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A F R I C A N S T U D I E S I N S T I T U T E

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Title: Ideologies and the Construction of Class Amongst African Women i Colonial Zimbabwe, 1930-1960.

by: Terri Barnes

No. 310

Ideologies and the Construction of Class Amongst Urban African Women in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1930-60

> These women are determined not to be left behind in the rat race of catching up with the rising living standards. They lead in introducing modern techniques in their homes and develop the community around them. They dress fashionably, and often buy their clothes from leading stores and boutiques in town. They aspire to holiday abroad if they can afford it. They buy their food from supermarkets in town because the stores in their townships do not carry the type of choice of items they wish to purchase. Many of them drive cars of their own...The desires and aspirations of these women are not different from any other race.[1]

In order to extend the range of studies of women, class and ideology in southern Africa,[2] this paper attempts to disaggregate the mass of African women who lived in colonial Harare (Salisbury) and other Southern Rhodesian towns by the 1950s.[3] Two main arguments will be advanced. First, disaggregation is best attempted in terms of class analysis. Because the situation of urban African populations in the period under review does not precisely match the classis categories of class analysis, however, an additional concept will be utilized in one case:[4] being "well-known" will be used to flesh out the meaning of belonging to the small petty-bourgeoisie of urban communities. Secondly, the erection of a class structure amongst African women is then examined in terms of the beliefs that were held at the state and community levels about the proper place of women in urban society. These beliefs are termed ideologies, and it will be shown that domesticity and dependence were the cornerstones of acceptable female behaviour.

Two aspects of the paper are initially explained. First, I think it is insufficient to automatically assign women to the class of their male relatives, and so it is necessary to consider other factors when trying to analyze class positions amongst women. Secondly, the basis for class differentiation between urban population groups in a settler-dominated political economy was ownership of or access to land, the urban expression of which was housing.

1. Class Analysis

Women are generally invisible in class analysis, which relates mainly to the classic dichotomy between productive and reproductive labour.[5] The members of a family are assumed to be of the same class, to which they are assigned on the basis of the economic status of the husband or father. But the gender-based inequalities within households in patriarchal societies render this analysis problematic. Erik Wright, for example, does not go quite far enough when he states,

> ...the housewives of workers are in the working-class in their relation to capital and in a variety of possible

> classes in relation to their husbands. An assessment of the latter depends upon the real relations of control over assets, income and labour within the family.[6]

I think that women hold their own class positions at all levels of society. Their daily lives demonstrate that their class positions within families and households, and therefore in relation to capital are not the same as those of their male relatives. First of all, men may have the option to withhold earned income from women as they see fit. In colonial Zimbabwe, for example, a wife's earnings automatically belonged to her husband; he decided how they were to be used.[7] Secondly, property inside the family may not be truly jointly owned. Thirdly, a man probably has more access to whatever benefits are offered by state or government structures than a woman (since states and bureaucracies have been gendered institutions which support, among other things, the power of men over women). Because of the dynamics of patriarchal society a woman's class position is not identical to that of her father, husband or son.[8] Women's access to resources in the colonial political economy may have come to depend on men because of laws and norms, but marriage and other personal relationships were often choices and strategies, not the sole determining features of women's experience.

The terminology of class analysis in relation to African women is also problematic, since, as many writers have pointed out, the classic works of class analysis have developed around research on the methods of capital accumulation of first world men.[9] Also, as Eales points out in her studies of African women in Johannesburg, the range of incomes between urban women was often very narrow.[10] A further important feature of the political economy in Southern Rhodesia was that no group of Africans controlled the means of production or developed into a bourgeoisie because Africans were, practically without exception, denied access to significant political and economic resources.[11]

However, urban communities were economically heterogenous. There were men and women (such as those described at the beginning of this paper) who, using various methods, differentiated themselves from the majority, who were severely underpaid workers. It is inaccurate to say that "well-known" people inhabited the upper ranks of a working class because (see below), they were in the position to hire, and therefore exploit, labour. Although in the context of the entire political economy they commanded miniscule amounts of capital and economic power, they did stand as a petty bourgeoisie in relation to African workers.

One explanation for the lack of a precise match in class categories might be that colonial capitalism was, in the period under review, insufficiently developed to have wrought "full-fledged" classes amongst African populations. According to this view, Africans have been progressing along a path of

proletarianization, and in the 1930-1960 period they simply had not yet arrived. This scheme - itself adopted to counter an earlier, fundamentally racist model[12] that assumed that African workers were innately different than other workers (especially European and American ones) - has underlain much of the past 30 years of labour historiography of colonial Zimbabwe. But it has been subjected to a useful critique by James Ferguson, who argues regarding the historiography of labour on the Zambian Copperbelt, that the model which portrays groups of African workers at any one time as suspended between end points called 'traditional' and 'modern' or even 'pre-capitalist' and 'capitalist' does violence to the task of accurately representing the differences and continuities over generations which have characterised their experiences.[13]

Bearing in mind that the experiences of differentiated urban African communities in the period under review do not precisely match categories like petty bourgeois and working class, and trying to respond to Ferguson's call for Afro-centric models of class analysis, this paper uses a complementary concept to which I was introduced by the women I interviewed in an oral history project to characterize differentiation amongst urban women. The way they put it was that some women in urban African communities were "well-known". The way in which they used this term connoted more than mere fame. A well-known woman had material assets which other women lacked: a house, a husband, perhaps education; she certainly had status, some money, and enjoyed relative safety. In using this concept as a way to describe the meaning of one class category in the terms used by urban African people themselves, class analysis is not jettisoned and the component parts of petty bourgeois/renowned status are analyzed in materialist terms.

2. What was the basis of differentiation in urban areas?

By the 1970s, the paths taken by groups of urban women in Rhodesia had diverged to the following extent.

> Wives who are married in the traditional way, or whose marriages are only registered with the district commissioner, tend to be either completely uneducated or to have gone to school for only a few years. Wives married in church have generally received a primary education, often a secondary education, and many of them are engaged in the professions. No professional woman would marry without a church wedding since church marriages carry high prestige...Women living in <u>mapoto</u> [temporary] marriages are never working in the professions, but neither are they illiterate. Most of them possess upper primary education and so belong to that section of women who came with high hopes to town to earn money, but failed to find good employment; hence they entered temporary unions to find economic support.[14]

What were the roots of this situation?[15] Following White's analysis of domestic labour in colonial Nairobi,[16] I suggest that the forms of women's urban labour were intimately connected with their economic situation, and that urban gender relationships were in part structured by women's conscious strategies of accumulation.[17] Some women were more successful than others. The basis of stratification was access to the means of production. In a capitalist economy based on mineral extraction and agriculture, the primary means of production was always land. Translated into the urban context, the means of production was either residential or farming land or, later, simply, housing. Owning land or a house, or to a lesser degree having the security of tenure represented by being an approved tenant meant that a person could at least potentially engage in a variety of accumulating activities. Significantly, all these activities, once having crossed a borderline level of profitability, would necessarily involve the hiring - and therefore the exploitation - of labour. My evidence suggests that all urban women aspired to secure housing, and that they did so for more than the obvious reason of wanting a roof over their heads. Without access to housing, a person was doomed to insecurity and had little hope of avoiding the fate of perpetually shuttling back and forth between the impoverished working class and the destitute reserve army of labour. With secure housing, rooms could be rented out to lodgers, vegetables could be grown for sale, bricks could be made, a mini-brothel could be operated, beer could be brewed, concealed and sold, a gambling operation could be run.

Therefore, differentiation between urban African women was primarily based on their differing degrees of access to housing; there were women, who, on that basis, made their way "up", became "well-known" and put themselves in a position to exploit labour. After the mid-1930s this was achieved mainly on the basis of formal, respectable marriage to higher-income men who themselves had access to housing. Advantageous marriage, in turn, partly depended on women's levels of education.[18]

Bujra points out that bourgeois status is not just a matter of lifestyle, levels of consumption or of ownership of resources; a bourgeoisie "is defined in terms of its exploitative relationship to the proletariat - it becomes a bourgeoisie by way of this relationship."[19] Although much more research is needed on this point, it seems likely that the workers with whom the most petty bourgeois of well-known women developed exploitative relations were the workers who brewed and sold beer under supervision; prostituted their bodies in the houses of small-time madams; weeded vegetables; and rented or sublet rooms from stand or house owners. This exploited group may also have included the domestic workers who cleaned the houses and clothes and took care of the children of these invariably Christian families.[20]

The Southern Rhodesian economy

The territory which came to be known as Rhodesia, then as Southern Rhodesia and finally in 1980 as Zimbabwe, was conquered and settled by mercenaries in the 1890s. By the late 1920s a segregated economy had been constructed. Settler-controlled, it was dependent on the labour of large numbers of African workers only marginally removed from the depredations of forced labour, and on the hope of markets in Britain and South Africa. Only after World War II and the northward shift of foreign investment funds after the 1948 Nationalist victory in South Africa did the majority of the settlers of Southern Rhodesia get a firm grasp on prosperity. The low economic level of this marginal settler society was not offset by prosperity on the part of African communities; early capitalism was disruptive enough to bring increasing levels of economic distress to indigenous people. Having weathered the early storms of colonialism through peasantization, many communities were on the economic borderline by the late 1920s. The implementation of thoroughgoing racial land distribution in the 1930s, natural disasters and the trickle-down effects of the Great Depression were enough to tip most of these communities over into a downward spiral of penury before World War II. The major cause and consequence of this dependence was the development of a full-blown migrant labour system, as elsewhere in the subcontinent. An important distinguishing feature of Southern Rhodesia, however, was its emergence as both a center for labour drawn in from surrounding countries, and an exporter of labour in its own right.[21]

