

GENDERED EXCLUSION AND CONTESTATION

Malawian Women's Migration and Work in
Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930s to 1963

IREEN MUDEKA

ABSTRACT: States, industrialists and African authorities in colonial southern Africa generally perceived migrant work in masculine terms—especially inter-territorial mobility, the complexities of which fueled the assumption that inter-colonial migration was predominantly undertaken by men. The biases of colonial actors, in turn, brought about later scholars' obliviousness to women's experiences, leading them to perpetuate representations of migrant work as a male phenomenon. This article challenges this masculinist understanding of migrant work by focusing on Malawian women's migration and work in colonial Harare between the 1930s and 1963. It particularly highlights the complexities of these migrations, examining women's encounters with different territorial regimes, gendered legislation, and transnational controls stretching from Malawi to Zimbabwe. It argues that the colonial states of Malawi and Zimbabwe, urban authorities, and Zimbabwean employers all joined together to exclude women from the legal migrant work stream. However, Malawian women defied the conventional notion of women as sedentary dependents of migrant husbands by migrating to Harare. In Harare, they further contested their exclusion by

Dr. Ireen Mudeka (mudekai@msu.ac.zw) is currently a lecturer at Midlands State University in Zimbabwe. She earned a BA Honors Degree in Economic History and a Masters Degree in African Economic History at the University of Zimbabwe. After 2000, she obtained a Compton and MacArthur Foundation scholarship to pursue a PhD in African History at the University of Minnesota, where she earned a PhD in 2011 for a thesis on Malawian women's migration. She has also conducted research into the role of women in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle and the failure of Zimbabweans to mentally demobilize after the liberation war.

undertaking various forms of work for survival. This article traces these women's experiences through discourse analysis of colonial records and oral accounts of two generations of Malawian women and men.

Introduction

Mainstream scholarship has presented the history of both internal and international migration as a male phenomenon in the context of capitalist development. This obscured women's mobility throughout the twentieth century. Marxist scholarship on Southern, West, East and North Africa stresses men's migrant labor flows; recruitment processes and labor controls; and struggles for a fair wage, better working and living conditions.¹ Even West African literature on inter-colonial commercial migration focuses on how "men came and went."² Such androcentric literature erases women's engagement as inter-colonial migrant workers, reflecting prevailing patriarchal perceptions of the "migrant worker," and marking a significant gap in African labor history.

The new scholarship emerging between the 1990s and 2000s aimed to fill this gap by focusing on female migrants' livelihood strategies. For instance, Wells contested the mainstream conception, implicit in the male dominated literature, of African women as victims trapped in the passive grass widow syndrome. To her, South African women were "migrant workers in their own right."³ Similarly, for Zimbabwe and Swaziland among others, scholars established migrant women's struggles for mobility against colonial structures and customary laws; their fight to preserve their income generating options; and their flight from patriarchal controls and rural poverty.⁴ East, Southern and West African literature similarly examines internal migrant women's commercial sex work. For example, the Kenyan and Sotho women studied by White and Coplan fled rural poverty in Kenya and South Africa to work in Nairobi and the Rand respectively.⁵ Ouedraogo's Dagara girls migrated from rural Burkina Faso to engage in different economic activities, including prostitution in the West African town of Bobo Dioulasso.⁶ Pettin, on the other hand, focuses on circular, rural to urban commercial migration among Nigeria's Hausa women.⁷ C. Obbo follows Ugandan women's migration to the city of Kampala, where they settled in shanties such as Namuwongo–Wabigalo.⁸ Other scholars, such as Buijis, even established women's rural to rural migrant work, with Buijis' Transkeian women working on farms in Natal.⁹ However, despite dispelling the view of women as shiftless dependents of migrant men, this literature still

focuses primarily on internal migration, based on the adage that women only migrate over shorter distances.

In Africa the feminization of international migration is increasingly drawing scholars and policy makers' attention. Even so, scholars still see women's international migrant work as merely a contemporary trend.¹⁰ Of course, by emphasizing the novelty of such movement, this scholarship misses the complexity of the colonial antecedents of women's migration and work, at once, moving from rural to urban areas and further across multiple colonial boundaries. For instance, Malawian women moved from rural Malawi to Blantyre and into either Mozambique or Zambia before reaching Zimbabwe and moving on to Harare to live and work.

This study traces these women's migration and work experiences in colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, against official laws designed to limit their mobility or to outright exclude them. Of course, inter-colonial migration emerged in response to the growth of the male oriented capitalist system in regional development centers such as Zimbabwe. Insofar as states, urban manufacturers and other employers regarded men as the principal workers, they promulgated trans-colonial and urban controls to confine women, as much as possible, to their homelands. However, Malawian women actively contested these restrictions. In both obvious and creative ways, they earned incomes for their families' survival in Zimbabwe and across national boundaries. This was despite the triple disadvantage of being women, foreigners and non-capitalist workers who encountered a complex regimen of laws, both generally affecting women and specifically affecting foreign women.

The study begins in the 1930s, the decade when Malawians' migration to Harare doubled from the officially recorded 20,000 men of 1920–1921 to 42,598 by 1934–1935.¹¹ It ends in 1963, when Kamuzu Banda's political rise changed the trajectory of Malawian migration. It applies discourse analysis to draw meanings and perceptions both from archival documents and oral accounts of two generations of Malawians in Harare's earliest African townships, Mbare, Highfield, Mufakose and Rugare, as well as in Blantyre and Zomba, Malawi. The paper falls into two principal sections, respectively focusing on Malawian women's exclusion from inter-colonial migrant work and their contestation of such marginalization.

