery,¹¹⁵⁷ OGHK also failed to deliver the same and actually hindered local authorities from enforcing public health by-laws by commissioning the occupation of houses built without water and sewer reticulation systems.

In Bulawayo, sewerage and reticulation pipes could not be laid under the OGHK houses built on un-serviced land as it was later discovered that the construction site was on a bed rock. The bed rock needed blasting but that could not be done because houses had already been built.¹¹⁵⁸ While it was possible to lay the pipes, the only method that could be used for laying them was by using a jackhammer which was very expensive. The method was also time-consuming and labour intensive, and the jackhammers use diesel which was a rare commodity in the country. Above all, there was a serious shortage of money to finance the construction of sewerage services.

The Bulawayo Council condemned OGHK houses as “death traps.”¹¹⁵⁹ In September 2006 the Council issued eviction notices to over 100 families living in the OGHK houses in order to prevent outbreak of diseases such as diarrhoea and respiratory infections and

¹¹⁵⁴ Agarwal, cited in Christopher Mafico, *Urban Low Income Housing in Zimbabwe*, (Aldershot: Avebury, 1991), p. 108.

¹¹⁵⁵ Amin Kamete, “A Review of Zimbabwe’s Public Sector Urban Low Income Housing Production System”, p. 22.

¹¹⁵⁶ C. Mafico, *Urban Low Income Housing in Zimbabwe*, pp. 108 and 113.

¹¹⁵⁷ Response by the Government of Zimbabwe to the Report by the UN Special Envoy, p. 15.

¹¹⁵⁸ *Zimbabwe Independent*, 6 January 2006, “Operation Garikai hits snag”, quoted in Solidarity Peace Trust, “*Meltdown*”, p. 28. Under town planning laws servicing of stands should be done before construction starts but the government ignored professional advice at the inception of the operation.

¹¹⁵⁹ *The Standard*, 19 September 2006 “Bulawayo Council Condemns Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle Houses.”

this was in line with the Council's public health by-laws since the two roomed houses did not have water and sewer reticulation systems. The Council noted that:

Developing a project of this nature and size on un-serviced land had inherent problems that in the long run negate whatever gains may be envisaged in providing shelter to residents. Lack of water and sewer reticulation compromised hygiene standards and created a nuisance of fouling of open spaces. In fact, residents swapped death from exposure to the elements for death through diarrhoea and respiratory infections as a result of unsanitary living conditions.¹¹⁶⁰

The Council served residents with notices to vacate to ensure provision of sanitary facilities and instructed that the houses should only be occupied after residents have been given a "certification of occupation" from the health inspectorate. Ndabeni-Ncube noted that:

All we are saying is that you don't occupy incomplete houses without such basic (water and sewerage) services. We are saying to the people that put the families there: can you correct that situation because there would be a terrible disaster. Why did they put those people in those houses without such basic services in the first place? This was just a case of creating problems for Bulawayo and creating an unhealthy situation in the city.¹¹⁶¹

Governor Mathema, whose office supervised OGHK in Bulawayo, refused to comment on the evictions. When interviewed he responded by saying "*Tshiyana lami wena* (Leave me alone you!). I don't have a comment. Go to the Council."¹¹⁶²

In March 2008, nearly three years after the start of the reconstruction phase, less than ten houses had electricity connected to them. House occupants fetched water from a communal tap and used the bush to relieve themselves. The scornful national government statement in 2005, prompted by accusing Tibaijuka's Report of being influenced by Tony Blair and his allies, including George Bush, that "We certainly do not believe that allowing Bush toilets and Blair toilets in the urban areas would be appropriate"¹¹⁶³ rang hollow. In 2006, Minister Chombo was said to have ordered the Council to build Blair toilets so that the beneficiaries could move in but this was resisted by the Council on the grounds that the Blair toilets would pollute the city's underground water system.¹¹⁶⁴ Therefore, OGHK failed to observe the essential standards.

¹¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹¹⁶² Ibid.

¹¹⁶³ Government of Zimbabwe, "Response to the Report by the UN Special Envoy", p. 27.

¹¹⁶⁴ Solidarity Peace Trust, "Meltdown", p. 36.

Most importantly, it failed to deliver the promised houses. After touring the affected areas across the country more than a year after the launch of OGHK, Amnesty International (AI) noted that most of the victims of the operation had not benefited from the rebuilding exercise. The majority of the OGHK houses were incomplete, lacking doors, windows, floors and even roofs. Houses were also not connected to adequate water or sanitation facilities. Construction at most sites had ground to a halt because of lack of funds. AI's Africa programme director, Kolawole Olaniyan, argued that OGHK "is a wholly inadequate response to the mass violations of 2005, and in reality has achieved very little."¹¹⁶⁵ Olaniyan labelled OGHK "a failed government public relations project to cover up mass human rights violations" and urged the government to seek international assistance to address the immediate housing and humanitarian needs of the affected people.¹¹⁶⁶ Solidarity Peace Trust argued that the sudden announcement of this biggest housing scheme in the history of Africa was hastily made to cover up for the cruelty of the demolitions which had left thousands of people shelter less in the urban areas.¹¹⁶⁷

In January 2007, OGHK had provided about 5,000 stands and 700 houses, most of them still unoccupied in Bulawayo. Only 39 families of the victims of OM had been allocated the OGHK houses in the city.¹¹⁶⁸ By the end of 2007, a total of 7,000 un-serviced stands had been allocated to the OGHK project in Bulawayo. The chairman of the Bulawayo Home Seekers Consortium, Mr Sifiso Ndlovu revealed that all beneficiaries who were allocated stands after the first phase were supposed to service their stands and build the houses on their own but they were failing because of lack of funds. A number of the beneficiaries still had not taken up their stands due to failure to raise the required deposits.¹¹⁶⁹

In November 2007, more than two years after the launch of the programme, only 200 houses had been successfully completed in Bulawayo and allocated to the beneficiaries on the waiting list, and a further 273 were at various stages of completion.

¹¹⁶⁵ Kolawole Olaniyan, cited in *The Standard*, 22 October 2006, "World Habitat Day vs Murambatsvina."

¹¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶⁷ Solidarity Peace Trust, "*Meltdown*", p. 27.

¹¹⁶⁸ *The Standard*, 7 January 2007, "Only 36 benefit from 'Operation Garikai' in Bulawayo."

¹¹⁶⁹ *Chronicle*, Monday, July 30, 2007, "\$30 Billion Needed for Operation Hlalani Kuhle."

Challenges faced included lack of funds, skilled personnel, plant and equipment to undertake the project as the site was not serviced.¹¹⁷⁰

As a result of the irregularities associated with the implementation of OGHK, Bulawayo residents euphemistically referred to OGHK as “Operation Khalani Kuhle” which meant “Operation Cry Well”. When asked what they meant by “cry well”, Jimmy Rungano argued that they only:

substituted ‘H’ in Operation Garikai [H]alani Kuhle for ‘K’ so that it will become Operation Garikai [K]halani Kuhle. (To *khala*, means ‘cry’ in Ndebele language.) So in other words we meant that OGHK was a programme just meant to inflict pain on us because the government shameless excluded us when it had made us believe that we were the intended beneficiaries.¹¹⁷¹

For Rungano, OGHK was just a smokescreen meant to lull the international community when national government agents were still active driving the victims of OM further away from the urban areas, having followed them in transit camps where they were initially dumped and sending them scattering to various rural areas with no food and no hope for survival. Rungano, whose one roomed cottage was destroyed at Mzilikazi Township, argued that:

I started to smell a rat when I heard that the homeless victims of OM initially housed by churches in the city were removed by the national government agents at night and dumped at transit camps outside the city. I just asked myself that if OGHK was truly meant for the victims why the government had not transported all such victims to the OGHK site in Cowdry Park Township. For me, that was a sign that the national government did not want the poor in cities. They [government officials] wanted to ensure that all the poor go and die in bushy areas where they would not be seen by many people. That was a government way of saying ‘go and suffer in the bush where no one will see and console you, where no churches will give you food, go and die and be buried where you belong, in rural areas, not in the city.’¹¹⁷²

Sinothi Ncube whose dwelling was destroyed in Nuboyenja during the blitz, noted that:

When I heard about the OGHK housing scheme during OM, I thought that was too good to be true. I just did not understand why the national government would start by destroying our accommodation before finding alternatives for us. My neighbour, Sibanda, who also had his house destroyed, approached city council offices, I heard he was referred to the OGHK task force office running the

¹¹⁷⁰ BMRL P4/1 Public Health General/Clean Up Campaign, Memorandum to Acting Town Clerk, “Executive Mayor’s Annual Report for the year 2006/2007 Municipal year”, 20th November 2007.