State policy towards urban Africans was fairly contradictory in the period under review. Although the ruling party espoused extremely segregationist rhetoric until the early 1940s,[22] expressed in legislation such as the 1936 Natives Registration Act, in practice legislation was often unenforced and urban communities had a wider degree of latitude than the letter of the law indicated.[23] From the mid-1930s, an influx of Africans into urban areas, rapid industrialization, and unprecedented social conflict in the 1945 and 1948 strikes pushed the state to force lax municipalities into providing minimal services to urban Africans. This approach came to fruition in the 1946 Natives (Urban Areas) Accommodation and Registration Act (modelled on South African legislation).[24] The thrust of government policy in the Federation era (1953-63) was to recognize the existence of urbanized African communities and to paternalistically mould them into obedient, controlled and tidy dependencies.[25]

Early differentiation pressures on African women[26]

Until the 1940s, the state's main concern with African women was to define their positions, rights and duties inside the evolving institutions of marriage[27] in order to move African family relationships into line with the new capitalist economy. After an initial flirtation with some emancipatory statutes,[28] the legal codification of permanent minority status placed women securely under the control of their male relatives. Under

pressure from disgruntled rural men, the state then began to try to control women's sexual behaviour. Criminal sanctions were made applicable to adulterous married women.[28] And gradually, women's sexual activity outside the control of male relatives in general became defined as "immoral," and women so categorized became the objects of social condemnation.[30]

Morality was also being defined in fairly narrow terms. A moral woman was, simply, a hard-working, virtuous wife, and education aimed to train to girls to this end. Thus the small number of girl graduates from rural mission programs were meant to become "suitable companions for the emergent African [Christian] male elite". For this task they learned the skills of domesticity and the maintenance of proper wifely dependence.[31]

The state's view of the ideal African wife is described in this statement from the official in the Native Education Department who was in charge of the "instruction of native women and girls" throughout the colony:

> ...I like to think that this work is symbolised by the letter H. Humanity, Homes, Husbands, Housewives, Hygiene, Happiness and lastly Heaven. May I say that these things will be achieved by women. It is they who must guide the men!...The qualities of character required by the Government can be better cultivated in the home than elsewhere.[32]

Encouraging the development of a core of women leaders - loyal, thrifty and obedient African wives - fit in well with general government social policy towards Africans before the 1940s. It was policy to manipulate custom and tradition ("to bolster up tribal ways, to try to maintain the past..."[33]) so as to develop manageable flows of labour to the colony's capitalist enterprises. Thus, women who were hungry for education found themselves in schools for wives, in which training in domestic matters was paramount.

Other ideological pressures were brought to bear on school-trained girls through organizations such as Wayfarers and Sunbeams for African girls. These segregated versions of the Girl Guides movement were started in Southern Rhodesia in the 1920s.[34] Among other things, a Wayfarer did "her duty to God," was "a friend to animals," and was "clean in thought, word and deed."[35] Wayfaring could change the behaviour of African girls. European women missionaries approvingly noted that after a few years, members often showed a "noticeable improvement" in personal appearance, "a greater understanding of the team spirit," and many had "spotlessly clean houses." The significance of these developments to the process of differentiation was expressed by a woman who became very prominent in women's organizations in Harari Township in the 1950s. She had joined Wayfaring in 1929 and recalled that of the members of her generation, all had "assumed proper wifely characteristics in their homes and <u>are well-known even now</u> (emphasis mine)."[36]

Thus the early ideological pressures on African women from above focused on a small group of educated, Christian girls, who were meant to be precipitated out from the mass of rural African women in order to provide proper wives for Christian boys.[37] In their training, the seven H's (as above) reigned supreme.

African women in Southern Rhodesian towns

The mission-educated women discussed above were mostly a rural phenomenon in the pre-World War II period, as the men to whom they were married generally stayed within the spheres of rural missions. African women who lived in the colony's towns (the largest of which were Salisbury, Bulawayo, Umtali and Fort Victoria)[38] represented a separate strand in the differentiation of urban women. On the whole, these women were disaffected elements of rural society who sought new opportunities in the urban environment; girls running away from arranged marriages, wives leaving their husbands,[39] and women of various marital status who fled rural areas in the wake of natural disasters and war.[40]

Demographic data on urban women is sketchy and unreliable,[41] but the tables below display some of the available figures on the numbers of African women resident in the colony's capital city in the period under review.

Table 1. Adult African population of the greater Salisbury area, 1934-69[42]

	Men	Women	Total	Percent of women
1934	16,475	2,594	19,810	13
1946	36,358	2,700	39,058	7
1953	72,338	7,510	79,849	9
1962	111,490	36,060	147,550	24
1969	179,770	100,320	280,090	36

*

Table 2. Adult Africans employed in Salisbury, 1926-1969[43]

	Men	Women	
1926	11,962	139	= 1.1% of total
1931	15,043	68	.45%
1936	20,010	167	.83%
1941	31,658	350	1.0%
1946	31,658	777	2.3%
1951	64,073	1,894	2.8% "
1969	113,350	10,180	8.2%

*

Table 3. African women employed in Salisbury, 1936-69[44]

	Employed women	Women in greater Salisbury	% employed
1936	167	2,700	6%
1954	1,641	8,330	19%
1956	1,527	6,312	24%
1962	n/a	38,060	n/a
1969	10,190	100,320	10%

Throughout the period under review, only a small minority of African women in Salisbury were formally employed. The largest number of these were domestic workers.[45] Because the vast majority of urban African women did not earn regular wages, tracing the development of urban female class differentiation becomes a matter of searching for the survival and perhaps accumulation strategies of primarily unwaged women.

Domestic ideology for urban women

Encouraging the growth of an African female elite in Southern Rhodesia became conscious state policy only after World War II. From virtual neglect of the problems engendered by the presence of African women in urban areas, from the mid- to late 1930s, increasing in pace after the war and moving to consolidation in the 1950s, the colonial state and associated institutions began to address the issue of the ideological messages that should be aimed at urban women. This had to do with a changing realization of the value of depending for labour on stable urban family units instead of strictly migrant male labour.[46]

According to the colonial stereotype a "stabilized" worker was a man who lived with a woman and perhaps their children in town. The stereotypical migrant worker was a temporary, woman-less male visitor to urban or mining areas. As early as 1933, the Chief Native Commissioner, in discussing policies followed on the Zambian Copperbelt put himself on record as aware of the potential benefits to capitalism of the presence of women in towns and the resulting "stabilization" of urban labour:

> At the Roan Antelope Mine [on the Copperbelt] 46% of the labourers have their families with them. The Mine authorities have found that the length of service and efficiency of men who have their women folk with them is...greatly increased...[47]

By the early 1940s his observations on the economic value of women in urban areas were gaining wider acceptance in some circles and were echoed by other organs of the state:

> Malnutrition and deficiency disease are particularly evident amongst the industrialized bachelor labourers, who are the worse sufferers. They have never been taught to cook...and

> after the day's work lack the time and energy necessary in the preparation of all those extras with which a wife make her meals appetizing and nutritive...[The] present overcrowding of masses of single men and women into confined quarters is a prime factor in the spread of tuberculosis, not to mention the care and cleanliness devoted to their homes by most women whose "house pride" stands out in remarkable contrast to the unhygienic filth of single quarters.[48]

Given that the state could see the value of women in urban areas, what kind of ideology did it aim at them? Evidence for the earlier periods is scanty, but suggests that the ideal of a properly domesticated wife was appropriated from rural ideology by the state as the model of the ideal urban woman. "Cookery, laundry work, housewifery and other domestic science subjects" were the only subjects taught in classes for location women in 1936-37.[49] The following year the formation of a municipally-funded "African Women's Club" in the location was reported, and sewing and knitting were among the new activities made available.[50] Significantly for the matter of differentiation between urban women, membership in the latter organization was restricted to married women.[51] By the late 1950s, domestic education for African girls and women had become firmly entrenched. In 1959, a survey of training facilities in Southern Rhodesia for African women summed up:

> The Missions give a good basic domestic training, and the Southern Rhodesian government schools have this bias for girls. [White] women's organizations are active throughout the country, engaged with promoting African Homecraft Clubs (to train African women to be good housekeepers and mothers), cookery classes, sewing groups...[52]

The import of domestic training did not simply end with clean clothes made with proper buttonholes, however; it could have implications for the eventual class position of a woman and her children. For example, a study of the Langham Homecraft Village (started as a private venture in 1943 primarily to train "suitable" wives for professional and influential men) cites the case of an early trainee who, when married, was "well known for the high standards she maintained in her home and for her emphasis on personal integrity, order, hygiene and a balanced diet for her family." All of woman's children became successful professionals, especially remarkable "in the context of white-ruled Rhodesia of the fifties and sixties, when there were limited educational opportunities available to blacks."[53]