Women Restricted and Excluded

From the mid-1930s, the state in colonial Malawi and Zimbabwe instituted a male oriented inter-territorial migrant labor system in a series of arrangements leading up to the 1948 Migrant Workers' Act, extant till the

early 1960s. In Malawi, African authorities collaborated with colonial officials and “native police boys.” In Zimbabwe, border patrols, “native police” and inspectors implemented inter-colonial agreements to limit or even expunge women from the migrant stream.

Such gendered controls must be understood in their context, whereby from the inception of colonial capitalism, infant enterprises drew primarily from male labor. Whether by design or not, capitalists and government authorities alike associated work as well as migration with men. Since they applied the term “worker” to refer to males, this spelled the marginalization and, ultimately, the exclusion of women from capitalist work processes. For instance, within Malawi, the development of tea and tobacco estates in Tchiri Highlands, cotton Estates in Tchiri Valley, and related processing factories in Blantyre and Port Herald, beginning in the 1900s, revealed women’s exclusion. Such enterprises relied solely on male labor. As internal migration slowly increased in the late 1920s to account for over 10,000 male workers, women still constituted a mere 300 workers in these agro-based industries.¹² Similarly, in Zimbabwe, by the time of the Great Depression, men constituted two-thirds, 95 percent and 100 percent of agrarian, manufacturing and mining workers. Women claimed a mere 5 percent of the workforce in Harare. Besides the 117 employed by British American Tobacco (BAT), the 5 percent was made up of nannies and house girls, with Malawian men still dominating jobs as cooks and houseboys. These working women were mainly locals, either of mixed race or of the Shona ethnic group.¹³ Where the system marginalized local women, it offered very little, if any, opportunities for Malawian or foreign women in general. As Angwaula Mlepa, a Malawian woman residing in Harare since the 1950s stressed, “In Salisbury, it was unheard of for a Malawian woman to be a wage worker, or a nanny or even a house-girl.”¹⁴

This exclusion continued with the establishment in the 1900s of the Rhodesia Native Labor Bureau (RNLB), a male oriented migrant recruitment agency, organized by the state, in collusion with capitalists. The RNLB operated camps along several migrant routes providing medical attention, food and shelter exclusively to male migrants in transit. In 1903–1904 and 1920–1921 the RNLB transported 6,000 and 20,000 Malawian men to Zimbabwe, respectively.¹⁵ Women’s exclusion from capitalist wage work justified their exclusion from these services. As Bendasi Arumenda, a former Malawian migrant laborer, explained, “In both Nyasaland and Rhodesia, the governments never really wanted women because they were not workers like us men. So, government would never give them work books as they did to us or offer them *mutandizi*/free services to migrate. . . .”¹⁶ This gendered situation prevailed into the 1930s.

Between 1933 and 1935, as the end of the Great Depression brought economic expansion in Southern Africa, the mining, agricultural and manufacturing sectors' labor demands doubled in Zimbabwe. While the RNLB's recruitment increased from roughly 20,000 in the 1920s to 42,598 in the 1934–1935 period, none of these workers were female.¹⁷ By the 1941–1942 period, as production trebled to meet war time demand and import substitution industrialization requirements, the RNLB's recruitment rose to 142,000 males. This also necessitated the establishment of an additional migrant labor recruitment agency, known as *Urere* or Without Charge, headquartered in the Chief Native Commissioner's (CNC) Harare office. Like the RNLB, *Urere* operated free river-boats, road and railroad transport along elaborate networks of migrant routes. It sheltered, fed, and offered medical care to migrant men in camps on the "Mzalanyana-Mrewa-Salisbury route," which started on the Mozambique-Malawi border "at the nearest possible point to Lilongwe and Angoniland." Here, men congregated for transportation via the Pandanjala Mountains and Tete camps, reaching Mt. Darwin, Mrewa and then Harare in Zimbabwe.¹⁸ *Urere* also utilized the Misale route established in 1954, running from the Zambian border to cater for Northern Malawian migrants.¹⁹ Zimbabwe does not share a direct border with Malawi, hence migrants from Northern Malawi mostly traversed through Zambia.

From the mid-1930s, the absence of between 30 and 60 percent of Malawi's able-bodied men brought negative socio-economic impacts necessitating legislative interventions.²⁰ In 1935, the Governor of Malawi observed that, "the exodus of the ambitious and energetic men not only means that women are fully occupied in the fields . . . , but also that they have no support to maintain or improve living standards."²¹ Women lost male contributions in house building, hoe making and hunting or guarding food crops against birds and marauding animals.²² Just like in Kenya's Nyanza District, where the male oriented migration exposed women and children to starvation,²³ in Malawi, yields declined and starvation claimed one in every ten children between the mid-1930s and the early 1940s. As the Governor observed, "the growing emigration has brought misery and poverty . . . The waste of life, health and wealth is colossal. . . ."²⁴ The Nyasaland Labor Officer resident in Zimbabwe concurred that "many of the native workers leave their families to settle down here . . . it is breaking up home life in Nyasaland."²⁵ Under the circumstances, no longer could women fit neatly into the stereotypical official role as those who stayed behind to maintain rural economies. They responded by fleeing escalating poverty and extreme, yet unrewarding, labor demands in their natal homes. They thus left elderly mothers/mothers-in-law, grandmothers and aunts with elderly fathers/

grandfathers and uncles to take care of children and maintain rural subsistence. This partly spurred the need for general as well as gendered legal controls on Africans' inter-colonial mobility.