¹¹⁷¹ Interview with Jimmy Rungano, 6th Ave Extension Tote Club, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Monday 5 January 2005.

¹¹⁷² Ibid.

housing schemes. He tried his luck for several weeks, going there daily but that was useless because just like me, he was not on the council's waiting list because we stopped paying the annual renewal fees many years ago as we could not afford them. After weeks of trying Sibanda lost hope and gave up, very frustrated, and guess what, also having lost the soles of his only old pair of shoes due to walking long distances everyday. Many housing projects have excluded us since independence, so I thought why should I bother myself now?...¹¹⁷³

Siboniso Tembo, who stayed in the overcrowded and dilapidated Sidojiwe hostels argued that when she heard about the OGHK housing scheme:

I thought that we were going to be some of the first beneficiaries of the scheme because the council has known about our housing predicaments for decades. The council had promised to transfer us to Emganwini Millennium housing scheme but that fell through. We only heard that the soldiers running the OGHK housing project had their own list of people they wanted to allocate houses and stands. We are still here, we will die here in this squalor...¹¹⁷⁴

Since the allocation of a few OGHK completed structures was mired in controversy with the ruling ZANU PF party officials and their relatives being cited as the main beneficiaries, Solidarity Peace Trust labelled OGHK “a scandal of dismal delivery and ZANU PF patronage.”¹¹⁷⁵ This was reiterated by Olipa Mangena, a resident in Bulawayo who argued that:

OGHK houses are for bland ZANU PF supporters. I can't think of any way by which anyone who is not their supporter could have accessed a house or a stand in that place. Anyway, as far as we know, the majority of the beneficiaries of the OGHK scheme were soldiers. Deserving victims of OM are languishing in heart rending housing conditions. When the national government appointed military personnel to run the housing programme, that was a bold message to the victims of OM to cry well, alone and not even dare think of going to the OGHK site where there are soldiers. The presence of soldiers always carries some sense of fear among the residents... We are powerless yes I agree, but no one can stop us from saying what we want...¹¹⁷⁶

This led Charlton Ngcebetsa Jnr to argue that OGHK houses in Bulawayo appeared like “a cantonment because most of the houses were allocated to the members of the ZNA. The majority of the victims of OM were left out in the cold.”¹¹⁷⁷

¹¹⁷³ Interview with Sinothi Ncube, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 2 January 2009.

¹¹⁷⁴ Interview with Siboniso Tembo, Sidojiwe Hostels, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Sunday 4 January 2009.

¹¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁷⁶ Interview with Olipa Mangena, Cowdry Park Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 01 March 2008.

¹¹⁷⁷ Interview with Charlton Ngcebetsa Jnr, Bulawayo Tower Block, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 7 January 2009.

Foreign migrants without any rural home to return to remained destitute in the city.

Mr Maseko, originally from Malawi argued that:

Bulawayo, and many other urban areas and even mines and farms of this country were developed by the labour of foreigners from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique among others. Many of them lost their shelter in this city during OM and some of them are still roaming the townships right now, they have nowhere to go. The two cottages I built in my backyard in Njube Township were also destroyed. I used to rent them out to get money. It's very unfortunate that the government has done very little for the migrants workers who played a critical role in the development of this country.¹¹⁷⁸

Other older stranded foreign migrants in Bulawayo wished to die because of the extreme poverty conditions they were enduring.¹¹⁷⁹ The government prevented victims of OM who were of foreign origin from getting food handouts. Minister Chombo for example, justified the need to “vet” families eligible for food aid, as “we have a lot of outsiders, like Zambians and Mozambicans, making their way to these areas, so we have to verify and ensure that those who receive assistance are deserving Zimbabweans.”¹¹⁸⁰ Farm workers became victims of the new either/or paradigms of race and loyalty in Zimbabwe during the third *Chimurenga*, being forced to support land invasions because of racial or political identification.¹¹⁸¹

In response to the fate of foreign migrant workers without a rural home in Zimbabwe and affected by the blitz, the government argued that it promulgated legislation granting citizenship to all SADC citizens who were resident in the country in 1980.¹¹⁸² However national citizenship was of no use in guaranteeing the right to permanent residency even for the local poor in cities, as such, national citizenship could not be expected to protect the former migrant workers suffering from the effects of blitz as it failed to protect locals from the same. After all, when land invasions began in 1999, even national citizenship did not guarantee rights to property the same way that participation in the liberation war now did. Former farm workers, most of them children

¹¹⁷⁸ Interview with Mr. Maseko, Renkini Bus Terminus, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 3 January, 2009.

¹¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁸⁰ Thousands still homeless one year after Zimbabwe's forced evictions- in [http://www.citymayors.com/society/zimbabwe_evictions.html]

¹¹⁸¹ Blair Rutherford, cited in Luise White, *The Assassination of Hebert Chitepo, Texts and Politics in Zimbabwe*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), p. 104.

¹¹⁸² Government of Zimbabwe, “Response to the Report by the UN Special Envoy”, p. 27.

of foreign migrants, could not have the same claim on the state's resources as did people who were "unquestionably" Zimbabwean or who claimed to be war veterans.¹¹⁸³

Other than promising to build houses for the victims of OM, the national government also promised to build vending bays for informal traders affected by OM. The vending bays were to be built at the corner of Lobengula Street and 3rd Avenue, (a former legal vending area where vending bays built by the Council were destroyed by OM) and in Cowdry Park Township. In Bulawayo alone, the national government promised to build 41,000 vending bays before August 2005. However, more than a year later only 120 bays had been built at the corner of Lobengula Street and 3rd Avenue and were commissioned by the Minister of Small and Medium Enterprises Sithembiso Nyoni.¹¹⁸⁴

The vending market at the corner of Lobengula Street and 3rd Avenue is basically on the outskirts of the city. It was patronised by a very small section of the population in the city, mainly those walking through to their homes in Makokoba and Mzilikazi Townships. It is located in an area infested with street thieves, and as result not many city residents patronised it. The vending shelters built in the area could only accommodate 120 traders, but thousands more needed vending bays in the city. When this author visited the market nearly three years after the establishment of the vending shelters, the area had almost become a white elephant. More than half of the 120 stalls were unoccupied. The beneficiaries of the OGHK vending bays had abandoned them in frustration. Some were already conducting business in street corners and other sites considered illegal by city authorities but where they could find more customers. One of the vendors at the market, Ndaba, whose stall was almost empty with just one bunch of bananas, argued that:

This is the problem with these people (national government or council), they always want to impose their decisions upon us. Very few customers always come to this market. We have been deliberately pushed out of business by being allocated a market that is on the outskirts of the city. There is no business in this place. This is probably the dullest vending market I have ever seen. As you can see many people have abandoned their stalls. I am still in this market not for any serious vending as you can see that my stall is almost empty. There is no joy here. I just come here to while up time with friends. Staying at home can increase your stress and you can end up committing suicide...¹¹⁸⁵

¹¹⁸³ Luise White, *The Assassination of Hebert Chitepo*, pp. 103-104.

¹¹⁸⁴ Solidarity Peace Trust, "Meltdown", p. 20. Also see *Chronicle*, 5 July 2005.

¹¹⁸⁵ Informal discussion with Ndaba, Corner 3rd Avenue/Lobengula Street Vegetable Market, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 22 April 2008.

Ndaba indicated that most of the traders were no longer able to raise enough money to enable them to order more commodities for resale. Their situation was compounded by that most of them sold one line of commodities, perishable fruits and vegetables which became stale much faster.