Differentiating ideologies from below

Ideological pressures on urban women which came from above would not have been able to make much impact on their own. In

fact African urban communities themselves embraced the idea in terms of there being "good" women and "bad" women and that it was in the interests of all concerned to put distance between the two groups. Good women were conceptually separated from bad primarily according to their marital status. It has already been noted that the first club for African women which was started in Salisbury in the 1930s refused to accept unmarried women as members, and this categorization continued. To become a member of the women's organization of the United Methodist Church, the Rukwadzano rweMadzimai, for example, one not only had to be married, it had to have been in a church ceremony. Uneducated women were welcome as long as they met this qualification.[54]

Educated and/or well-married women were urged to learn and display skills that would visibly differentiate their lifestyles. Popular magazines in the 1950s sang the praises of women who spent time learning such things as flower-arranging: "We say, this is progress!"[55] Women's organizations within churches played similar roles. According to Rukwadzano rules, members did not brew beer, "or send others to do so;" they should not smoke, quarrel or fight; a member "must keep her home clean, and her children clean, look after her husband's clothes, keep them clean and the buttons sewed on, and to give him warm water with which to bathe."[56]

Clubs for urban women had become quite well-established by the late 1950s, although only minority of township women belonged to them.[57] Although some boasted the leadership of European ladies and others were run by African women, the aims of both were similar and attention continued to focus on teaching or improving domestic skills and, de facto because only a minority of the women of a community were members, on increasing the distinctions between women of different classes. According to representatives of a white women's group which ran a club program for African women, "We are trying to give them the advantages that we have had from civilization...the male cannot advance on his own."[58] To this end, those who attended annual meetings of the Federation of African Women's Clubs were treated to demonstrations of skills such as how to make scones and lay a table for dinner.[59] An African woman who was instrumental in setting up such clubs hinted at a possible political importance of club work by proclaiming in 1954 that African women had "a great contribution to make...by building up happy and ideal homes," the aim of which was to bring up "healthy families, prepared and educated to face the future under the British flag."[60]

Sometimes ideologies from below, and literally from above, merged; an example is the Radio Homecraft Club, broadcast weekly on government radio. RHC was started by an African woman, Agnes Kanogoiwa, in 1954, as an effort to "get women together because of some things we didn't like." Mrs. Kanogoiwa emphasized that one of the club's functions was to air women's problems.[61] The weekly RHC program, which had expanded from 30 to 60 minutes by 1959, pumped out heavy doses of domesticity over the air. Early programs were in play form and focused on two initially helpless,

"primitive and ignorant" housewives who eventually "reached a standard where they could take part in needlework competitions."[82] Yearly sewing competitions organized by the program brought in hundreds of entries; "each [winner] would get a [sewing] machine or a radio set or something and that encouraged women to learn."[83]

Women's organization with other concerns came into being by the late 1950s. Possibly following the women's club model, groups of working women banded together. Reports from 1953 noted the formation of The Harari Employed African Women's League (which had a male president!). The members were mostly domestic workers who sought an organized method of job listings and to promote aspects of their welfare such as late night transport.[84] In 1956, "a hesitant effort by [urban] factory girls to form their own union," was noted.[85] Criticizing their husbands for making them feel "that the fight for better conditions was for men only," 300 wives of railway workers formed a Women's League in 1958.[86] Also in 1958 there was an African Trades Union Club for women in the town of Gwelo; Women's Leagues of the African National Congress (Southern Rhodesia) in some of the African townships of Salisbury; and two prominent African women had made an attempt to form a "Women's Voice Association" in Harari township.[87]

The elements of class differentiation

1. Access to housing

There were few options open to urban women who had an eye to accumulating money. Legal self-employment in petty commodity production was restricted to men,[88] and there were, as seen above, few employment opportunities open to women. They could, therefore, try to accumulate only through a limited number of activities. Two were what are now thought of as women's "traditional" urban activities - prostitution and beer brewing.[89] A third was that on which the others were predicated - control of or access to housing.

Different policies were followed by the authorities of Southern Rhodesia's towns in the disposition of urban housing to African residents.[70] After 1895 the Bulawayo Sanitary Board (forerunner of the town council) allowed Africans to own dwellings in the location. Significantly, however, the Sanitary Board retained ownership of the land under the houses. This arrangement gave rise to a distinctive pattern of urban housing. By 1914, 82% of the stands in the Bulawayo location were rented by women: a situation strikingly similar to that in both early Nairobi and some areas of the Witwatersrand in the 1920s.[71] In 1930, women in Bulawayo were losing ground to men but still represented 68% of the African stand renters and house owners.[72]

One very probable outcome of women's rental of stands from the authorities was capital accumulation. Up to six huts could be

built on a stand in the Bulawayo location which rented for 5 shillings per month from the city; each hut could then be rented out for about 5 shillings. There was no rent control in the location. By 1929, at least one woman had been able, through prostitution, beer-selling and most probably stand rental, to accumulate an estate worth "hundreds of pounds."[73]

Hut ownership in the Bulawayo location was taken up by both respectable married women and unmarried prostitutes.[74] Some of these women organized themselves to defend their interests. In testimony to the 1925 Land Commission, the president of the Bantu Women's League (which represented the women property-owners) said,

> [Women] used to get a stand and they would build rooms on them which they used to let to other natives and now they are not allowed to do that. It is very hard on them as the men cannot get sufficient money to support their wives.[75]

Because they had access to housing and organized themselves through the League to defend that access against the state's increasing attacks, Thornton locates the women property owners of the Bulawayo location in a "nascent petty-bourgeoisie".[76] African women also owned location houses in the midlands town of Gweru. Jeater cites the cases of two women, one of whom built up "a considerable property business" in Gweru and Bulawayo.[77] Phimister similarly locates such successful women in the ranks of a petty bourgeoisie.[78]

African residents of the Salisbury location, however, were never allowed to build or own houses. But this did not prevent some Salisbury women from emulating the efforts of women in other towns. Unconstrained by legalities, they found ways to secure access to housing up to the mid-1930s.[79]

According to Joanna Mwelase, who moved to the Salisbury location in the 1920s,

> If you [a woman] went to the location you could get a house. If you were a girl doing [prostitution], if you wanted a house you could get it. Rent was 8 bob. If you had a house it was yours personally - as long as you could pay 8 bob for it...A woman could get a house of her own in Matank [the oldest part of the location], before the men started wearing shirts or whatever, as they do today. Then...they said, "The houses are now for men," and those men who had no houses were given where the women had been removed. That's when they did away with giving women houses.[80]

Similarly, a long-time local politician in Harare township recalled that location prostitutes in the 1930s took advantage of corruption in the police force and were illegally allocated housing.[81] Lawrence Vambe, a prominent journalist and historian of Harare, noted that in the 1920s and 1930s, "professional prostitutes in Harare seemed to enjoy some sort of

official recognition. They acquired rooms as easily as legitimately employed male workers."[82]

The following testimony from 1930 describes another tactic which some women used in the struggle for housing.

> We now find that the women without husband [sic] and who earn their money by immoral ways are the controlling influence [in the location]. She chooses her man for the time being, only a boy with money, and sends him along to register the house in his name, and - as long as he pleases her - he remains the registered occupier of the house. This has been going on for some time.[83]

The careers of two township women of the 1930s illustrate many of these things: women's early methods of capital accumulation in the Salisbury location, and a cultural link between accumulation and respectability.

Mai Musodzi, a.k.a. Mrs. Franks, was perhaps the most well-known woman in the history of the Salisbury location. Yoshikune has traced her early life, from orphanhood during the first Chimurenga of 1896-97, to married prosperity on a farming plot not far from Salisbury, to a relocation to the urban area itself in the mid-1930s.[84] There she quickly became the leader among the location women, mainly for her willingness to take on municipal administrators in English on behalf of the township women.[85] She served in many aspects of volunteer work until her death in 1952. Mai Musodzi almost had it all: relative wealth gained in her farming years, a proper marriage, a township house, standing as a Catholic churchwoman, safety from colonial harassment. What she did not have, interestingly, was formal education. This did not, however, block her progress through the history of the township as an influential and powerful figure.[86]

Emma MaGumede, on the other hand was a woman from Bulawayo, who, by the 1930s, had became famous in the Salisbury location for her enormous size, "modern" lifestyle and the wealth accumulated from brewing beer and running a brothel.[87] Two houses were registered in her name (one was a shebeen, and she lived in the other). Unprecedented for a woman and rare even for a man at the time, she owned a car and had a driver to ferry her about. The grocery store which may have technically been rented from the municipal authorities in the name of her son-in-law was widely remembered by residents of the time to have been managed and controlled either by herself or her daughter, Winnie.[88]

MaGumede, who for most of her adult life made and enjoyed her money without reference to male authority, may have been well-known but was also fundamentally disreputable. When asked if she was "a nice person, did she have a good heart", a respondent noted haughtily,

> When we say a person is nice, we don't mean the face. If she was good-hearted she would have told the young ones, "Don't

do chihuu [prostitution]. Don't do this." But she didn't teach anything. I didn't see it. She didn't go to church.[88]