The first gendered inter-colonial agreement, the 1936 Migrant Workers Ordinance, was thus brokered between Malawi and Zimbabwe. The Ordinance required that, "all native migrant workers [i.e. men] must obtain migrants' certificates in their districts of origin."²⁶ It authorized the district commissioners (DCs) to issue certificates to men only. The 1940, 1942, 1946, and finally the 1948 Migrant Workers Agreement, extant till 1963, when the end of colonial rule in Malawi opened a new era, similarly excluded women.²⁷ The 1948 Agreement, in fact, stressed that able-bodied men had to obtain migrant work books authorizing their migration in any administrative center in Malawi, as well as en-route to and within Zimbabwe.²⁸

Apart from other considerations, by including a return clause for husbands, the states tried to construct women's place outside the migrant stream. The 1936 agreement's return clause expected men to return to Malawi from Zimbabwe at three months' work intervals.²⁹ The 1946 Convention decreed that "every native migrant worker must return to his wife and children in Nyasaland after six months of work. . . ."³⁰ Under the 1948 Migrant Workers Act, the return clause shifted from six months to two years' work intervals, based on the logic that, "as long as our Nyasaland natives return home regularly . . . their womenfolk would not be compelled to flock down to Southern Rhodesia."³¹ The return clause thus marked the following reasoning: women were sedentary; by regulating men's mobility, states could also easily discourage women from joining migrant husbands. The 1948 Migrant Workers Act stressed that no woman would leave Malawi without a travel permit from the *Boma* (administrative office) in their district of origin. Only certified wives of migrant workers could obtain the permits.³²

However, as legal minors, such certified wives still needed the approval of male guardians, known as *ankoswe*, to obtain permits.³³ Among the matrilineal-matrilocal Chewa, Man'anja and Yao people, *ankoswe* are the uncles on the mother's side. In such communities, men moved to wives' homesteads upon marriage. In case of polygamy, they moved between wives' matrilineal homesteads. Here, all children belonged to the wife's brother and inherited from him. Hence, even if they moved to wives' homesteads, they were the "owners"/guardians of their sisters' children, whether such sisters were married or not. No decision could be made about such children without the *ankoswe*'s endorsement. Among the patrilineal-patrilocal Tonga, Ngoni and Tumbuka, where upon marriage wives relocated to husbands homesteads, *ankoswe* are uncles on the father's side,

biological fathers or male siblings. In both patrilineal and matrilineal communities, any *nkoswe's* power depended on his place in the family's male hierarchy.³⁴ In any case, to even consider migration, women needed to be certified as wives by the District Commissioner (DC). The quest for a marriage certificate was just one of many hurdles. A certified wife not only needed a migrant husband with proven employment in Zimbabwe; she also needed the husband's work book registration number, the husband's letter of invitation, and a letter from the husband's employer approving the wife's travel and indicating availability of accommodation.³⁵ A woman ultimately needed *ankoswe's* verbal consent or approval of all processes, from marriage to migration, before the DC. These requirements combined to eliminate from the legal migrant stream single, divorced, and widowed women, as well as uncertified and some certified wives.

For the elderly *ankoswe*, releasing the *mbumba* (females under their guardianship) meant relinquishing power, not just over women but the remittances sent by husbands. *Ankoswe* wielded the authority to initiate requests for migrant permits for women at village, chiefdom and district levels. If *ankoswe* refused, the women, due to their perpetual minority status, could do nothing. Indeed, Man'anja women remembered their general frustration as *ankoswe* refused to assist them. Many concurred with Alice Gomez's experience, whereby she waited several years for her *nkoswe's* support. Married in 1943, and intending to join her husband since 1944, Alice's elderly *nkoswe* persistently refused to present her request before the headman and chief, stating that, "Salisbury [Harare] is an immoral place, what parent allows a girl child to go to such a place?" *Ankoswe* commonly asked questions like, "You, a mere woman, you want to go to Salisbury? What for?"³⁶ Indeed, within the Malawian household of this era, whether it was matrilineal or patrilineal, *ankoswe* continued to view young women as children who needed to be kept under surveillance.

As such, the Malawian government adopted what resembled Michel Foucault's "carceral archipelago of surveillance," utilizing these already existing hierarchies of power to control targeted subjects.³⁷ In the hierarchy of male command, it was *ankoswe* who approached headmen, and the latter then approached chiefs. Chiefs brought the request before the DC. Each of these male authorities could forestall women's migration. Indeed, Headmen Chapweteka and Muomba of Mlanje and Zomba in Southern Malawi were notorious for suppressing women's mobility. In Kuntiwa village, both male and female informants concurred that, "everybody knew Headman Kuntiwa for saying, 'Girl, you are going nowhere!' or, 'If you go, never set foot here again!'"³⁸ Chiefs such as Muroro also retracted permission made by *ankoswe* or headmen. Informants also recall that between 1948 and

1963, Chief Muroro, like Headman Kuntiwa, unleashed “police-boys” to intercept women on migrant paths and punish them to deter migration.³⁹

To further ensure chiefs, headmen and even some migrant men’s collaboration, the state offered incentives for keeping women from the migrant stream. For instance, in 1946, the Governor of Malawi decreed that “every migrant man is under obligation to register his name and that of his wife/wives in his Native Authority, Village Headman and District Commissioner’s census records.”⁴⁰ The decree offered chiefs and headmen 10 and 5 percent of the total tax remitted for such wives respectively.⁴¹ This was enough for the authorities to curtail women’s mobility. Some husbands, requiring their women to remain in the villages to ensure continuity of access to rural resources, also withheld from wives their employment and other details. This was since the decree empowered chiefs and headmen to “delete from local and district registers names of natives [men] who leave their villages and chiefdoms without any sign of return,” with wives being among such signs.⁴²