The allocation of vending bays was also riddled with allegations of corruption just like the OGHK houses. Council officials and vendors alleged that most of the bays were not allocated to deserving informal traders who were affected by OM, but to predominantly members of the ruling ZANU PF's Women's League. Vending has therefore remained almost entirely illegal in official eyes since 2005 because 95 percent of licensed vendors were left without legal trading sites. Most of the vending sites were left even dirtier than before the operation.¹¹⁸⁶

Registered informal traders in Bulawayo never recovered most of their goods that were confiscated by the police during OM. In February 2006 the Bulawayo Up and Coming Traders Association (BUTA) complained that they failed to recover their wares. They were tossed back and forth by the ZRP and Bulawayo City Council and thus sought an explanation on who was responsible and what steps were they to take to be refunded as the Court had ruled in their favour. Their other complaint was that the ZRP still harassed them and confiscated their wares. BUTA sought permission to carry out citizen arrest on officers who blatantly abused their offices. Inspector Dube from the ZRP Licence Section, Bulawayo argued that if the Court had ruled that the BUTA vendors' wares be returned, it was up to the victims to take that judgment to the ZRP and claim back their wares. He noted that only legal vendors would be refunded if it was indeed established that the ZRP erred and that if BUTA felt unfairly treated they could take the matter up with the court. However, where the illegal vendor admitted the offence and paid the admission charge, confiscated goods were to be disposed of in terms of laid down procedures,¹¹⁸⁷ which was public auctioning. One frustrated vendor whose goods were also confiscated by the police argued that:

¹¹⁸⁶ Solidarity Peace Trust, "*Meltdown*", p. 21.

¹¹⁸⁷ BMRL B3/2 Hawkers and Vendors/Informal Traders, Minutes of the Meeting held between council officials, ZRP and BUTA in the Committee Room at 2. 30 pm on the 23rd of February, 2006.

...It's clear that the police have consumed our wares. For them to continue saying that we go back to court is just a way of frustrating us until we give up on this case, they know that we don't have enough money to sustain our case through the courts. They should simply confess that they have consumed our goods; we know that is one of the reasons why they are trigger happy when it comes to raiding and confiscating our goods. Surely for how long will we continue begging them to return goods they confiscated from our registered members?¹¹⁸⁸

For Mbulawa Dube in Bulawayo, OGHK created:

Unprecedented chaos and confusion among informal traders in Bulawayo. OGHK has failed to deliver the vending bays promised in 2005. We no longer see the importance of being a registered vendor, almost everyone in the city is now a vendor stampeding for customers everywhere. The order that prevailed before OM was swept aside by the operation which worsened poverty levels in the city and pushed many households into unorganized informal trading as the only survival mechanism. Look at what's happening in the city now. There is a vendor standing in almost every street corner or any open space. Since 2005, every minute we spend here (6th Avenue/Lobengula Street vending area) we would be on the lookout for the police or the green bombers¹¹⁸⁹ who raid and confiscate our goods. There is no happiness and peace in our lives. It's now a dog eat dog situation. If you don't come here you don't get any customers, what should we do?, we need to feed out families...¹¹⁹⁰

Operation Murambatsvina clearly left the informal sector in Bulawayo in misery and disarray.¹¹⁹¹ Rita Sibanda, a vegetable vendor in Bulawayo, argued that:

...What the Zanu PF government is doing is acting like an irresponsible father who does not want to provide for their girl child, refusing to buy her clothes, give her food and even to send her to school. When the child is forced into 'prostitution' as a survival strategy, the father turns against the child, accuses her of being a delinquent, and then uses that as an excuse to chase her away from home so that the father frees himself from the 'burden' of providing for the child. We are the creation of this government, it is our guardian, our parent, but now it has now turned against us. There is nothing we can do because we are poor. Who can love a poor person these days?...¹¹⁹²

OGHK therefore largely failed to restore the dignity and meet the hopes for a better future to the displaced people.

Perhaps with no money to stock other commodities, hungry "entrepreneurs" resorted to be selling rodent meat in 2006. One such man was said to be catching rodents in the bushy areas on the outskirts of Bulawayo. After roasting the rodent meat, he spiced

¹¹⁸⁸ Interview with a BUTA vendor, Bulawayo Vegetable Market, Bulawayo 01 March 2008.

¹¹⁸⁹ Green bombers were state trained and state sponsored youth militias who violently enforced any orders assigned to them by the government.

¹¹⁹⁰ Interview with Mbulawa Dube, Corner 6th Avenue/Lobengula Street vending area, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 2 January 2009. In 2006, only 9,000 vetted and licensed vendors in Bulawayo operated in legal vending sites. This meant that other thousands of unlicensed vendors spent their entire working lives on the run and lost many of their goods to raids by the police. See Solidarity Peace Trust, "Meltdown", pp. 8-9.

¹¹⁹¹ Solidarity Peace Trust, "Meltdown", pp. 8-9.

¹¹⁹² Informal discussion with Rita Sibanda, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 16 January 2008.

it with salt and chilli powder, and then commuted to the western suburbs of Makokoba and Luveve where he fetched around Z\$75000 to Z\$100 000 per rodent. Residents were so desperate to eat meat that the business was thriving. Beef was retailing at Z\$790 000 per kg in most butcheries and many low income earners could not afford buying beef.¹¹⁹³ See picture below.

The picture below shows a vendor selling rodents' meat in Bulawayo townships.



Source: KN, Bulawayo, 10/6/06, in http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jun11_2006.html

Despite the brutality of OM and the failure of OGHK to deliver the promised “dignity” to township residents, Bulawayo residents still found the lighter side of the dark episode to joke about. They argued that townships will never be the same after the clean-up operation for a number of reasons. Sahwira, a resident in the city who used to boast to his

¹¹⁹³ KN, Bulawayo, 10/6/06 quoted in http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/jun11_2006.html

khabhiza (beer drinking cabinet) that he was a landlord at *Bambazonke* (Harare) was left in deep mourning. This was because his friends in Bulawayo learnt that the several houses that he claimed to own in Harare were actually wooden shacks at Mbare that were also razed during OM.¹¹⁹⁴ Also, the clean up threatened to destroy township residents' crucial gossip linkages as residents were left bound to miss cobblers who normally sat under trees in street corners, talkative illegal barbers who were always ready to take off at the sight of the municipal police and women vegetables vendors who were reliable sources of all township happenings and crucial township gossip.¹¹⁹⁵

7.5 Conclusion

The main motive for conducting OM was to disperse some of the urban poor to rural areas. This revealed the fragility of the poor's claim to permanent urban residency in Zimbabwe. Mrs Moyo, a resident in Makokoba Township argued that:

The truth is that the sun has set for most of us in townships. Worse still, it set when we were in the middle of a desert, with no food and no place to sleep. There are only two options as a way out. One is to return to rural areas for those who have them. For permanent town residents, most of them will remain here and lead a miserable life that will lead to a miserable death...we don't know what to do...¹¹⁹⁶

At old age, with limited power to work, old residents in Bulawayo were left dejected and convinced that OM was their "death sentence." Lillian Moyo, a resident of Njube Township, argued that "that thing (OM) only came to kill us. We are already dead. Can you tell me that I am alive when hunger strokes me everyday like this? For me and many others, it's clear that one day we will succumb to the pain of hunger..."¹¹⁹⁷

The constant talk by national government officials that the poor return to rural areas at least revealed that the "reconstruction" programme was just a smokescreen to lull the vocal international community. It also indicated that OGHK was not planned. This was confirmed by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee that assessed the progress of OGHK which recommended that in future, proper planning be done before the

¹¹⁹⁴ William Phiri, "Transport Emalokishini", Here and there with William Phiri, 4 June 2005, see http://www.inkundla.com/forum/ubbthreads.php/topics/30358/ibhave_yemalokitshini

¹¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁹⁶ Interview with Mrs Moyo, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, 16 January 2008.

¹¹⁹⁷ Interview with Lillian Moyo, Njube Township, Bulawayo, 5 January 2009.

government embarks on national construction programmes,¹¹⁹⁸ contradicting President Mugabe's assertion that OGHK was conceived and carried out in line with the objectives of the 2004-2008 national housing delivery programme adopted by his government in October 2003.¹¹⁹⁹

The programme clearly demonstrated the big gap between the government's excessive rhetoric on the provision of low cost housing in urban area, and its apparent lack of capacity to deliver the promises. OGHK also highlighted the lethality of the state/city struggles over the provision of housing and other amenities to low income earners.