2. Self-employment

Economic growth after World War II[90] had an important impact on urban women's employment. By the early 1950s, for example, there were approximately 1,500 more African women working in formal jobs in Salisbury than there had been ten years before. A survey by the municipality in 1952 showed that women were relegated to the lowest-paying jobs.[91] Although more research is needed, it is unlikely that employment at any of the larger establishments would have paid wages sufficient to enable working women to rise significantly above the economic levels of most other urban women.[92]

There was one other formal option for urban women by the 1950s. In 1951-52, a few African women in Salisbury began to be issued with formal permits to be self-employed; after 1953, securing such a permit was predicated on a woman being the wife or daughter of an approved male tenant in one of the townships.[93]

Table 4. Officially self-employed women in Salisbury, 1951-60[94]

	# of employed women	Self-employed women	% self-employed
1951-52	1,046	22	2.0%
1952-53	1,201	29	2.3%
1953-54	1,573	68	4.1%
1954-55	1,810	72	3.8%
1955-56	1,435	92	6.0%
1956-57	1,651	191	10.3%
1957-58	1,799	n/a	
1958-59	1,999	231	11.5%
1959-60	2,495	232	9.2%

*

Table 5. Occupations of formally employed African women in Salisbury, 1958-59[95]

	1958-59	1959-60
Commerce & industry	358	738
Domestic service	1,382	
Teachers	56	
Nurses	166	1,757
Municipal workers	40	
Self-employed	231	232

In 1958-59 charwomen earned an average of L9/10/- per month, and in 1959-60 this increased to L13/7/-. This was at a time when the recommended minimum wage for a single male worker in Salisbury was about L6/10 per month.[96] As illustrated in the

following articles from the popular press, some self-employed women were able to accumulate capital from their labours, thus fulfilling the promise inherent in the official permission to carry out one's "own business."[87]

> An African woman, a prominent resident of the Harari African Township, Miss Jane Maruta, has deposited L665 for a new lorry. In an interview Miss Maruta said the value of the lorry is L1165, and that she would make efforts to get it from the garage as soon as the officials fill her forms...Her occupation in [the township] is to sell firewood. She started this business in 1950. Prior to this she was working in Salisbury as a nanny.
>
> *
>
> Mrs. Chauma is fast making name (sic) in the business world by her being the first African woman in Salisbury to run a taxi. Previously she worked as a chair-woman (sic) and from her hard work she managed to serve (sic) enough money to buy a taxi cab. She employs a driver to run the car for her.[88]

Female self-employment was not the main method of accumulation, however. By the 1950s, my evidence suggests that advantageous marriage had surpassed other methods of women's self-advancement. This development had its roots in the period of the closing off of economic opportunities to women but paradoxically it began to flourish in an era when more women began to enter the formal workforce. It was a fruit logically born of the unremitting emphasis placed on the correct roles of women as dependent wives and mothers.

3. Marriage

In 1936 surveys undertaken of the colony's main locations arrived at the following estimates of the numbers of married and unmarried women residents.

Table 6. Women in the Salisbury and Bulawayo locations, 1930[89]

	Sby	Byo
Wives (properly married)	150	200
"Concubines" (napoto women)	300	725
Prostitutes	150	300

Properly married women (either civilly registered or married by Christian rites) were thus in a minority. By the 1950s, these wives clearly enjoyed levels of respectability not accessible to other women. But there was differentiation even amongst the ranks of married women. For some, the marriage certificates which set them apart from the unmarried masses also functioned like passes. This was an anomaly in an economy where women were never included

in the provisions of the main pass laws. Marriage certificates were a feature of daily import only for women who were not "well-known". Harassment by police for these certificates was widespread but it was rarely faced by "well-known" married women. Typical of the latter were these women's answers to the question, "Did the police ever stop you to ask for a marriage certificate?"

> In my time we never met police who bothered us. Because most of the police went to the same church as we did. They knew us. Yes. They would know, "It's Mai Bakasa, it's so-and-so." Most of them knew us.[100]

*

> You couldn't stay [in your husband's house in the location] without a marriage certificate!...You had to take it out if the police who came [during raids] didn't know you. But the regular ones knew, "She is the wife or she is not the one." That's what they did.[101]

The following incident displays the link between advantageous marriage and women's economic opportunities. In 1953 the Salisbury municipality decided to accept applications for the lease of a "native eating house."[102] The twenty-eight applicants included nineteen men, seven women, a burial society and a musical group. Six of the women applied on the basis of being married to men who were prepared to advance varying amounts of cash as security - from L400 to L1000. The seventh woman was in business for herself as a wood vendor, but her application was withdrawn. Interestingly, one of the married women was Emma MaGumede's daughter, Winnie, of whom it was noted, "runs [her husband's] general dealer's store". This represented in one case continuity in a female lineage, even though the methods of maintenance of class position had changed from one generation to the next.[103]

Similarly, the career of the first woman general dealer in Harari Township shows the relationship between one woman's marriage, her access to the resources of the colonial state, and her financial success. Born in 1913, Bertha Charlie had only minimal education, and came to Harare in 1931. On the basis of having been one of the local married women trained by the local Red Cross detachment,[104] she started working in the late 1940s as a wardmaid at the African hospital in Salisbury, for which she received the "Coloured" wage of L8. She then was asked to become one of the first African women members of the Salisbury Municipal Police, a group charged with keeping order amongst the township's female population. Three years later she was given a license to sell cooked food to workers from premises which she rented from the municipality. Finally in 1957, she was "chosen" to operate a general dealer's store in the location, using the money she had saved from her police wages and through cooking. In 1989 she was still running her business, employing at least three workers in

the shop. In reflecting on her experiences as a businesswoman, she remembered,

> [In 1957] the whites...said, "We want to see what a black woman can do." Many people were put forward and I was chosen...Many people fought for this shop. But Mr. Briggs [director of municipal "native administration"] said, "This is municipal property, this country doesn't belong to anybody [i.e. not only to men]." Many fought for it. But I persevered, my child. We can't tell you some things...You would find horns [attempted witchcraft] across the doorstep. But I persevered..I was as good as the men, we were equal. I was even better than some.[105]

At every step of her way up the ladder, Mrs. Charlie took advantage of the few opportunities that the state held out to African women. She went as high as a relatively uneducated woman could: learning first aid skills as a married woman, cleaning up in hospitals, enforcing state and municipal policies on other women, selling food to men who were not allowed to bring their wives to town. This continuing access to even meagre state resources, predicated on her married status, was the necessary ingredient in her success.

Another potential method of accumulation by women was the manufacture and sale of handicrafts, the most prominent of which was crochet. This was historically entirely a women's occupation. In the towns of Zimbabwe today, it is common to see unemployed and uneducated women hawking crocheted doilies and bedspreads. But the practice of making and selling these items originated with educated women, who probably learned the craft in mission schools and then taught it to each other. For example, one woman from a prominent family who came to live in town with her husband in the 1950s, claimed that in those years she made enough money from her crochet-work to loan money to a brother who owned several buses! She was initially taught the craft by, and worked for her sister. Later she branched out on her own. It is likely that she then also subcontracted orders out to other women. Another woman who, "lived on doilies," remembered,

> [In the 1950s] many people hadn't known about [crocheting]. I taught my niece how to hold a crochet. She is now in South Africa, selling doilies. I told her, "Use a crochet, there is life in it." People were not yet aware that crocheting has got money, has got life, so that you won't bother your husband [ie. need to ask him for money].[106]

The factor that ties together the experiences of the charwomen, the general dealer, the applicants for the eating house license and the members of the early crocheting community is that the women who were able to accumulate capital had relatively secure access to housing, which, dating roughly from the mid-1940s they secured primarily on the basis of the formal relationships they

maintained with working men. Housing and marriage were linked because one of the main thrusts of urban segregationist legislation in the period under review was to tie the provision of family housing to male employment. After 1946, a man who lost his town job lost the right to rent his house (or room, or space in a room) as well.[107] But the municipalities never provided enough accommodation for the working African men of the city. Married or single, workers and job-hunters had most often to do the best they could just to get a roof over their heads. Squatting or lodging without a permit, they constantly risked the penalties meted out to unregistered labour - fines and imprisonment.

Gaining access to legal housing was the only way to gain enough security in town to either carry on some kind of entrepreneurial activity or to consistently reproduce labour; and legal housing was a very, very scarce commodity.[108] Therefore, a woman's primary motive and responsibility were to get herself, her belongings and her children if any into a house; or a room; or space in a room. With a very few exceptions of well-educated women, maintaining a relationship with a man was the most enduring way to achieve access to housing. The most ideologically preferred way to maintain such a relationship was through "proper" marriage. In 1943 it was already cynically observed by one government official that "The Marriage Certificate, instead of being an imposition requiring legal penalties to enforce it, has become such an attraction that the urban Native Commissioner spends his time withholding it. And in spite of this, married quarters are being built at a rate far behind demand."[109]

Women at the bottom of the urban economy

Not all women were able or willing to achieve what gradually came to be known as "approved wife" status. They maintained a less secure access to urban housing through other relationships with men. The most common of these, mapoto, was so popular in the urban areas that the state was forced to tolerate it even in periods when it was under pressure to remove women from urban areas.[110] Designating mapoto women who lived with men for temporary periods as "concubines"[111] and often declining to prosecute them under segregationist legislation, the state profited from their urban labours without the regulation necessary in the "approved wife" system. Mapoto women took care of "single" male workers at no cost to the state. Caroline Renhas described mapoto of the 1940s like this:

> We did mapoto, there in Mbare. Yes. You were told [by a man], "You! Can you leave this place swept?" You want mapoto. So you sweep and sweep. You go and fetch water. Then he says, "I have left you some money. Go to the butchery and buy meat." Then you go and buy that meat. Then you come and cook your sadza. You make your tea. You drink. Then you sit

> there at that door. He comes back from work, he finds you there. And he says, "This is my wife."[112]

Interviews have stressed that the activities which defined mapoto women rarely crossed the borderlines of profitability; "kubika mapoto" [doing mapoto] was mainly a method of making ends meet. Mapoto women themselves did the housework in the homes they shared temporarily with male tenants; this was one of the distinguishing features of the relationship.