In addition, for the state, women’s immobility justified various types of remittances from migrant men. As one official noted, “In Nyasaland, far too much consideration is given to the financial aspect. The government requires the earnings of our migrant natives to circulate within Nyasaland, with wives spending on basic family needs.”⁴³ The 1936 Migrant Workers’ Ordinance included a voluntary remittance clause obliging employers to aid willing workers to remit. Between 1946 and 1948 however, the government of colonial Malawi made remittances compulsory “on account of wives and children left behind.”⁴⁴ Under the 1948 Act, migrant men retained only three-quarters of their wages, as employers directly remitted the remainder to putatively sedentary women in Malawi.⁴⁵

In 1949, the Nyasaland Labor Commissioner mailed 400 copies of a Government Notice to Zimbabwe, urging Native Department Offices, Post Offices and employers to assist Malawian men’s remittances “on behalf of wives in Nyasaland.”⁴⁶ Migrant men registered names of recipients in their work books. Indeed, if approximately 110,000 and 150,000 pounds worth of remittances passed through state coffers yearly, as in 1950 and 1953 respectively, then it was expedient to confine women to sedentary status.⁴⁷ The 1948 Act also included the deferred wages clause to cater for sedentary wives.⁴⁸ In 1956 alone, total deferred wages amounted to 59,466 pounds.⁴⁹ Here, employers had the obligation to withhold and record a sixth of each worker’s monthly wages in his migrant work book. They forwarded it to Malawi for collection by each migrant man himself at the *Boma*/district office for family use on his return after two years of work.⁵⁰ In case men became *matchona* (those who never returned), deferred wages became uncontested state revenue.

With such benefits in sight, the state deployed police details to apprehend migrant women on various internal routes and main transit areas. At *Paurere*, the main transit station in Blantyre, the police conducted inspections, detaining and repatriating undocumented women back to their villages, while directing men to obtain workbooks at the Blantyre district office.⁵¹ On the Mozambican side, undocumented women faced the Mozambican police, who handed them over to Malawi's border police for repatriation. In a 1961 report entitled "Mabvuto PaDondo/Trouble at Dondo," the African Weekly observed that "at Dondo Junction, just inside PEA [i.e. Mozambique], these police-boys apprehend and beat up women without papers. They force some to fetch water for them and do other tasks before repatriating them to Nyasaland."⁵²

On the Zimbabwean side, the state deployed policemen to patrol the Zimbabwean borders and beyond, armed with truncheons and aided by vicious bloodhounds.⁵³ Women from Southern Malawi entered through legal points at Mkumbura, in Mt. Darwin, Forbes in Mutare and Nyamapanda in Mtoko, while Northern Malawians entered through Chirundu and Victoria Falls. Where border officials readily legalized undocumented men by offering them new work books, they treated undocumented women as vagrants, given the 1948 Act's order to "arrest, detain and repatriate on sight any native woman travelling without a visitor's permit."⁵⁴ Every woman in transit was examined for the following set of documents: a marriage certificate, husband's letter of invitation, employer's letter confirming husband's employment and availability of appropriate accommodation in marriage quarters in Harare and, finally, the "visitor's permit." Such searches were conducted anywhere, even on lorries and trains running between Mozambique and Zimbabwe. As such, only those with legal documents travelled on secured routes; in a rare occurrence in 1959, 1,305 legally documented wives used the usually male only free transportation system, known as *Urere*.⁵⁵

While men and well-documented women passed through quickly, the police detained illegal migrant women for days, awaiting random transportation on trucks ferrying food and medicines to transit camps, or returning workers to Malawi.⁵⁶ At Forbes border post alone, the police deported 242 Malawian women in August 1949, as compared to 289 in August 1959. Non-Malawians were much fewer in numbers, with Mozambicans, Zambians and Tanzanians making up, respectively, 132, 74, and 10 in August 1949, and 101, 38, and 2 in August 1959.⁵⁷ In any case, Malawian women who legally entered Zimbabwe through open routes were far below ten percent of the men who migrated at the same time. For example, in 1959, the only year when *Urere* is recorded to have transported women, only

1,305 documented wives traveled, as compared to over 20,000 men who used the agent's services to enter into Zimbabwe.⁵⁸

In Harare, authorities defined migrant women who lacked the required set of documents, employed husbands, and adequate accommodation, as "vagrants."⁵⁹ This was not surprising in a scenario in which, under the 1948 Act, even documented migrant women were tagged as mere "visitors" or "travelers," denoting their irrelevancy in the capitalist economy.⁶⁰ According to this Act, "any policeman or immigration officer may order any native woman who has entered without a valid travelling permit to leave the colony."⁶¹ This spoke directly to official concerns with African urban influx, which escalated in the period of economic recovery from the end of the Great Depression. Especially between 1935 and the 1940s, Harare experienced a double influx of foreign and internal migrants. This affected municipalities and central government, due to the increased costs of socio-economic amenities. In 1951, one official in the Colonial Treasury Department warned that, "So far, the expansion of Highfield Village Settlement and Mabvuku Native Location has taken over a million and a half pounds from our coffers . . . our government does not have the finances to meet the demand for . . . facilities at this rapid rate."⁶² The influx also had a bearing on urban capitalists. Some preferred that workers stabilize with families to prevent the back and forth movement which affected production. To them, having wives to meet the workers' social reproductive needs and comforts would make workers contented, healthy and thus more productive. Others however, viewed stabilization as raising costs, as employees would require family rather than bachelor wages, adequate housing, schools and other family amenities.⁶³

For the general white minority, influx threatened the status of urban environs as white space. Just like apartheid South Africa, Zimbabwe's 1931 Land Apportionment Act demarcated space into white and black areas, with urban zones being white. However, the inevitable need for African labor spurred the promulgation of the 1936 Native Urban Areas Act (NUAA). The Act urged capitalists to ensure that Africans settled outside European residential areas or the city center, unless employers obtained permits to the contrary. NUAA demarcated African dormitory townships located near factories. In 1946, the state adopted the Native Urban Areas Registration and Accommodation Act (NUARAA), amended in 1951, to replace the NUAA.⁶⁴ As was the case with women and unemployed youths in the 1920s in Nairobi, Kenya,⁶⁵ such laws declared single, widowed, divorced women, as well as wives of unemployed and retired men, to be vagrants who were liable to arrest and repatriation. As such, even Carter House, the only single women's hostel in Harare, located in the African township of Mbare,

accommodated mostly resident certificate (RC)–holding locals employed as house girls in European homes.⁶⁶ While the legislation generally affected African women, as foreign migrants, Malawian women suffered doubly because internal controls dovetailed with gendered transnational legislation to categorize them as illegal.