Beauty Ngwenya, an ex-resident of Killarney squatter camp who was dumped at Spring Farm on the outskirts of Bulawayo, summarised the predicament faced by victims of OM very well. She argued that:

...Killarney Squatter Camp was far much better than living here where I am struggling to make ends meet. I used to be a vendor while staying at the squatter camp but now I am just a homeless and an unproductive human being. I am a poor woman entirely dependent on well-wishers. I do not foresee a situation in which I will benefit from Operation Hlalani Kuhle. I will die homeless.... There is no hope here. We have been reduced to beggars. Our lives were far much better in Killarney than at Spring Farm. We need urgent help and those houses that we were promised when our shacks were destroyed by government security agents...¹²⁰⁰

Therefore, while the greatest purge of the undesirables failed to "ruralise" them, it left them poorer and revealed the fragility of their claim to rights to permanent residency in the city.

¹¹⁹⁸ Parliament of Zimbabwe, "Second Report of the Portfolio Committee on Local Government", p. 14.

¹¹⁹⁹ See "Speech by President Mugabe."

¹²⁰⁰ Beauty Ngwenya quoted in *The Standard*, 8 January 2006, "We've lost hope-Evicted squatters."

Thesis Conclusion.

This thesis highlighted the fragility of the poor's claim to the right to permanent residency in Bulawayo's townships. This was accomplished by focussing on the poor's livelihoods and struggles for low cost housing in the city. I emphasized inadequate state funding coupled with high housing standards requirements, unemployment coupled with dwindling and low paying formal jobs and the resultant poverty as major factors responsible for spreading and sustaining the discrimination against low income earners in the city between 1960 and 2005. Discourses from colonial to the post colonial era sustained the discrimination against the poor. During the colonial period, the major discourse was that all Africans belonged to rural areas and had access to land, together with the perception that low income earners in townships were immoral and unclean and these were largely influenced by the colonial/racial ideology whereby towns and cities were regarded as European areas and rural areas as African areas. Africans were reluctantly accepted into urban areas when this policy proved incompatible with the demands of a settled urban population by the industrial capital.

The situation did not change much after independence. The new political leaders, most of them former nationalist leaders who belonged to the African middle class during the colonial period, continued to exhibit a discriminatory stance against the majority of the low income urban masses. Like the Ian Smith regime, the new Zimbabwean government leaders later viewed high population growth as responsible for underdevelopment and its attendant problems and thus sort ways to ensure that women were relieved of the "drudge of constant pregnancy."¹²⁰¹ The post-colonial government hoped that the development of growth points would slow down the rural-urban migration. Ntabazinduna Growth Point, around 30 kilometres east of Bulawayo was one such centre that was expected to grow but up to today it offers no competition to Bulawayo in attracting business investors.¹²⁰² National government officials' hostility towards the

¹²⁰¹ Michael O. West, "Nationalism, Race, and Gender: The Politics of Family Planning in Zimbabwe, 1957-1990", in *Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1994, p. 466.

¹²⁰² Mirjam Zaaijer, *Urban Economic Restructuring and Local Institutional Response: The Case of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe*, HIS Project Paper Series, (Rotterdam: Institute for Housing and Urban Development, 1998), pp. 22-23.

urban masses worsened after 2000 when the urban masses began voting en masse for the opposition MDC party.

I also highlighted how the post-colonial government continued to regard low income earners in urban areas as belonging to rural areas. This was seen through a manifest reluctance by authorities to accept informal activities in the face of increasing housing shortages and unemployment. The overall conclusion is that there was a misunderstanding by authorities on how most of the rural land was not able to support some families because of infertility or lack of resources to successfully till the land by most some families.¹²⁰³ A brief overview of the chapters in this thesis reveals a constant discrimination against the poor in the city since 1960.

The job insecurity experienced in the 1960s was worsened by inadequate funding for African housing coupled with high housing standards requirements and poverty caused by the prevalence of low wages for Africans, wages which were largely determined by the belief that Africans were bachelor workers, not family men. Hunger due to lack of food occupied a central theme in Africans' definition of poverty and what made them happy in the city. Maseko argued that:

During the colonial period you could sometimes visit a friend you thought they were very poor and they give you white tea, plenty of sugar with bread that was buttered, but in the last few years you would be lucky if you visited a friend and was given any food. That is serious poverty. This national government has reduced us to extreme poverty in the last decades. Most people have not been able to send their children to school with any pocket money or lunch boxes, for me that's serious poverty because it subjects children to serious hunger that tempts them to engage in informal activities and evil ways to get food.¹²⁰⁴

This was similar to the findings of Clive Kileff in the late 1960s that Africans wished to prosper by their work so that they could stay in town as long as they could because then they would be happy there and they could eat bread everyday.¹²⁰⁵

Africans in Bulawayo therefore firmly believed that their poverty was caused by unemployment. Men with formal jobs were highly respectable both in urban and rural areas. However, as highlighted in the second chapter of this thesis, the high

¹²⁰³ Beacon Mbiba, cited in Mbiba and Ndubiwa, "Decent Work in Construction and the Role of Local Authorities: The Case of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe", *Unpublished Report*, January 2006, p. 29.

¹²⁰⁴ Interview with Mr. Maseko, Old Long Distance Bus Rank Terminus, Saturday 3 January 2009.

¹²⁰⁵ Clive Kileff, *Research Report*, University of Rhodesia, undated, p.79.

unemployment rates among Africans revealed one deep seated national government prejudice, that is, the belief that African problems, including unemployment, were to be solved by themselves through rural community development projects. The national government hoped that unemployment in urban areas was going to be solved by Africans moving back to rural areas where there was no development that could attract them, more so because of the state's land policies that had rendered many rural Africans landless and unwilling to remain trapped in rural poverty. Worse still, rural employers preferred foreign African labourers to local ones who despised rural work and preferred to flock to the city where they were not wanted due to high unemployment levels.

The use of draconian legislation and various other influx control measures failed to stop the influx of Africans into urban areas. While the influx exacerbated the unemployment problem in the city, it also fuelled the growth of the undesirable informal sector that was never legalised by the colonial state. In the third chapter, I highlighted the difficult environment under which formally unemployed Africans and even those formally employed low income earners supplemented their wages through informal economic activities which had become a crucial source of livelihood for many in townships. The growth of the informal sector increased in the 1970s following the breakdown of the influx control measures as the war of liberation intensified in rural areas and many families migrated to the city which was relatively peaceful.

I also revealed how class dynamics among Africans were instrumental in sustaining the discrimination against low income Africans in the city. African businessmen paid their African employees very low wages and the self-serving activities of African businessmen and their representatives on the Advisory Boards did little to win them favour of township Africans, who, since the late 1950s began issuing calls for their removal and for "ordinary people being chosen to represent ordinary men."¹²⁰⁶

Low income Africans in Bulawayo also suffered from housing insecurity and poor housing conditions. While the Bulawayo Council was the first in colonial Zimbabwe to introduce home ownership schemes for Africans, the fourth chapter revealed how it discriminated against low income earners who wanted home ownership schemes. The

¹²⁰⁶ Michael O. West, "Pan-Africanism, Capitalism and Racial Uplift: The Rhetoric of African Business Formation in Colonial Zimbabwe", in *African Affairs* (1993), 92, p. 279.

building of bachelor accommodation by the Council in the 1960s, years after its widespread condemnation, revealed a persistent belief by the Council that the city was not a permanent home for the poor Africans. Hostels and other bachelor housing forced Africans to retain rural links, an act that was also used as an excuse by authorities for the perpetuation of conditions that treated Africans as temporary bachelor workers in the city.

Women were worse off because they suffered from a combination of colonial/racial discourses on gender, space and disease which promoted gender hierarchies and patriarchal power in urban areas.¹²⁰⁷ Unemployed single women were a subject of condemnation and ridicule by the authorities, white residents, middle class and low income African men. Single women were regarded as prostitutes; they met various obstacles in their search for employment and could only access accommodation through some form of alliance with men. Men also called for employment and housing sanctions against them in the city.

This thesis attempted to highlight that while Hugh Ashton, the African Administration Department director from 1949 to 1976 and the Bulawayo Council in general were liberal towards Africans in the city because they were the first to introduce home ownership schemes for Africans and Bulawayo Council was the first to integrate African advisory board members into the Council's administration, that liberalism was only a preserve for middle class Africans, not the poor. In the 1960s for example, Ashton repeatedly complained about the presence of undesirable unemployables in townships and accused them of exerting pressure on the Council's limited housing facilities.