Mapoto women worked for men in a kind of barter deal. In return for her domestic and sexual work the man provided accommodation, food, and intriguingly, in an unwritten agreement, domestic goods. A mapoto woman was not paid daily or nightly for her services. Instead, it was tacitly acknowledged that when she left the relationship she was entitled to take away with her some or even all of the household goods that she fancied: "She took them...even clothes, when she knew she wanted to go. Who would he go and report to? [She would say], 'He was living with me, refusing to give me money. That's why I have taken the things.'" Another woman described the rationalizations of both partners at the end of a mapoto relationship as follows:

> [She would reason] "He has rejected me, of course. He rejected me when I still loved him and it's better to take utensils, of course, pots and pans, they are a woman's...Yes, they are mine. I cooked and I washed for you, and slept with you. So what I have taken is mine." [A]...man could use force [to get his things back]; but some would say, "I still have my strength, I can work and buy some more. Let her go."

This arrangement might signify a number of things: an ingenious solution to the problems engendered by the minuscule wages earned by the male workforce; an unwillingness of men to impart cash to temporary partners; or women's awareness that given one or both of these, money was not the only thing one could get from a man. It also seems that this practice could have been a source of female accumulation of property.[113]

Mapoto women were often harassed by the authorities. In the 1940s, for example,

> ...we were arrested. We went to spend the day in a certain house, and we were locked in - clang! And we spent the day there...and it was said, "You have been arrested for staying in the location, whilst you are not married...we are fining you five shillings."...Then it was said, "Why do you stay [there] without being married? If you get married we won't arrest you."

Mapoto could shade into prostitution depending on how often a woman chose to end temporary relationships. Prostitution has played a curious role in the political economy of urban colonial

Zimbabwe. State and local authorities complained about African prostitution in urban areas, but they never outlawed it.[114] However, colonial authorities regulated this labour in such a way that prostitutes were at the bottom of the urban economy; when urban women's independent access to housing was closed off, their labour could no longer lead to any accumulation.[115] Prostitution thus became sex that women advertised and men paid for and performed in bushes, behind buildings, at outdoor dances; perhaps in the man's quarters but not in the woman's.[116] Because they had the least secure access of all urban women to housing, street-walking prostitutes constituted the last ranks in a kind of reserve army of reproductive labour. Far from being well-known, by the 1950s they were so disreputable that they had lost the individuality of their own names. They used the names of "champions" who had been famous prostitutes of the 1920s and 1930s (years when urban women still had some economic independence).[117]

The following article from the African press in 1958, at a time of mounting nationalist agitation in the colony, suggests strongly that prostitutes were firmly differentiated from other urban women. Their interests were specific, and their response to their problems was that of workers; like the Bantu Women's League of the 1920s they organized to defend their economic position.

> Prostitutes Meet. May form union...at Kasasa, six miles outside Salisbury, eight prostitutes met there last week to discuss matters of common interest. They decided to build the nucleus of a trade union. The opinion of other centres will be tapped, and if possible, a Colony-wide trade union formed, which may affiliate to the T.U.C. of Southern Rhodesia. At last week's meeting it was decided to raise the fees by almost 100%, with effect from the first of March. It jumps from 2s. to 4s. A spokesman told our vernacular representative that this step had been taken in view of the high costs of all commodities - food, clothing, and furniture - in town, and the recent wage award to African workers.[118]

Conclusion

This paper has sketched some of the factors which influenced class differentiation between urban women in colonial Zimbabwe. In the early years of urban settlement, some women took advantage of opportunities offered by the new colonial situation and gained access to housing. When this access was closed off, they developed other strategies to carve niches in urban areas; for most women, the main strategy was to try to become attached formally or informally to a male worker and his "right" to accommodation.

By the 1950s there was a great divide between groups of urban African women; it was reflected in their opinions about each other. One unmarried woman said,

> We [unmarried women] would meet, sometimes in the bar. We were many and we would be friendly to one another...We didn't have anything to do with [married women].[118]

On the other hand, a well-known woman reflected,

> As a person who had a bit of knowledge, [the authorities] took me as a person who could help. And the whites who taught found it easy to teach through me, because I understood their language...But those who were [unmarried/divorced mothers] - they came to do their own "jobs" and we wouldn't aim to teach those. They had their jobs. I never had time for [them].[120]

Far from being composed of an undifferentiated mass of women, urban African female society was awash with cross-currents of privilege and privation. This arose from socio-economic pressures imposed by official culture, but also from the embracing of concepts of differentiation at community level.[121]

Acknowledging and charting the contours of women's urban experiences can help to strengthen class analysis in African social history. As an example, equating what we would call petty bourgeois women with what historical African communities would have called well-known women points towards interesting areas of research in the intersections of class differentiation and urban culture.

FOOTNOTES

All file references are to the collection held in the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ).

1. Mrs. E. Chirwa, describing a group of urban women in colonial Zimbabwe, 1976. Perhaps some indication of a gender breakdown of an accumulating group in the African population can be glimpsed in the fact that in 1930, 2223 African men, and 117 women, colony-wide, had savings bank accounts in the popular post office system. Annual report of the Chief Native Commissioner (hereafter CNC), 1930. S138/1.

2. A recent important volume on "Southern" Africa only discusses women and gender in South Africa, Botswana and Lesotho. On the other hand, recent studies of Zimbabwean society follow tradition in making next to no mention of urban African women or of women's participation in socio-economic processes. See Cheryl Walker, ed., Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945 (Cape Town: David Philip, 1990); Colin Stoneman and Lionel Cliffe, eds., Zimbabwe: Economics, Politics and Society (London: Zed Press, 1989); Michael Schatzberg, ed., The Political Economy of Zimbabwe (London: Macmillan, 1984). Exceptions are Ian Phimister, An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890-1948 (London: Longman, 1988); Charles van Onselen, Chibaro (London, 1976); Lawrence Vambe, An Ill-fated People (London: Heinemann, 1972) and From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe (London: Heinemann, 1976).

3. There are few studies on African women in colonial Zimbabwe, and most are unpublished. See Teresa Barnes, "African female labour and the urban economy of colonial Zimbabwe, with special reference to Harare, 1920-39" M.A. thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1987; "To raise a Hornet's Nest": The Effect of Early Resistance to Passes for Women in South Africa on the Pass Laws in Colonial Zimbabwe," Agenda 5, 1989; "The Fight for Control of African Women's Mobility in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1900-39," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society (forthcoming 1992); Diana Jeater, "The Construction of Moral Discourse in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939," Ph. D. thesis, Oxford University, 1990; Lynette Jackson, "Uncontrollable women in a Colonial African town: Bulawayo Location, 1893-1958," M.A. thesis, Columbia University, 1987; Nancy Folbre, "Patriarchal Social Formations in Zimbabwe," in Sharon Stichter and Jane Parpart, eds., Patriarchy and Class: African Women in the Home and the Workforce (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988); Stephen Thornton, "The Struggle for Profit and Participation by an Emerging African Petty-bourgeoisie in Bulawayo, 1893-1933," (University of London, 1977-78); Phimister, "Economic and Social History,"; Tsuneo Yoshikune, "Black Migrants in a White City: A History of African Harare, 1892-1925," (D.Phil thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1991). Elizabeth Schmidt has published several studies, see

"Farmers, Hunters and Gold-Washers: A Reevaluation of Women's Roles in Pre-colonial and colonial Zimbabwe," African Economic History no. 17 (1988); "Negotiated Spaces and Contested Terrain: Men, Women and the Law in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890-1939," Journal of Southern African Studies 16, no. 4 (1990); "Patriarchy, Capitalism and the Colonial State in Colonial Zimbabwe," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 16, 4 (1991); Peasants, Traders and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939 (Portsmouth: Heinemann, forthcoming, 1992).

4. More research is needed to begin to describe the cultural connotations of membership in other urban classes.

5. The relationship of domestic, reproductive labour to production is oft-debated; for a summary see Sharon Stichter and Jane Parpart, eds. Patriarchy and Class: African Women in the Home and the Workforce. (Boulder: Westview, 1988), Introduction.

6. Erik Wright, Classes. (London: Verso Press, 1985), p. 129. The idea that relations inside a family are solely determined by family members, and on an equal basis takes inadequate account of household relations of struggle and domination. See Heidi Hartmann, "The Family as the Locus of Gender, Class and Political Struggle: the example of housework," in Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, vol. 6 no. 3, 1981.