Malawian women were at the mercy of different surveillance systems, as three main police categories operated to repatriate migrant women without documents. The police units included *Mudzviti*, the state police; *Katseker*, the municipal police responsible for maintaining law and order in the city; and, finally, individual companies' police, generally known as *masekiriti* (a derivation of security forces).⁶⁷ For instance, companies like Rhodesia Railways (henceforth National Railways of Zimbabwe [NRZ]), employed and trained their own police details. While the state governed the country as a whole, the municipality governed urban space, with the duty to provide housing and other amenities for the working class. From the municipality, many employers rented whole sections in African locations for their workers, while more affluent companies like NRZ purchased land and built Rugare Township for its workers. Like the municipality, companies such as NRZ provided separate marriage and singles quarters and deployed *masekiriti* to survey and eliminate illegal women, in compliance with urban settlement regulations.⁶⁸ Together, *masekiriti*, *mudzviti* and *katseker* police wielded the authority to "arrest, detain and repatriate *on sight* any native woman . . . without a visitor's permit."⁶⁹ The spatial restrictions of the Zimbabwean state meant that any woman found in single males quarters, or in shanty settlements like Pinto's Quarry, were automatically designated as illegal.

Here, a woman was guilty until proven innocent. Usually commanded by white officers on horseback or on military-like lorries, swarms of African "police boys" raided the locations. Separately or in convergence, police boys conducted these *spakisheni* (stop and interrogate/search) operations across the city: on streets, in singles and marriage quarters, in slums, in beer gardens and *shabeens*, at communally tapped water sources, in health centers, market places and allegedly even at churches.⁷⁰ It was more common for the police to round up women and escort some to their homes to produce the required documentation, while detaining others to await repatriation if they failed to produce papers.

In cases where single women settled in the marriage quarters, the police could ferret them out using migrant household heads' work books and *kadhi remba*, or house registration cards.⁷¹ In these two documents, the employer and municipality respectively listed the names of all family members, including birth dates. Every worker, in whose name the marriage

housing was issued, was required to report, not only deaths, but every new born or newly arrived member of his immediate family to the employer. The employer officially added the names in the work book and on the house registration card. The two cards served multiple purposes. They allowed household collection of food supplements or rations, as at the Railways Company; they served as passports to access company subsidized medical care or house repair services from relevant authorities; and most significantly, they established an official count of legal household members.⁷² During the unexpected house-to-house cordon and search operations, usually conducted in the early hours of dawn, from 3 A.M., the police inspected documents. In this way, in 1949 alone, they rounded up, detained and, in liaison with the office of the NC of Salisbury, repatriated over 800 women to Malawi from three major African locations—Mbare, Highfields and Rugare.⁷³ In 1958, they repatriated 1,710 women to Malawi.⁷⁴

In the 1950s, the escalating repatriations not only testified to the capacity of urban authorities to flush out illegal migrant women, but ironically denoted the increased influx during the Federal period. The colonial authorities of Malawi, Zimbabwe and Zambia forged the Federation of the three territories in 1953 for economic reasons. Garfield Todd, the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe in the 1950s, had anticipated that federation was likely to spur increased foreign influx into Zimbabwe, the center of economic development. In 1953, he remonstrated that, “Federation must change nothing insofar as existing migrant agreements are concerned.”⁷⁵ In this scenario, Malawian women still remained on the margins, given that, while federation lasted till 1963, the restrictions of the 1948 Act also remained extant. To try and concretize these restrictions, in 1958 the colonial state passed the Foreign Migratory Labor Act (FMLA), implemented in Harare in 1960. The cities of Bulawayo and Mutare followed suit in 1962 and 1963 respectively.⁷⁶ Allegedly, “this umbrella Act would discourage *new waves* of foreign workers from coming down with wives and children to the already overcrowded locations . . .”⁷⁷

Under the new provisions of the FMLA, the notion of legality took a new turn. In the 1930s, having a working husband, housing in marriage quarters, a marriage certificate, a visitor’s permit endorsed in Malawi, and a resident certificate from the Harare city fathers established women’s legality. Beyond these legal pathways, some cases occurred during the post war reconstruction and rapid industrialization of the late 1940s into the first half of the 1950s, whereby some employers seeking to stabilize labor aided their Malawian workers to form unions with illegal migrant women in Harare. Here, employers like NRZ occasionally requested the endorsement of such unions by the Malawian Resident Officer and the Native

Commissioner of Harare and agreed to provide marriage housing.⁷⁸ Such cases were, however, very isolated, as implied by informants' descriptions of these as "high luck" or "rare good fortune" cases.⁷⁹