At independence in 1980, perhaps the biggest gain for low income earners who stayed in rented housing was that they suddenly became house owners and landlords following a government decree that all African urban leaseholds should become freeholds. This fulfilled the long desired ambition of housing tenure among low income Africans, but the majority who benefited were men because all the rented housing was held in their names during the colonial period. While the ZANU PF led government

¹²⁰⁷ Lynette Jackson, "Stray Women" and "Girls on the Move": Gender, Space, and Disease in Colonial and Post-Colonial Zimbabwe", in Paul T. Zeleza and Ezekiel Kalipeni (eds), *Sacred Spaces and Public Quarrels: African Cultural and Economic Landscapes*, (Trenton and Asmara: Africa World Press, 1999), pp. 147-167.

commendably tore down race-specific obstacles to education and individual advancement in the 1980s, it largely squandered the opportunity to provide low income housing, opting for repressive and demagogic politics while presiding over a deteriorating economy.¹²⁰⁸

The fifth chapter revealed how the financial incapacity of the authorities led to a slow delivery of serviced land, together with the high building standards requirements and the poverty of many urban residents, as major factors behind the very slow provision of low income housing in Bulawayo between 1980 and 2005 and the resultant widening gap between low income housing supply and demand. In 1991, Christopher Mafico argued that there was a need for a complete overhaul in the country's urban housing policy or else history was going to judge the country very harshly for squandering the opportunity of improving the lot of her citizens.¹²⁰⁹ This happened in 2005 when the national government sanctioned the assault of the urban poor who lived in informal housing and depended on informal activities for livelihoods, a move which attracted fierce international condemnation.

In the sixth chapter I traced the macro economic problems that contributed to the growth of the informal economy in Bulawayo, highlighting how in the 1980s, the droughts and factory closures due to water shortages, together with the impact of the political tensions between the national government and the region of Matabeleland, exacerbated poverty conditions in Bulawayo. The urban poor continued to exist in an environment where their opportunities and living and survival spaces continued to shrink, leaving them in an unenviable position which daily exposed them to the worsening harsh economic environment.

Relocation of the Bulawayo residents to rural areas since the 1990s was a strong indication that they viewed 'rural poverty' as less vicious than urban poverty. Unemployment, lack of accommodation and old age among other factors forced the urban poor to relocate. That is the reason why Debby Potts and Mutambirwa argued that peasants (those who worked in urban areas) needed their rural land because if they lost their jobs, whether because they were fired or made redundant (as during the ESAP era in Zimbabwe) or became too ill, disabled or too old to work, they faced a possibility of

¹²⁰⁸ Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past and the Present*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 138-139.

¹²⁰⁹ Christopher Mafico, *Urban Low Income Housing in Zimbabwe*, (Aldershot: Avebury, 1991), p. 149.

absolute destitution in the absence of a comprehensive welfare system.¹²¹⁰ Some Bulawayo residents clearly retained rural links so as to minimise poverty risks at old age. Mr Nkomo argued that:

For sure there is no city here any more; this is something else we do not know. Bulawayo is now just a name but it is no longer the city that used to attract thousands and thousands of people. Now people run away from the city to refresh somewhere else. In the past people used to come to the city to refresh. It's like it is dead now. It's the same situation with the country as a whole. Look, for the past years people no longer work, even if they want to. They had to spend hours and hours queuing for basic commodities or valueless money and what time do all these people in queues do they work?¹²¹¹

While the rural-urban links have been crucial to the survival of lowly paid urbanites, there is perhaps a need for more localised research in Bulawayo and its surrounding areas like Tsholotsho, Lupane, Nkayi, Gwanda and Kezi, (perennial low rainfall areas with poor soils for crops) to ascertain the extent of rural-urban links as a survival mechanism of the poor in the city. The situation became more critical after independence because of the recurrence of droughts in the region. Bhoqo Mpala for example argued that there were some people in districts like Lupane who never harvested any crop that could last them beyond three months every year regardless of whether it was a good or bad rain season for the whole country, especially those with fields of sandy soils and those without livestock from which they could get manure to boost the fertility of their fields.¹²¹²

A similar view was reiterated by Lillian Moyo who argued that when the going got tough in the city, her husband would send her and their children to rural areas:

without food, and with no seed to prepare for the planting season, just going there escaping urban hunger to face the rural one. The reason why we are in Bulawayo is that at our rural home there is nothing. We don't have any livestock or any machinery to use to plough. The problem again is that when you leave him (my husband here), he will never follow you in rural areas, you will hear that he has found another wife, so now I resolved never to go back to rural areas, I will just do what others do here in the city to survive...¹²¹³

Moyo also engaged in illegal vending for survival in the city.

¹²¹⁰ Deborah Potts and Mutambirwa, "Rural-Urban Linkages in contemporary Harare: Why Peasants Need their Land", in *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1990, p. 680.

¹²¹¹ Interview with Moffat Nkomo, Bulawayo City Centre, Bulawayo, Friday 12 December, 2008.

¹²¹² Interview with Bhoqo Mpala, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, Friday 23 November 2008.

¹²¹³ Interview with Lillian Moyo, Njube Township, Bulawayo, 5 January 2009.

The post-colonial government's policy towards the informal sector vacillated according to its political fortunes. When the national government was severely discredited by the negative impact of ESAP in the 1990s, it allowed and encouraged the growth of various informal housing and economic activities that local authorities struggled to control. It was the same informal structures that the national government later on destroyed during the third *Chimurenga* chaos.

During the third *Chimurenga* period, there is evidence that the ruling party's intensifying authoritarian nationalism was responsible for silencing the poor in urban areas. While their massive vote in favour of the opposition could be reasonably viewed as an expression by the urban masses of their disapproval of the deteriorating economic conditions, the central government increasingly resorted to force and perhaps lies to silence any dissenting voices. The ruling elites were now ready to cut ties with the urban masses because they no longer required their support to rule.

While the urban crisis after 2000 was very similar to the 1940s one,¹²¹⁴ after 2000, the struggle between central and local government should not be seen as a contestation only between the central and the local state. According to Amin Kamete, residents in cities also tended to be dragged into the fight through their associations as they now tended to publicly express their sympathy for the local governments run by the opposition MDC party members, a move that riled ZANU PF officials and by extension the central government.¹²¹⁵ Therefore, unsurprisingly, the crisis ended up with a massive attempt to "ruralise" the poor in the name of restoring order and cleanliness.

It was because of authoritarian actions exhibited by the national government since 2000 that in 2004 Terence Ranger wrote that "nationalism as a movement, or a set of movement, and as an ideology, remained central to contemporary Zimbabwe and still required a great deal of rigorous historical questioning."¹²¹⁶ The events during the urban crisis in 2005, and even after the defeat of Robert Mugabe in the March 2008 harmonised Council, Member of Assembly, Senatorial and Presidential elections when more violence

¹²¹⁴ Terence Ranger, "City Versus State in Zimbabwe: Colonial Antecedents of the Current Crisis", in *Journal of East African Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2, July 2007, pp. 161-192.

¹²¹⁵ Amin Y. Kamete, "The Return of the Jettisoned: ZANU PF's Crack at 'Re-Urbanising' in Harare", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 32, Number 2, June 2006, p. 267.

¹²¹⁶ Terence Ranger, "Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History, and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe" in *Journal of Southern African History*, Vol. 30, Number 2, 2004, p. 216.

was unleashed in the name of defending “our land and our sovereignty,” when targeted victims were no longer those in urban areas but also those in rural areas highlighted the urgent need for a more rigorous historical questioning of nationalism especially with the increase in central government interference in the running of local authorities which also affected service delivery to the poor.

The 2005 urban crisis, discussed in the last chapter of this thesis, seems to be a perfect summation of this thesis that the city was not a home for the undesirable urban poor based on the brutal assault of their informal housing and informal economic activities. The crisis exposed the Zimbabwean government’s belief that the poor in urban areas belonged to rural areas where they were expected to be having land. Whether they had land or not did not matter, they had to return. The reasons behind the launch of OM were related to the national government’s authoritarian nationalism that had become the hallmark of all political, agrarian, economic and social policies of Zimbabwe under the Third *Chimurenga*.

The rhetoric about the “reconstruction” OGHK programme dovetailed well with the characteristic excessive national government rhetoric on the provision of low cost housing in urban areas and the characteristic failure to deliver the same. After all, when OM was in full swing, the Bulawayo based government mouthpiece *Chronicle* lumped all the responsibility for the urgent need of allocating the affected people alternative vending sites and housing stands to local authorities “so that the clean up is not seen as worsening the people’s plight but taking them out of difficulty into better life,”¹²¹⁷ when most local authorities were not consulted before the launch of the operation.