7. H. Childs, "The History and Extent of Recognition of Tribal Law in Rhodesia" (Salisbury: Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1975), quoted in Joyce Kazembe, "The Women Issue", in Ibbo Mandaza, ed., Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition, 1980-1986, (Harare: Jongwe Press, 1987), p. 381-382.

8. Meer disagrees with this idea, and gives current South Africa as an example, arguing that black women, "are [now] filed into the class of their husbands and fathers as wives and daughters," because they do not yet have a class consciousness of themselves as women. Fatima Meer, et. al. Black - Woman - Worker (Durban: Madiba Publications, 1980) p. 37.

9. See contributors to Claire Robertson and Iris Berger, eds., Women and Class in Africa (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986); Wright,"Classes"; Margot Lovett, "Gender Relations, Class Formation and the Colonial State in Africa," and Robert Fatton, "Gender, Class and State in Africa," in Jane Parpart and Katherine Staudt, eds., Women and the State in Africa (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1989).

10. Kathy Eales, "Patriarchs, Passes and Privilege," in Philip Bonner, et. al., eds., Holding Their Ground: Class, Locality and Culture in 19th and 20th Century South Africa. (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1989). p. 116.

11. See Volker Wild, "Black Competition or White Resentment? African Retailers in Salisbury 1935-1953", Journal of Southern African Studies, vol. 17, no. 2, 1991.

12. For example, W.L. Barber, The Economy of British Central Africa (London, 1961); L.H. Gann A History of Southern Rhodesia (London, 1965); also works of J.C. Mitchell such as Cities, Societies and Social Perception (Oxford, 1987).

13. James Ferguson, "Mobile Workers, Modernist Narratives: A Critique of the Historiography of Transition on the Zambian Copperbelt, Parts One and Two", Journal of Southern African Studies, vol. 16, nos. 3 and 4, 1990, esp. p. 620.

14. A.K.H. Weinrich, Mucheke: Race, Status and Politics in A Rhodesian Community. (New York: UNESCO, 1977) p. 45-46.

15. The evolution of a state-regulated marriage system is too complex to go into for the purposes of this paper. Suffice it to say that a woman and man could be formally married either "traditionally" or by "Christian rites" (ie. in monogamous union). In either case the woman was not entitled to what came to be known in the 1950s as "approved wife" status unless the marriage had been registered with state authorities and she could produce a marriage certificate to prove it. With "approved wife" status came perks like living legally in town, enroling one's children in an urban school, applying for more spacious accommodation than a so-called single man was entitled to, and, later, becoming legally self-employed. A "proper" marriage was the sine qua non of social respectability in town. By 1980, for example, "many women's and club organizations insist on [a marriage certificate] for their members, particularly in the case of comparatively older women." Olivia Muchena, Women in Town (University of Zimbabwe, Center for Applied Social Science, 1980), p. 21.

16. Luise White, The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), chapters 2, 5, 9; esp. p. 124-125.

17. The fact that most women failed to accumulate much, if anything at all, should not be allowed to obscure the fact that accumulation was a goal for all. There were definitely some women who moved beyond the sphere of day-to-day survival and into a world of relative security.

18. According to a small survey of elite African men carried out in the early 1960s, the quality most desired in a wife was "same education". Boris Gussman, Out In the Mid-Day Sun (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962), p. 146.

19. Colonial housing policy ensured that most women - even those "properly" married - did not have secure access to housing; many husbands did not have secure accommodation to share with their wives. This is one reason why economic security was so difficult to achieve. For a discussion on women and class formation see Janet Bujra, "Urging Women to Redouble Their Efforts: Class, Gender and Capitalist Transformation in Africa," in Robertson and Berger, "Women and Class," esp. p. 139.

20. See note 5 above.

21. Phimister, "Economic and Social History", chapters 1-4; Terence Ranger, Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1987); Victor Machingaidze, "The Development of Settler Capitalist Agriculture in Southern Rhodesia, 1908-1939," (PhD thesis, University of London, 1980).

22. "In the white towns...the African has to conform to white requirements. It should be noted that he is not obliged to go to a white town; he can earn outside the town what for him is a good living, if he does not like the restrictions in the towns." Prime Minister Godfrey Huggins, "Statement on Native Policy in Southern Rhodesia", 1941.

23. See Barnes, "African Women's mobility".

24. T.R.H. Davenport, "Rhodesian and South African Policies for Urban Africans: Some Historical Similarities and Contrasts", Rhodesian History, vol. 3, 1972, p. 69-70.

25. Alan Cousins, "State, Ideology and Power in Rhodesia, 1958-1972", International Journal of African Historical Studies, vol. 24, no. 1 (1991).

26. It may be noted that urban women were subject to unifying as well as differentiating pressures. The former have not been discussed in this paper because of the prevailing tendency to discuss urban women as a uniform mass. Policies such as police and municipal harassment of township residents from the late 1940s, for example, must have had a unifying effect. However, the collective and individual actions and responses of African women in urban struggles remain, like so many other aspects of Zimbabwean social history, to be investigated.

27. See note 12 above.

28. See Schmidt, "Negotiated Spaces" and "Patriarchy"; Jeater, "Discourse".

29. The Natives Adultery Punishment Ordinance of 1916 was meant to prevent married women from running away from their husbands with the foreign migrant labourers who were travelling through the countryside in increasing numbers. Promiscuity by married men was not seen as a matter for legislation. See Barnes, "African Female Labour," and "Women's Mobility,"; Schmidt, "Negotiated Spaces,"; Emmet Mittlebeeler, African Custom and Western Law: The Development of Rhodesian Criminal Law for Africans (New York: Africana, 1976).

30. The term prostitution is by now relatively respectable when used in an academic context to describe the sale of sexual and domestic labour. This, however, hardly conveys the scorn, disgust and denigration which the term has historically carried in colonial and African societal usage in the labelling of African

women who were even suspected of deviation from patriarchal control of their sexuality. See Rudo Gaidzanwa, Images of Women in Zimbabwean Literature (Harare: College Press, 1985); also Jeater, "Discourse".

31. Elizabeth Schmidt, "Ideology, Economics, and the Role of Shona Women in Southern Rhodesia, 1850-1939," (Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1987), chapter 4 and p. 387.

32. "On the main missions...after the 12th year of education the favoured leaders will continue their school training in order to train further as Teachers, as Nurses, as suitable wives for native men in responsible positions in the Reserves, and as Home Demonstrators. The last are women who are being trained in Maternity work, Home nursing and Home economics for 2 years and who will travel about the Reserves..." Mary Waters, Organizing Instructress, Native Education Department of Southern Rhodesia, "Address on Work Amongst Native Women and Girls in Southern Rhodesia," March 13, 1929. S2239/36/19.

33. Richard Gray, The Two Nations (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 129.

34. Ibid., p. 321.

35. Mrs. C. Carbutt, representing the Territorial Council of Girl Wayfarers Association, in evidence to Commission of Enquiry into Native Female Domestic Service, 1932. S94.

36. Mrs. Lillian Nhari, interviewed and quoted by Schmidt, "Role of Shona Women," p. 322.

37. The vast majority of education facilities were run by missionaries, but followed the framework of government policy. Male pupils were mainly taught practical subjects, agriculture and manual work. Dickson Mungazi, "The Educational Policy of the British South Africa Company towards Rural and Urban Africans in Zimbabwe: A Dilemma of Choice, 1899-1923", African Urban Quarterly, vol. 2, no. 1, 1987; Mudereri Kadhani and Roger Riddell, "Education", in Colin Stoneman, ed., Zimbabwe's Inheritance (London: Macmillan, 1981).

38. Now known as Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare and Masvingo. These towns were founded in 1890 as a direct result of the northwards gold rush following the 1886 discovery of the riches of the Rand. They quickly took on the classic characteristics of colonial towns on the South African model, major features being racial segregation and minority domination of economic life. Mario Azevedo, "Colonization, Settlement and Urbanization in Southern Africa," in Andrea Rother, ed. Preliminary Discussions on Problems of Urbanization in Southern Africa (Michigan State University: Center for Urban Affairs, 1988); Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, "The Process of Urbanization in Africa," African Studies Review, vol. 34, no. 1 (April 1991), p. 32-36; Anthony O'Connor, The African City (London: Hutchinson, 1983); Phimister, "Economic and Social History," p. 240-41.

39. The literature for colonial Zimbabwe discusses the exodus of women from rural areas in the early decades of the 20th century in terms of women fleeing patriarchal control, not, as in the case of South Africa, women often leaving rural areas to search for their absent migrant husbands. See Schmidt, "Negotiated Spaces" and "Patriarchy" and Jeater, "Discourse"; contrast with Phil Bonner, "'Desirable or undesirable Basotho women' Liquor, prostitution and the migration of Basotho women to the Rand, 1920-1945", in Walker, "Women and Gender", p. 234-241.

40. Yoshikune, "Black Migrants," chapter 2; Phimister, "Economic and Social History,"; Ngwabi Bhebe, Christianity and Traditional Religion in Western Zimbabwe, 1859-1923 (London: Longman, 1979), p. 142.