These narrow pathways of mobility from the illegal to the legal categories ended with the FMLA. Under the FMLA, women's status as illegal workers no longer just emanated from being single; the loss of a husband due to death or divorce; a husband's retrenchment or incapacity to work because of sickness or old age; or lack of adequate accommodation, as had been the case in the 1930s and 1940s. Instead, even newly arriving and well-documented wives of working men were treated like single women, divorcees, widows, the wives of pensioners, and the wives of sick or laid-off workers: they became illegal migrants. This shift must be understood in the context whereby colonial Zimbabwe was planning a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) against Britain. Economists anticipated that UDI would lead to sanctions from Britain, economic difficulties and reduced labor demands. From 1958, some employers already relied on casual labor to forestall costs of maintaining permanent workers and their families.⁸⁰ Hence, during this federal era—that is, even before the 1965 UDI—as job opportunities declined, the FMLA aimed to deter the foreign inundation of the struggling city. As many husbands lost their jobs, as a result of downsizing and cost cutting measures, many married women whose presence relied on husbands' employment shifted into the illegal category. The 1960 FMLA thus compounded the 1948 Act, as well as the 1946 and 1951 Native Urban Areas Registration and Accommodation Act, in excluding such wives and any newly arriving wives from the city's 10km radius.⁸¹

Women Contesting Marginalization and Exclusion

To migrate and settle in Zimbabwe, Malawian women purposively challenged the edifice of patriarchal power represented by the above laws and at district, chiefdom, village and household level by DCs, chiefs, headmen and *ankoswe*. They also confronted "police boys" and other state and urban authorities—while in Malawi, while in Zimbabwe, and while in transit in between.

Within Malawi, women had to manipulate and bribe chiefs, headmen and *ankoswe*. Since the first step was to deal with *ankoswe*, as among the matrilineal Chewa and Man'anja, certified wives took advantage of the brother-sister relations between their uncles and mothers. They liaised with their mothers, who in turn persuaded their own brothers, the said *ankoswe*, to assist their daughters.⁸² A significant proportion of Man'anja women who migrated between 1949 and the 1950s also used the divide

and conquer strategy, playing *ankoswe* against each other, by showing more deference to one over others. In addition, over half of the Yao women interviewed used open bribery. They would win *ankoswe*'s support by offering gifts remitted by migrant husbands.⁸³ For example, according to Twasume Chigwegwere, a Yao woman from Gaga village, her eldest *nkoswe* had obstructed her migration since 1949. He only assisted her in late 1955, when her husband gave him a new bicycle and a trunk full of clothes from Zimbabwe. Twasume finally obtained a travel permit in 1956.⁸⁴ The women applied similar "weapons" to neutralize chiefs and headmen. Stories circulated in Malawi about migrant women who offered chiefs such as Muroro, of Port Herald District, "gifts" ranging from hoes and bicycles, to hats and coats, to goats and chickens. Representing many a migrant woman, Jessi Maluwa and her *nkoswe* failed to obtain a travel permit between 1955 and 1958. She obtained the permit in 1959, when Maluwa's *nkoswe* offered Muroro hoes, a new coat, and other items remitted by her husband.⁸⁵

However, where manipulation and bribery failed, flight was most effective. As such, given her failure to obtain a permit since 1948, Estere Banda, a young, registered wife fled from Mzikuora in 1949, accompanied by her husband and their son, Austin. As Estere recalled, "We left Mzikuora at dawn and walked for days to the Blantyre road to get a truck." Tired, deprived of sleep and shelter, and threatened by predatory animals, they survived on *masau* (wild sour berries).⁸⁶ Most importantly, flight was the basic weapon for single, divorced and widowed women, such as Mbombe Maliki, who had neither marriage certificates nor husbands to provide required documents. In 1951, Maliki sneaked away from her village at dawn, in the company of four *madhobhadhobha* men (guides of illegal migrants) and her four-month old baby. She did not even notify her own mother, because, she alleged, "She would have told uncle and he would have stopped me."⁸⁷ Flight was most successful during the rainy season, between October and April, when policemen in different villages and chiefdoms least expected it, given the difficulties involved. Angwaula Mlepa, a divorcee who fled Namwera's village with her companions in the dry season of 1954, was apprehended by the police in neighboring Jasi village. She recalled that, "When we first fled, we were caught and brought back to Namwera. . . . Yet, we fled again, this time during the rainy season, and made it here."⁸⁸

Evading the authorities became more complicated in main transit zones, such as Paurere in Blantyre and Mozambique's Dondo Junction, where women faced random stops and document checks. As Luwina Jasi recalled, "We needed to evade swarms of police boys patrolling main routes, as well as train or bus stations all the way from Malawi to Mozambique and the Zimbabwe border."⁸⁹ Women purposively saved remittances or money

raised from various sources over long periods, to pay fees averaging between five and twenty pounds each, for the services of *madhobhadhobha*.⁹⁰ These *madhobhadhobha* posed as itinerant traders or passing travelers within Southern and Northern Malawian villages. The women thus gained access to *madhobhadhobha*'s illegal networks, complete with river boats to cross dangerous rivers such as the Zambezi. They also utilized *madhobhadhobha*'s skills as huntsmen, trackers and accomplished trekkers for relative security against wild animals, bandits, male authorities and "police boys."⁹¹ Allegedly, *madhobhadhobha* worked in teams of up to six to escort groups of migrant women, sometimes accompanied by husbands, male friends and kin. As cosmopolitans who commanded different languages, including *chilapalapa* (a mix of English, Afrikaans, Chewa, Sena and also the Shona language of Zimbabwe), they liaised with some headmen and friendly villagers en route.⁹² This relative security explains how migrant women like Mbombe Maliki could flee with their babies. Malaiki recalled that her group travelled for about two months, all the time utilizing *madhobhadhobha*'s networks to rest for days and obtain food and shelter in friendly villages such as Madziamanga and Nyampinga of Mozambique, before continuing.⁹³ Many illegal women thus evaded the border patrols at formal entry points like Mukumbura, Forbes and Nyamapanda of Mt. Darwin, Mutare and Mtoko in Zimbabwe, and instead entered through clandestine points such as Mavuradona, Penhalonga and Mudzi.⁹⁴