The situation for the urban poor seemed to worsen after 2005. During the Easter holidays in 2006 for example, more than 60 vagrants, mostly males of different ages and race, were rounded up by the police in Bulawayo under the Vagrancy Act. They were only taken to Tredgold Magistrates Court more than a week after their arrest. They attracted the attention of the public when they appeared in court clad in “tattered garments with unkempt hair and carrying their filthy world possessions” to answer charges of contravening the Vagrancy Act.¹²¹⁸ Interestingly, almost none of them

¹²¹⁷ *Chronicle*, Monday 13 June 2005, “Expedite Allocation of Alternative Land.”

¹²¹⁸ *Zimbabwean Independent*, April 20-26, 2007, “Detention of Vagrants riles rights activists”

understood why they had been arrested when they appeared before the presiding magistrate. After their assessment by the magistrate, more than twenty were released and immediately went back to their traditional street corners. Nearly forty of them were considered to be mentally unstable and were sent to Mlondolozhi prison for psychological examination by prison doctors. Twelve months after their detention, it was established that they were still languishing in Mlondolozhi and Bulawayo Central Remand Prison where some of them died between November 2006 and February 2007.¹²¹⁹ Court officials confirmed “These vagrants have spent a year in prison when dangerous criminals are granted bail and are going scot-free. It appears the authorities have completely forgotten about them.”¹²²⁰

In July 2006, a year after OM, the Zimbabwe Republic Police raided again the Killarney squatter settlement in Bulawayo and took into custody a number of people who had returned to the site after being evicted from their homes during Operation Murambatsvina.¹²²¹ This highlighted the national government’s continuing determination to keep the homeless outside the city. In October 2007, a squatter camp had sprouted in Bulawayo city centre with more than 20 people living in the sanitary lane between George Silundika Street and Robert Mugabe way.¹²²²

In 2009, an increasing number of residents were reported to be joining other squatters at the Ngozi Mine Richmond squatter camp because they could no longer afford to pay rentals and other service charges in townships. The “new arrivals” were bringing along their families. Mr Lungile Mpofo, a security guard who had two children and used to stay in Pumula South joined the other squatters at the beginning of February 2009 after being evicted from his lodging for failing to pay rent. He noted that:

I used to stay with my family in Pumula South. I was renting two rooms and paying R300 for that. Things went to a head in January, when my landlord demanded that I pay R600 for my accommodation. The situation was even made worse by the fact that I was supposed to pay a further R200 towards electricity bills. Even if I wished to, there was no way I could pay that amount.¹²²³

¹²¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²²⁰ Ibid.

¹²²¹ <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2006-07/2006-07-18-voa57.cfm>

¹²²² *Chronicle*, Wednesday 24 October, 2007, “Squatter camp sprouts in City centre”.

¹²²³ *Chronicle*, Thursday May 07, 2009, “High Rentals in the city force residents to squatter camps”

Other new arrivals at the squatter camp included Charles Nhoko and Tifkane Sibanda among others. Mr Nhoko, who was married with three children and employed as a general worker in the heavy industries used to stay in Njube Township. Mr Sibanda, who also squatted with his family, said he was looking for land to build a homestead for his family. Meanwhile, the Bulawayo city authorities were aware of the presence of those squatters and the health hazard at the dumping site but just as before 2005, the Council argued that the squatters were not its responsibility, but that of the national government.¹²²⁴ The charging of high bills in townships, among other hardships in townships, were some of the reasons why Makokoba Township residents, “with stones in hand”, once drove out the technicians who were trying to read the electricity meters in houses in the township.¹²²⁵

On the formal housing front the situation was not any better. In 2009, Bulawayo’s housing waiting list was reported to be at 90 000. The Mayor said the Bulawayo City Council would not allocate un-serviced stands to people as they were likely to face problems similar to those being faced by people living in the new Operation Hlalani Kuhle houses in Cowdry Park, who, since 2005, still did not have access to running water, toilets with the flush system and electricity. As a result, some of the affected residents still used the nearby bush to relieve themselves and relied on firewood for cooking. The Council was still not able to service stands. The city council was now wary of allocating land to private developers as some of them had devised new tricks of selling a single stand to several people among other tricks they committed against house seekers.¹²²⁶

In 2010, the Bulawayo city council and the national government continued to square off against each other over the Garikai/Hlalani Kuhle housing scheme in Cowdry Park. This prompted the beneficiaries of the national government’s housing scheme to call on the two authorities to solve their differences over issues involving the servicing of the units to avoid theft of building materials at unoccupied houses. The beneficiaries were also failing to carry out expansion works on the houses. Sukoluhle Moyana, one of the

¹²²⁴ Ibid.

¹²²⁵ Terence Ranger, “Writing History as Literature: Bulawayo Burning, 1893-1960” paper presented as SOAS African History Seminar, 2 December 2009, p. 11.

¹²²⁶ *Chronicle*, Wednesday, July 29, 2009, “Bulawayo Housing waiting List Balloons to 90 000”

beneficiaries noted that “There isn’t any water in our area and it is virtually impossible to carry out any construction activities. We are in dire need of water as we are also under threat from disease since we are using health hazard facilities to relieve ourselves.”¹²²⁷

The Bulawayo Council called on national Government to unveil resources to the local authority to service the stands and enable the residents to live in conducive conditions. It was adamant that the national government, through the Ministry of National Housing, first hand over all un-serviced areas allocated to people to the local authority as promised. The Council would then carry out an audit to find out the identity of those who were allocated un-serviced stands to facilitate a smooth hand over.¹²²⁸

In May 2010, the national government had repossessed 30 houses and 311 vacant stands falling under Phase Two (un-serviced area) in Bulawayo that were not taken up by beneficiaries of Operation Hlalani Kuhle/ Garikai. The houses were repossessed because of lack of development and participation in the servicing programme led by the Bulawayo Homeseekers’ Consortium Trust.¹²²⁹ This sparked an outcry from the affected residents. According to the Bulawayo Council:

...there was an outcry from the people whose stands or houses were to be repossessed as they had visited our offices seeking some help on how they could retain their stands and reverse the pending repossessions. All these people had been referred back to Hlalani Kuhle (national government agency running the housing programme) since the instructions to repossess had emanated from the ministry, seeing that the houses concerned were built by the Government.¹²³⁰

Problems faced by the victims of OM and beneficiaries of OGHK were still experienced nationwide, leading to the Amnesty International Zimbabwe’s director Cousin Zilala to argue that “It is a scandal that five years on, victims are left to survive in plastic shacks without basic essential services...The needs of these victims are at risk of being forgotten because their voices are consistently ignored.”¹²³¹

Because of ongoing problems faced by the poor in urban areas, Bulawayo residents still believed that the political leaders, most of them former nationalist leaders,

¹²²⁷ *Sunday News*, February 14, 2010, “BCC/Gvnt must find solution on houses”.

¹²²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²²⁹ *Chronicle*, Thursday May 06, 2010, “Govt Repossesses Hlalani Kuhle Houses”

¹²³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²³¹ *The Standard*, Sunday 23, May 2010, “After Murambatsvina: shattered dreams and broken promises”

did not represent their interests. For example, when responding to a comment by the Bulawayo based ZANU PF politburo member Joshua Malinga who urged the residents to be “patient and resilient because the economic challenges facing the country will be a thing of the past,” arguing that ZANU PF was the only party with “people’s interests at heart,”¹²³² one Bulawayo resident, rubbished the claims that ZANU PF has a heart. He argued that:

...Yes an evil one they have, not a heart that feels for the poor. If anyone in ZANU PF cared about the impact of the current economic crisis, surely they should have stepped down to give others a chance. We are really surprised that many of the ZANU PF people do not see the gravity of the problems this country is facing...they are just playing with people’s lives when it’s clear to many that they do not a solution to the crisis...¹²³³

Five years after the devastating clean-up operation, the vending situation was still chaotic. In February 2010, the Bulawayo Council proposed to construct about 300 stalls for vendors and still to re-open ten vending sites closed during the clean up operation in 2005. Vending sites to be re-opened included the Sixth Avenue Extension, Lobengula Mall, Fifth Avenue and Herbert Chitepo Street sites. The Bulawayo Mayor Councilor Thaba Moyo acknowledged that vending was the basis of livelihood for many families in the urban set-up as witnessed by the rampant informal vending which perpetuated the black market.¹²³⁴

Economic problems intensified in Bulawayo. This led to the closure of sixteen beer outlets in the city’s townships because the outlets were no longer operating viably due to declining number of patrons. These included Burombo in Thorngrove, Phekiwe in Nkulumane 12, Ikhwezi in Pelandaba, Sizinda North in Sizinda, MaKhumalo, popularly known as Big Bhawa in Makokoba, Elangeni and Mondela in Tshabalala. This affected informal traders, most of them old women, who, over the years, have been surviving on selling foodstuffs at the more than 40 beer gardens in the townships.¹²³⁵

This actually followed reports in 2008 that enterprising residents from Bulawayo townships such as Old Luveve, Magwegwe, Old Pumula, Iminyela and Mabutweni,

¹²³² *Sunday News*, 16 March 2008.