41. Between 1921 and 1962 municipal authorities and the government census department based their population figures on indirect evidence - pass statistics, housing applications and tax records. The 1962 census was the first since the 1911 census to count African urbanites directly. The Rhodesian Front government, which came to power in the 1962 elections following the dissolution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, sought for political reasons to show that there was no unemployment or urban squatting in Rhodesia's towns, and also claimed that the total number of urban African residents in the country declined in the 1962-69 period. Independent accounts have shown, however, that in at least one squatter area on the fringes of Salisbury, the population increased more than six-fold between 1962 and 1969. The census figures for practically the entire colonial period are for these reasons quite suspect. Report of the 1962 Census (Salisbury, mimeo, 1964); David van Wyk, "The Economy of Urbanisation in Colonial Zimbabwe with Special Reference to Chitungwiza." (BA Hons. thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1987) p. 17-20.

42. Barnes, "African female labour," p. 43; Salisbury Mayors Minutes (hereafter SMM) 1953-54; Report of the 1962 census (Salisbury: mimeo, 1963); Report of the 1969 census (Salisbury: mimeo, 1971).

43. Reports of the 1941, 1946, 1951, 1969 censuses.

44. Barnes, "African female labour," p. 43-44; City of Salisbury Department of Native Administration Annual Report, 1954, 1956; 1969 census; population figures from sources as for Table 1. The numbers of employees in the 1950s are underestimates, only reflecting the employers and employees who complied with pass regulations and registered contracts with the city's Registrar of Natives. Another factor in undercounting was the requirement, dating from 1946, that legally employed African workers be housed at their employers' expense in "proper accommodation." There was a critical lack of such housing. In 1952 it was admitted that, "a considerable proportion of African females in employment...are not in possession of registered

contracts of service for the simple reason that there is no proper accommodation to house them." Any such workers, male or female, were left out of official figures. Report of the National Native Labour Board on...the Conditions of Employment of Native Women in Certain Industries, 1952. p. 11.

45. In contrast to South Africa, domestic work remained a male-dominated sector.

46. "...when during the 1948 strike [Prime Minister Godfrey] Huggins witnessed the emergence of the proletariat he was soon led to think that 'we shall never do much with these people until we have established a native middle class'. Gray, "Two Nations," p. 314.

47. CNC to Minister for Native Affairs, 16 December 1933. S482/224/39. This awareness may account in part for the leniency with which the technically harsh Native Registration Act of 1936 was enforced. Although it was a strict piece of segregationist legislation which sought by means of criminal sanctions to ensure racial purity in urban areas, married African women and long-time female urban residents were not generally harassed under its provisions. See Barnes, "African Women's mobility."

48. Report of the Committee Appointed to Investigate Urban Conditions in Southern Rhodesia, 1943. p. 8. S482/30/44.

49. SMM, 1936-37, p. 9.

50. SMM, 1938-39, p. 2.

51. See Terri Barnes and Everjoyce Win, To Live A Better Life: An Oral History of African Women in Harare, 1930-1970 (Harare: Baobab Books, forthcoming, 1992).

52. National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, "Women at Work in the Federation; memorandum on theme for the year 1958-59." (Salisbury: mimeo, 1959), p. 20-21.

53. Deborah Kirkwood, "The Suitable Wife: Preparation for Marriage in London and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe," in Hilary Callan and Shirley Ardener, eds. The Incorporated Wife (London: Croom Helm, 1984), p. 112.

54. Farai David Muzorewa, "Through Prayer to Action: The Rukwadzano Women of Rhodesia," in Terence Ranger and J. Weller, eds., Themes in the Christian History of Central Africa (London: Heinemann, 1975), p. 260-263.

55. "Women are Catching Up With the Times," The African Parade, January 1960, p. 76.

56. Muzorewa, "Through Prayer," p. 263.

57. According to a study carried out in 1957, 60% of urban African women had no affiliation with any club, association or society. Second Report on Urban African Budget Survey in Salisbury, 1957-58.

58. Representatives of the Federation of Women's Institutes, verbatim evidence to Commission of Enquiry into Urban African Conditions, 1957. S 51/7, p. 587.

59. Radio Post, October 1959, p. 33.

60. Mrs. Helen Mangwende, "Christmas greetings," The African Parade, December 1954.

61. Mrs. Agnes Kanogoiwa interview, 24 April 1989. By "airing problems" I think she mainly meant difficulties faced by women who were not conversant with the skills of domestic life on the European model. It should be noted that the local clubs organized in response to the RHC programme were less elitist than the township-based clubs; according to Mrs. Kanogoiwa although club activities were aimed at married women, unmarried women and single mothers could join in.

62. Radio Post, August 1959, p. 3.

63. Issues of the monthly magazine Radio Post through the 1950s were filled with reports of the ever-increasing volume of entries and the "huge task" undertaken by the white ladies who were the competition judges. Quote from Mrs. Kanogoiwa interview (see note 54 above).

64. Salisbury East, Labour Officer Reports, September 1953. S 21204/2.

65. J.F. Holleman, "The African Woman in Town and Tribe," The Listener, October 4, 1956.

66. African Weekly, April 2, 1958.

67. The African Parade, November 1958, p. 61-62.

68. In Salisbury, the only African women who were self-employed were three South African midwives. Annual report of the Salisbury District Native Commissioner (hereafter NC) 1938. S1563. But the state closed down African urban entrepreneurial activity in the mid-1930s, anyway. See Thornton, "Struggle for Profit,"; Wild, "African Businessmen,"; Lovett, "Gender Relations," p. 32. The restrictions were so severe that in the urban construction industry by the mid-1940s, "All that Africans were allowed to do was to puddle the cement and to hand the bricks...or...the planks to the builders." Mr. Reuben Jamela interview, National Archives of Zimbabwe, African Oral History collection no. 63, p. 8.

69. No specific study exists of women beer-brewers in urban Southern Rhodesia. It is almost always mentioned in official correspondence, however, when "problems" relating to urban women fell onto the colonial agenda. See, for example, Yoshikune, "Black Migrants," chapter 2. While women's activities were on the shady side of colonial law, African businessmen were initially aboveboard, working as retailers, self-employed builders, shoemakers, painters, carpenters, tailors, well-sinkers,

herbalists, cycle repairers, brickmakers and eating-house keepers. NC Salisbury annual report, 1936. S1563.

70. Consistently segregationist policies and practices on the part of the central state ensured that only a very few prominent African men in the colony - six around Bulawayo and one outside Salisbury - had been able to purchase land outright by 1925. Thornton, "Struggle for Profit," p. 2-4; Robin Palmer, Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia (London: Heinemann, 1977) p. 280.

71. Janet Bujra, "Women Entrepreneurs of early Nairobi," in Sumner, C. ed. Crime, Justice and Underdevelopment (London: Heinemann, 1982); Philip Bonner, "Division and Unity in the Struggle: African Politics on the Witwatersrand in the 1920s", African Studies Seminar Paper no. 307, University of the Witwatersrand, March 1992. Thornton explains the situation in Bulawayo by observing that house building was traditionally women's work; since the essence of ownership in the Location was to rent a stand and build one's own house on it, women predominated in the ranks of home owners. This is not entirely credible since while building homes may have traditionally been women's work, owning property, earning independent incomes from renting out rooms and using working men as agents to pay the Council's rents, were not. Thornton, "Struggle for Profit," p. 6. For women's traditional work in pre-colonial times, see Schmidt, "Farmers, Hunters and Gold-Washers".

72. The others were by then owned by the municipality. S235/394: Report of the Native Affairs Commission of Inquiry into the Bulawayo Municipal Location, 1930, p. 5; typewritten memo, nd., Reports and Exhibits to the 1930 Commission, S235/440. In the period 1929 to 1936, the number of African women resident in the location climbed from 750 to 1,237, when they represented 15% and 24% of the adult African population, respectively. Jackson, "Uncontrollable Women," p. 14.

73. Chief Superintendent, Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Bulawayo to Staff Officer CID Salisbury, 21 September and 2 October, 1929; typewritten memo, nd, probably 1930. S235/440.

74. In 1915 a group of "respectable married Africans" complained to the police about female brothel-keepers in the location. In court, the accused madams all pleaded guilty. Ngwabi Bhebe, Benjamin Burombo: African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1947-1953 (Harare: College Press, 1989), p. 10; Jackson, "Uncontrollable Women," p. 33. By 1930, when the town authorities were beginning to crack down on what they saw as the chaos in the location, the ownership of houses by prostitutes was a great irritant. There were also allegations that some of the prostitutes sub-let rooms from male stand-renters. Typewritten memo, nd., probably 1930. S235/440.

75. Mrs. Martha Ngano, quoted in Thornton, "Struggle for Profit," p. 13.

76. Regarding the efforts of the BWL to maintain its members' access to housing, see Minister of Native Affairs to CNC, nd., quoting Superintendent of Natives Bulawayo to CNC, 10 December 1929. S 235/424.

77. Jeater, "Discourse", p. 278.

78. Phimister, "Economic and Social History", p. 204.

79. This tallies with Robertson and Berger's observation that, "...it is...necessary to distinguish clearly between the ownership, control, and use of resources. In a sense it does not matter who owns something; more important is who can use and/or control it, an issue that is particularly cogent in dealing with African land tenure and labour control". Robertson and Berger, "Women and Class," Introduction.

80. Mrs. Joanna Mwelase interview, 31 May, 1988. This and all subsequent interviews cited were conducted by the author and Everjoyce Win in Harare in 1988 and 1989.