However, as the undocumented women arrived in Harare, they still confronted the 1936 NUAA, the 1946 NUARAA amended in 1951, the 1948 Act and the 1960s FMLA. These laws foreclosed women's access to the RCs needed to legalize their presence and hence, work, in Harare. Here, despite the tight surveillance concomitant with such laws, many women illegally settled with sympathetic legal residents of Malawian origin in marriage quarters, even as others found a place to sleep in single men's hostels.⁹⁵ Some joined "vagrants" in the shanty settlements such as Pinto's Quarry and Kwamazai, on the outskirts of Mbare and Mufakose respectively.⁹⁶ Apparently, while some women carried residential addresses of family members and located them in the townships, others took advantage of *madhobhadhobha*'s male privileges as possible migrant job seekers. Especially before the FMLA, *madhobhadhobha* connected them with legal Malawian residents in the various locations, where the women forged fictive kinships and identities to survive. For example, as a young woman, Mwaiwatu Mwale illegally migrated from Nkata Bay in the early 1950s. Through *madhobhadhobha* networks, she initially settled at Tavhina Masongerera's home in the Railways location of Rugare as a "daughter." Just like those who moved in with biological kin, fictive daughters like Mwale

worked hard to evade the authorities. Challenging gendered exclusionary principles, Mwale stayed for a whole month at Masongera's home before eventually moving into Pinto's Quarry. In a few months, Masongera connected Mwale to a working man who already occupied marriage quarters in the Railways Location. Mwale became a "legal wife," by assuming the identity of the man's documented wife, who had left for Malawi and failed to return—a strategy pursued by many illegal female migrants. Until the second half of the 1950s, when Mwale's "husband" finally legalized the union with his employer's help, Mwale defied the system by adopting the departed woman's identity, complete with marriage certificate, visitor's permit and residence certificate, to live freely in Harare.⁹⁷ Other women, such as Enesi Zagwa, who failed to legalize their unions before the limitations imposed under the 1960 FMLA, maintained these false identities until the end of colonial rule in Zimbabwe.⁹⁸ Through such strategies, Malawian women calculatingly broke through the seemingly impenetrable edifice of colonial gendered restrictions.

Indeed, women devised many other ways to evade police cordon and search operations and dawn raids. They liaised with sympathetic African "police boys" who preemptively informed them of impending raids.⁹⁹ Husbands obtained information from fellow Africans employed as *masekiriti* by the same companies, and alerted their wives. Most migrant women interviewed testified that illegal women who had prior knowledge of police raids were able to hide in surrounding bushes on the fringes of the African townships or in illegal settlements.¹⁰⁰ Under the 1960 FMLA, raids were launched not just by *masekeriti*, but also by municipal and state police boys who converged on illegal settlements. For instance, in the early 1960s, the police frequently raided Pinto's Quarry, the largest shanty settlement, rounding up "miscreants" for repatriation.¹⁰¹ In September 1961, they rounded up about seventy women and burnt down huts and granaries. However, many women were forewarned by friendly policemen and had fled beforehand, and were able to regroup, resettle, rebuild and re-launch their alternative work in the aftermath.¹⁰²

That under such conditions these women worked as food producers, beer brewers, financiers, commercial sex workers, and traders, among other jobs, testified to their resilience. They drew from their social reproductive roles in the private sphere to earn income in the public sphere. The women produced maize, pumpkins, cassava, sweet potatoes, sugar cane, rice, cowpeas and beans in rain-fed and wetland farming on the outskirts of African locations. As in Malawi, during the dry season, that is, between May and August, they dug wells in wetlands or tunnels to channel water to their crops from streams and rivers, such as the Mukuvisi, that cut across

African townships. From *madimba* (wetland farming), they harvested between August and September. In the rainy season, between October and April, they engaged in *mpahla* (rain-fed agriculture), reaping between April and May. Each family harvested an annual average of twelve to twenty 50 kilogram bags of dried corn and six to eight bags of rice and beans.¹⁰³

This was apart from the green crops that women marketed on the streets or from house to house, in illegal settlements or straight from their fields, located on the outskirts of the locations so as to avoid the police.¹⁰⁴ Some traded in relatively unpatrolled industrial sites within the 5km radius of the locations.¹⁰⁵ The bolder ones traded in European suburbs, disregarding the racial segregation under the NUAA, the NUARAA and the 1960 FMLA. In 1954, the Municipal Superintendent of Harare complained that “Nyasa women are the most difficult. . . . [T]hey are coming all the way from Harari and Highfield Village Settlement to market their produce in European suburbs . . . [h]eretofore, we must increase police patrols to nip this activity in the bud. . . .”¹⁰⁶ Oral accounts place the maximum possible weekly earnings from fresh produce marketing at 1 to 2 pounds and 2 to 4 pounds in the 1930s and 1940s respectively. According to Eneresi Paliza, “we went to the European suburbs from Highfields for the best prices. In the 1960s, a cob of fresh maize cost 1 to 3 shillings in the African location, but Europeans bought at 5 to 7 shillings . . .”¹⁰⁷