¹²³³ Informal discussion with a Bulawayo City Council employee (name withheld) Bulawayo City Centre outside of the Bulawayo City Hall, Monday 17 March 2008.

¹²³⁴ *Sunday News*, 28 February 2010, “BCC to Construct 300 Stalls”

¹²³⁵ *Chronicle*, Wednesday 12 May 2010, “Ingwebu Closes 16 beer outlets”.

sensing that beer was becoming beyond the reach of many, had started mini breweries in their backyards. Left-over *isitshwala* (thick porridge) and stale bread were being used to make *tototo/kachasu*, a very potent stupor-inducing illicit brew with an alcohol content that was almost twice that of commercial hot stuff. Some drinkers dissolved sugar in water, added yeast and left it to ferment in the sun for a knockout drink that was corrosive and said to cause stomach ulcers.¹²³⁶ One of the backyard breweries' specialty and customers' favourite was the "seven days" or *isigodokhaya*, an opaque brew that was several times more powerful than beer hall opaque beer. Residents liked it because it was more concentrated and was significantly cheaper. Mr Xolani Ncube from Old Luveve Township highlighted that "People love our beer. It is affordable, makes them drunk but leaves them with money in their pockets."¹²³⁷ Just as before 2005, the Council authorities wanted the illegal brewers to be arrested and encouraged other members of the public to report such people to the police. Decreasing clientele in the Council's beer outlets finally led to the closure.¹²³⁸

Linonifulu, a columnist in *Chronicle*, described the closure of beer halls as a big funeral for Bulawayo residents, both imbibers and non-imbibers because this was the industry that sustained residents. Beer profits were Bulawayo's life blood, that is, "our fathers' houses *emalokitshini* (in townships) were built using profits from these beer outlets."¹²³⁹ This is another pointer that the City Council's sources for funding low cost housing continue dwindle. Linonifulu also implied that this indicated that the Bulawayo residents had become too poor so as not to afford the cheapest available beer in the city sold in the beer outlets in the city by stating that "Ladies and gentlemen we are finished. The people of Bulawayo can no longer afford to buy beer,"¹²⁴⁰ "so expect no more funding for low cost housing from beer profits", [own emphasis].

¹²³⁶ *Chronicle*, Saturday 19 July 2008, "Imbibers turn to home brews"

¹²³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²³⁹ *Sunday News*, May 16, 2010, "Closed beer gardens, we are finished."

¹²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

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2. Informal discussion with Ken Ncube, Manwele beer hall, Mzilikazi Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 24 November 2007.
3. Interview with Kizito Dube, Emakhandeni Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Friday 23 November 2007.
4. Interview with Samuel Ndlovu, Emakhandeni Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Friday 23 November 2007.
5. Informal discussion with Will Ncube, Nketa Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, December 2007.
6. Interview with Mrs Moyo, Makokoba, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 16 January 2008.
7. Interview with Melitha Mpofu-Cowdry Park, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 24 November 2007.
8. Interview with Mr. Nheti. Nkomo, Makokoba Market, Bulawayo, Saturday 12 April 2008.
9. Interview with Mr. Nheti. Nkomo, Makokoba Market, Bulawayo, Saturday, 3 January 2009.
10. Interview with Mr. Benjamin Banda, City Council labourer since 1961, Bulawayo City Hall, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 14 April 2008.
11. Interview with MaKhumalo, Lobengula Street, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 14 April 2008.
12. Informal discussion with Ndaba, Vegetable vendor, 3rd Ave/Lobengula Street market, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 22 April 2008.
13. Interview with Mr. Mathe, Admin Assistant, Dept of Housing and Community Services, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 22 November 2007.
14. Interview with Siphetho Tshuma, Cowdry Park Township, Bulawayo, 24 November 2007.
15. Interview with Senzeni Dlodlo, Mzilikazi Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Thursday 17 January 2008.
16. Interview with Mr. Bhoqo Mpala, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Friday 23 November 2007.
17. Interview with Mr Tito Dlodlo, Makokoba, Bulawayo, Friday 23 November 2007.
18. Interview with a vendor who claimed to be a member of BUTA and requested anonymity for fear of victimization. Bulawayo city centre, Saturday 01 March 2008.

19. Interview with Olipa Mangena, Cowdry Park Township, Bulawayo, Saturday 01 March 2008.
20. Informal discussion with Rita Sibanda, (vegetable vendor), 16 January 2008, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.
21. Interview with Rudo Nkomo, Cowdry Park Township, Bulawayo, 16 January 2008.
22. Interview with Mr Josphat Moyo, Manwele Market, Mzilikazi Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Monday 19 November 2007.
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27. Interview with Gift Ncube, Thursday 11 December 2008, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.
28. Interview with Mr Moffat Nkomo, Bulawayo City Centre, Bulawayo, Friday 12 December 2008.
29. Interview with Khethiwe Fuyane, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 05 December 2008.
30. Interview with Moffat Bhandigwe, Lobengula Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, Saturday 6 December 2008.
31. Interview with Sheila Ncube, Nguboyenja Township, Bulawayo, 05 December 2008.
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33. Interview with Mkhethwa Zulu, MaKhumalo Beer hall, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, 05 December 2008.
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35. Interview with Susan Moyo, Old Rank Bus Terminus, Bulawayo, Saturday, 3rd January 2009.
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37. Interview with Mvutho Tshuma, Burombo Hostels, Bulawayo, Saturday 3 January 2009.
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39. Interview with Sinothi Ncube, Makokoba Township, Bulawayo, Friday 02 January 2009.
40. Interview with Simangaliso Nyoni, Nguboyenja Township, Bulawayo, Friday 2 January 2009.
41. Interview with Khiwa Dlomo, Emakhandeni Township, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, 3 January 2009.
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43. Interview with Khefasi Dube, Makhumalo Beer Hall, Makokoba, Bulawayo, 3 January 2009.

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Appendix 1.

Records of single men in Bulawayo, showing the numbers of the houses they occupied and their respective occupations.

~~FILE H1/4~~ ~~MAKOKOBA TOWNSHIP~~ ~~Accommodation & Compounding Hostels & Compound~~
 FILE - H1/4 MAKOKOBA TOWNSHIP Hostel for Single African Men -