81. Mr. Patrick Pazarangu, interviewed by the National Archives of Zimbabwe, African Oral History collection, no. 56.

82. Vambe, "Rhodesia to Zimbabwe," p. 185.

83. Oral evidence of John Moeketsi to Commission of Enquiry into the Salisbury Municipal Location, 1930. S85, p. 22.

84. Yoshikune, "Black Migrants", p. 154-156.

85. See Barnes and Win, "Better Life", chapter 14.

86. Ibid.

87. See notice of MaGumede's arrest for brewing "strong" hop beer, Bantu Mirror, 7 March 1936. For more on MaGumede, see Barnes and Win, "Better Life," chapter 14.

88. Residents also remember that late in life she married a man whose only motive was to gain control of her money - which he did, and bought himself at least one long-distance bus (ownership of a bus which could operate on a rural route was a most prized means of capital accumulation for aspiring petty bourgeois men). MaGumede herself was remembered to then have returned to the township in straightened circumstances, and to have had difficulties finding a place to live. Ibid.

89. Mrs. Joanna Mwelase interview.

90. The number of factories in the colony engaged in secondary industry increased from 299 in 1938 to approximately 900 in 1951. "Report of the National Native Labour Board on its Investigation of the Conditions of Employment of Native Women in Certain Industries..." 1952, p. 10; see also Phimister, "Economic and Social History", p. 252-258.

91. Salisbury Town Clerk to National Native Labour Board, enquiry into conditions of employment for native women, 19 May 1952. Salisbury Municipality file 12/7/62.

92. The 1952 "Native Women's Report" of the National Native Labour Board (see notes 86 and 87 above) recommended a wage of L3.9.0 for African women in some industries. Unsuccessful representations were made by African organizations to increase this figure to L5 per month. In 1957 it was estimated that the monthly budget of a teacher with four children was L17/16.6 per month. Labour Officer, Bulawayo South to Commissioner of Native Labour, Salisbury, 12 November 1953. NAZ Record Center, Location 32.5.6F, Box 35291, File 3320; Native Labour Department report, May 1954. S 2239; Submission of the African Teachers' Association of Southern Rhodesia to Urban African Affairs Commission, 1957. S 51/7.

93. City of Salisbury Department of Native/African Administration Annual Reports, 1953-54, p. 61.

94. Ibid., 1951-60.

95. In 1959-60, most of the women had permits to be charwomen, dressmakers, and food and wood vendors; there was one general dealer, one hairdresser and one woman engaged in taxi service. Ibid., 1958-60.

96. "A female domestic gets a better wage, generally, than a man, due to scarcity." Salisbury Department of Native Administration Annual Report, 1957-58, p. 134; Report of the Urban African Affairs Commission, 1958, (Salisbury: Government Printer, 1959) p. 77.

97. This status simply conferred on charwomen the same "freedom" that a working class person in capitalist society has - to sell labour to the highest bidder. This was distinct from the situation of colonial domestic workers, who were treated differently. See Charles Pape, "A History of Domestic Workers in Colonial Zimbabwe," (PhD thesis, Deakin University, 1992 forthcoming); Karen Hansen, Distant Companions: Employers and their Servants in Zambia, 1900-1985 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

98. Mrs. Chauma actually ascended to proper petty-bourgeois status when she employed a driver for her taxi. At the time she was also described as "a staunch member of the Methodist church." African Daily News, 10 October 1956; The African Businessman, vol. 1, 1961.

99. NC Salisbury to CNC, 31 August, 1936; Acting Superintendent of Natives Bulawayo to CNC, 15 September, 1936. S1542/S12, 1936-1939.

100. Mrs. Sarah Bakasa interview, 17 March 1989.

101. Mrs. Enniah Mutuma interview, 20 March 1989.

102. For a history of these businesses, see Wild, "African Businessmen," esp. p. 8-11.

103. The man who was eventually granted the license was a township hawker with assets of L827. City of Salisbury Director of Native Administration to Town Council subcommittee, 14 April 1953. NAZ Record Center: File 12/7/3/1, Location C25-14-6, Box 109975.

104. For an account of Mai Musodzi and the local Red Cross in Harari township, see Barnes and Win, "Better Life."

105. Mrs. Bertha Charlie, interviewed 21 February 1989.

106. Mrs. Esther Chideya interview; Mrs. C. Rusike interview, 28 April 1989.

107. Thus the name by which the white superintendent of the location and later the township of Harari was known emphasized his most significant function: "Katsekera," or, "he who looks/closes houses" [i.e. and evicts the tenants].

108. Through the mid-1950s, there was an average yearly backlog of about 12,000 applications for housing in Salisbury, a figure which did not reflect the shortage of accommodation for temporary male workers or for unwaged women. Evidence submitted by the City of Salisbury to the Urban African Affairs Commission, 1958. S51/5. Regarding the crisis of accommodation for Africans in urban areas by the early 1950s (see note 40 above) see Phimister, "Economic and Social History", p. 259-261.

109. Roger Howman, Assistant Native Commissioner of Bulawayo, oral evidence to the Committee Appointed to Investigate Urban Conditions in Southern Rhodesia, 1943, ZBI 2/1/1, p. 59.

110. This term refers to the practice of an unmarried woman using a man's pots to cook his food; thus mapoto. In one Salisbury compound in 1943, 34% of the men were listed as "temporarily married", i.e. involved in mapoto relationships. Gray, "Two Nations," p. 259; Barnes, "African Women's Mobility".

111. Colonial officials used the term "concubine" to describe mapoto women for a brief period in the late 1930s around the time of the passage of the Native Registration Act of 1936. See Secretary for Native Affairs to Town Clerks, nd S482/535; various correspondence from 1936, S1542/S12.

112. The quotations in this section are from Barnes and Win, Better Life, chapter 11. Some researchers have emphasized the insecurity, as opposed to the freedom, experienced by women in mapoto relationships. See Muchena, "Women in Town," p. 21; Weinrich, "Mucheke," p. 45.

113. A letter written by a man to one of the African newspapers in 1945 complained "Why is it that when we take [a mapoto woman] we allow her to bring her tables, chairs and beds? At first a man will be in possession of all such things, but later they get rid

of them because the women have better things than the men. They sell everything and replace it with the women's property...When they separate the woman takes everything...The house is left empty." Barnes and Win, "Better Life," chapter 11.

114. Zimbabwe Women's Action Group and Rudo Gaidzanwa, "Operation Clean-up," in Miranda Davies, ed. Third World, Second Sex 2 (London: Zed, 1987) p. 228. See also Barnes, "African Female Labour,"; Schmidt, "Negotiated Spaces" and "Patriarchy".

115. The tactic of closing off women's access to housing was also used by the colonial Kenyan state, although at a later date; see Luise White, "A Colonial State and an African Petty Bourgeoisie: Prostitution, Property, and Class Struggle in Nairobi, 1936-40," in Frederick Cooper, ed. Struggle for the City (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983). p. 181, and "Comforts of Home", chapter 6, esp. p. 132-136. The forms of prostitution in Southern Rhodesian towns do not correspond neatly with those so precisely described by White. Because of the lack of access to housing, there were no malaya prostitutes, although there were women who simulated malaya conditions by waiting for men to knock on the doors of their husbands' rooms when the latter were away at work. I have no data suggesting that the aggressive wazi-wazi form of noisy solicitation of clients occurred. Instead, the most prevalent form of prostitution after World War II was a variation of the watembezi form. Instead of house-owners or brothel-keepers, urban prostitutes in Southern Rhodesia became street-walkers.

116. I have collected some oral evidence which suggests that at least in the late 1940s and through the 1950s, many of these prostitutes were forced to have pimps; that men would not allow streetwalkers to operate independently. Documentary evidence supports this idea; all of which contradicts White's assertion that pimping existed nowhere in Africa outside Johannesburg. Interview with Mr. Levi Gono, 20 September, 1989; R.R. Wilcox, Report on a Venereal Diseases Survey of the African in Southern Rhodesia (Salisbury, 1949); see articles "Life in Harare Township" in African Weekly, esp. "Shameful Practices at Industrial Sites," May 18, 1949; White, "Comforts of Home," p. 6. Jane Parpart classifies prostitutes as a separate class in the social formations of the Zambian Copperbelt, reasoning that they were independent of men. See her "Class and Gender on the Copperbelt," in Robertson and Berger, Women and Class, p. 151. There is little evidence for Southern Rhodesian towns that prostitutes were able to marry and become respectable. In her 1977 study of an African township, Weinrich similarly assigned prostitutes to the bottom of her set of "social strata" although she emphasized their high incomes and freedom from male control. This difference might be accounted for by the fact that by the mid-1970s there was a hostel for single women in the township,

and their independent status thus did allow them access to housing. Weinrich, "Mucheke," p. 137, 142.

117. Mrs. Mary Ruswa interview, 20 April, 1988.

118. African Daily News, 3 March 1958.

119. Miss Keresiya Savanhu interview, 21 March 1988.

120. Mrs. Stella Mae Sondayi interview, 11 April 1988.

121. It is also quite likely that surviving pre-colonial concepts (after all in the 1950s, colonialism was only 60 years old) played a part. This is an under-researched area.