B.M.C. NO.	NAME	HOUSE	DATE ACCOMMOD.	OCCUPATION	GRADE
81/41799	Frederick	980	1.3.61.	Labourer	1
483/09741	Chitsiko	1944	1.3.63.	Security Guard	3
483/09714	Joni	123	1.6.59.	Security Guard	3
6/08006	Segwande	59	1.9.60.	Messenger	2
56/29009	Mubayina	72	15.1.65.	Sweeper	1
56/28661	Sitishini	980	1.11.60.	Sweeper	1
493/80307/01	Halimana	111	1.8.64.	Labourer	1
494/85134	Bishop	1005	1.4.64.	Supervisor IV	4
493/80186/01	Manduna	1518	1.12.61.	Labourer	1
65/41293	Sitandi	206	1.5.61.	Sift. Lab. II	2
65/41253	Mwenba	1984	Before 1962	W/S Works/Shift/Lab.	2
300/80815	Rywishi	234	10.3.65.	Gen. Parks	1
71/51490	Ernest	300	1.10.59.	Survey Hand	2
71/41551	Carikayi	904	1.10.51.	Messenger	2
481/80650	Jeremiah	302	16.10.64.	£23. 6. 8. } Q.Nursing Std.)	894
338/28156	Jameson	539	1.5.62.	Clinic Messenger	2
301/80181	Philimon	619	1.8.65.	£23. 3. 0. } Clerk Interpreter)	6/3
25/42319	Sangai	643	1.10.63.	Bath Cleaner	1
420/84874	Paradisa	1125	23.8.65.	Caretaker	5
420/80076/01	Motoni	977	1.12.61.	Police Constable	4-5
420/80930	Major	1019	25.2.66.	Police Constable	4
420/81772/01	Rusere	1344	1.6.61.	Office Cleaner	1
27/40012	Gabange	998	1.2.62.	Labourer	1
415/80467	Samuel	1006	1.6.66.	£24.13. 00 } Welfare Worker)	6
320/80792	Sinauli	1019	1.2.65.	Police Constable	4
335/82496	Sikayamba	1100	1.2.63.	Groundsman	1
335/80319	Albert	1489	1.9.62.	Supervisor I	5
40/20724	Dzingayi	2055	1.4.62.	Labourer	1
496/85666/04	Mabwe	105	1.9.60.	Cashier	5
496/87013	Tinargeo	343	1.10.65.	Beer H. Server	1
496/80965	Doniye John	632	28.4.66.	Beer Hall Hand	1
496/85707	Cyprian	1174	7.10.58.	Cashier	5
496/85715	Wangani	1604	1.3.62.	Beer Ha. Supt. II	3
307/80140/01	Solomon Kenias	1113	1.5.63.	Parks Labourer	1
47/28991	Jackson	1341	2.3.66.	Labourer	1
313/29003	Makendenge	1361	1.7.66.	Med. Orderly	891
336/80794	Mujuta	1621	28.1.65.	Labourer	1
306/89577	Maninji	2140	1.8.63.	Groundsman	1
8/18008	Ephraim	824	1.9.65.	Labourer	1
21/40233	Shongani	847	1.12.63.	Labourer (P. Nurs.)	3

2

Source: File H1/4 Hostel for Single African Men (Bulawayo Municipality Records Library).

MAKOKOPA TOWNSHIP (Contd.)

B.M.C. NO.	NAME	HOUSE	DATE ACCOMMOD.	OCCUPATION	GRADE
88/43694/85	James	1512	2.3.66.	Labourer	1
88/43686/61	Vandire	993	16.2.66.	Labourer	1
482/40737	Zickokera	802	1.2.62.	Labourer	1
482/43263	Sigwidi	1825	8.6.65.	Clerk	6
482/43391	Frank	2139	21.12.65.	Labourer	1

TSHABALALA TOWNSHIP

518/66146	Salimu Friday	7518/16/1	18.4.66.	Labourer	1
455/29153	Simakunzi	7529/9/2	1.7.66.	Labourer	1
868/41334	Tarubekera	7533/12/2	1.3.64.	Labourer	1
518/65358	Ngazi Ngambela	7544/11/1	21.10.61.	Labourer	1
71/47592	Kefasi Nkomo	7548/19/1	10.10.63.	Survey Hand	1
868/49509	Ikaoyo Liyunga	7548/38/2	23.9.61.	Labourer	1
396/80774	Sham	7550/6/1	1.10.65.	Labourer	1
518/65642	B. Tenson	7550/7/1	1.2.66.	Labourer	1
482/43169	Mubango John	7550/16/1	24.1.66.	Bricklayer	31
518/65610	Walemu	7556/6/2	21.5.63.	Labourer	1
310/80215	Garaipasi	7556/12/2	8.5.62.	Ambulance Driver	5
868/49455	Kongo	7557/2/1	2.2.63.	Labourer	1
301/80628	Dzihorewa	7559/1/1	18.1.66.	Temp. Clerk	5
496/80456/10	M. Maus	7565/29/1	1.11.65.	Barhand	1
11/18635	Joipani	7570/3/2	15.1.65.	Lorry Loader	1
335/80343	Griffiths	7573/6/1	19.1.62.	Clerk Telephonist	6
868/49228	Bayama Kambili	7582/17/1	1.9.64.	Labourer	1
447/80881	Daniel	7582/18/1	2.5.66.	Telephone Op.	3
11/18639	Mswenke Sunkey	7583/42/2	24.2.62.	Lorry Loader	1
482/42168	Misifolo	7584/20/1	6.11.64.	Labourer	1
518/65094	Isaac Bage	7584/25/1	20.2.62.	Labourer	1
40/28884	Danger	7596/18/2	1.10.64.	Slaughter Hand	1

PELENDARA TOWNSHIP

460/80581	Leonard	61125	1.5.64.	Clerk	4
501/61004	Mayikani	61449	1.5.54.	22.10.8. } Bulldozer	5/8
496/80573/06	Alpha	61011	23.9.58.	Barhand	1
496/80623/06	Mabhuriamb	61400	1.11.60.	Barhand	1
496/86072/09	Chingetar	61491	1.2.61.	Barhand	1
307/81074/02	Petro	61056	10.5.58.	Labourer	1

3

Source: File H1/4 Hostel for Single African Men (Bulawayo Municipality Records Library).

MPOPOMA TOWNSHIP

B.H.C. NO.	NAME	HOUSE	DATE ACCOMMOD.	OCCUPATION	GRADE
496/86068	Tyomayi	4-139/2	1.2.63.	Beer Hall Server	1
496/85542/09	Kwirira	14-422/1	1.11.62.	Beer/Hall	1
496/84274/07	Chimindo	18-572/1	1.9.64.	Beer H. Labourer	1
496/80086/09	Samson	73-2245/1	1.11.61.	Barman	5
494/86038	Tonisa	88-7678/2	1.9.64.	Bottling Plant Att.	3
496/86009/07	Rudo Lovemore	89-7704/2	1.9.64.	Beer H. Cashier	5
496/86005/07	Banga	99-0147/5	1.8.64.	Beer H. Server	1
307/8016/02	Elliot	42-1370/1	1.8.64.	Parks Labourer	1
307/2118/01	Obert	54-1680/2	1.6.61.	Parks Labourer	1
307/80017/02	Fakose	96-7885/1	1.9.62.	Parks Labourer	1
460/80541/80	Levy	9-273/2	1.2.64.	Housing Asst.	5
482-8888	Lekaya	11-341/3	1.10.64.	Labourer	1
301/80798	A. Chigamba	22-711/2	21.3.66.	Temp. Clerk	5
800/48759	Ndevana	32-1063/1	1.2.66.	Labourer	1
482/42131	Abott	36-1191/1	1.4.64.	Labourer	1
88/43956/37	Lemani	37-1210/2	1.5.61.	Labourer	1
520/68022	Wellington	34-1110/1	1.7.65.	Meter Reader	1
518/65543	Bayekiyo	41-1333/2	1.8.62.	Labourer	1
483/09727	Phanuel	89-7700/1	1.5.61.	Security Guard	3
518/65323	Sam	99-0237/1	1.3.61.	Labourer	1
531/69015	P. Shanjayi	99-0223/1	1.4.62.	Office Cleaner	1
301/80800	L. Dube	99-0153/2	15.2.66.	Temp. Clerk	5
514/66064	Paidamoyo	19-593/1	1.3.66.	Shif Worker	1

PUMULA TOWNSHIP

486/29197/01	John	A492	1.6.66.	Sanitation Lab.	2
81/41640	Baiweld	B154	5.10.65.	Labourer	1
375/80643	Joel	B157	1.4.58.	Labourer	1
307-1371/03	Sallipaba	B221	1.1.66.	Parks Labourer	1
307/89562/03	Elson Andala	C62	1.5.66.	Labourer	1
307/80439/03	Madonga	313/513	1.11.64.	Labourer	1
801/49911	Siketshi	B75	1.6.66.	D/P/Labourer	1
307/89581	Tape Levy	B83/84	26.3.65.	Labourer	1
311/28772	Elliott	313/526	1.6.66.	Labourer	1
378/28868	Dorothy	313/01	1.11.64.	Nursing Ord.	890
88/45335/77	Zaichen	313/06	1.11.64.	Labourer	1
458/28933	Peggy Dube	B295	1.9.64.	Qual. Nurs. Ord.	1
458/28933					

4

Source: File H1/4 Hostel for Single African Men (Bulawayo Municipality Records Library).