Malawian women diversified their work to include beer brewing, a domestic task women had performed in their natal homes for celebrations and religious ceremonies. Between the mid-1930s and the late 1940s, well remembered brewers like Mary Kadamika worked in shanty settlements such as Pinto’s Quarry and Kwamazai.¹⁰⁸ This was similar to the lucrative occupations for women in other parts of colonial Africa, such as Nairobi and in urban South Africa.¹⁰⁹ In Harare, Malawian women brewed both *chiseven days*, which took seven days to ferment, and *chikokiyana*, which was a one-day brew, using water, corn meal and sorghum fermenting powder. *Chiseven days* cost 10 shillings per large cup between 1940 and 1949, while *chikokiyana* cost 5 shillings; mixing the more lucrative *chiseven days* with the more quickly produced *chikokiyana* ensured a good mix of higher income and more continuous business.¹¹⁰ The most lucrative and potent drink, however, was *kachasu*. The women distilled this uniquely Malawian beer by slowly boiling precise amounts of fermented fruits, sugar and yeast in a large drum, tightly sealed at the top opening with plastic. A pipe attached to a small hole on the side of the drum directed and condensed steam in another drum located a distance from the fire. *Kachasu* fetched 20 to 25 shillings a large cup in the 1950s and double that amount by the 1960s.¹¹¹ The women’s brewing expanded enough to raise the Municipal

Superintendent's concern. As he reported, "As we seek to eradicate illegal settlements, we must bear in mind the repugnant activities that take place there . . . If Pinto's Quarry is anything to go by, even legally settled Nyasa women go there to brew and sell liquor to hordes of drunkards and prostitutes . . ." ¹¹²

Indeed, "prostitution" or commercial sex work was among urban migrant women's sources of livelihood. As late as 1963, the African Weekly observed that, ". . . [I]t is sad to see that some Nyasa women come here illegally to make a living as prostitutes. . . ." ¹¹³ Angwaula Mlepa confirmed the significance of commercial sex work among Malawian women: "I came to Harare in the 1950s thinking I could work as a house-girl, but there was nothing . . . I was single, with no money, and the child I left in Nyasaland with my mother needed support. . . . So I began [commercial sex work] this work right here. . . ." ¹¹⁴ Commercial sex work was not a unique experience of Malawian migrant women, but characterized marginalized women's survival in colonial East, West and Southern Africa. ¹¹⁵ In colonial Harare, Malawian commercial sex workers operated from the homes of fellow Malawians, from illegal settlements, from beer brewing arenas, and from men's hostels. Earnings averaged between 20 shillings and three dollars per customer in the 1950s and 1960s respectively. ¹¹⁶

Commercial sex workers, urban farmers, marketers and beer brewers reinvested earnings into the financial services sector, known as *chimbado*. Emerging slowly between the 1930s and early 1940s, before reaching a climax in the 1960s, *chimbado* catered for Africans who lacked access to bank loans amidst meager wages and rising unemployment. Like many other migrant women, in 1954 Alice Mbalami Kutengo joined a group of ten who put their saving into *chimbado*. As she explained, "in our group, we all put together an equal once off payment of 30 pounds each. We had younger mission educated women, who recorded borrowers' names, places of residence, of work and amounts loaned." ¹¹⁷ According to Angwaula Mlepa, her own group, operating from the early 1960s, capitalized on the African belief and fear of sorcery to maximize returns and minimize defaults. Allegedly, "to instill terror, every borrower had to vow to pay back while holding a carved black image, part human and part animal. . . . That was enough to ensure payment." ¹¹⁸ Group members withdrew their start up contributions with interest at the end of agreed periods—some monthly, some half yearly, others yearly. *Chimbado* was thus a well-organized, smart and lucrative business that allowed women to reinvest, bank and survive comfortably.

While women who were excluded from capitalist work were generally required to enter into the alternative economy, this was also propelled by

their husbands' meager wages, declining food rations, and the rising cost of living, which further pushed legal wives into the parallel economy. According to Tavhina Masongera, whose husband was employed by the NRZ, "in the late 1940s, my husband earned a meager 2 pounds and 10 shillings and got only two kilograms of maize meal, two cups of sugar, salt, a few strips of dried or fresh meat and cabbages in food rations every week . . ." ¹¹⁹ Even by 1957, as the Urban African Affairs Commission observed, "the weekly rations cannot feed a couple with two or more children, yet husbands' wages rarely make up for this inadequacy." ¹²⁰ As noted, in this era, "most urban workers earn 1 pound 10 shillings per month," yet "a family of four needs between 7 pounds 7s 4d and 12 pounds." ¹²¹

The women's work thus addressed urban food security, income, clothing and children's education, thereby indirectly supporting the urban capitalist system. Renowned beer brewers and urban farmers like Alice Mbalami Kutengo proudly stressed that theirs were the best fed, dressed and educated children in the locations. Kutengo noted how her informal earnings ensured her three sons' attendance at the expensive African boy's high school, Kutama Mission. ¹²² As Mbombe Maliki claimed, like other unmarried women, she lived a better life because "my earnings were better than those of the men who worked for Europeans. In the 1950s, I sometimes got more than ten pounds a month." ¹²³ Hence, the women could easily pay *madhobhadhobha* to help them undertake clandestine visits to elderly *ankoswe*, mothers, grandparents and children in Malawi. While documented wives travelled back twice a year for short visits, singles mostly travelled once yearly or every two years, with food, clothes, cash and other necessities. Others remitted through friends and relatives; as Mlepa testified, "We women never forgot the trouble back home, and if a friend from my village was crossing back, then I would say, please take this fifty or hundred pounds or clothes to my elderly mother. We even competed to see who remitted the most" ¹²⁴ As Luwina Jasi concurred, "I worked hard and so I always had cash to rush home to assist even during funerals . . ." ¹²⁵ Women's remittances circumvented official channels, going through clandestine yet reliable routes.

Conclusion

The colonial states of Malawi and Zimbabwe, as well as urban authorities and capitalists in the latter, colluded to marginalize and exclude women from the migrant work stream. Through legislation and agreements, they constructed women's place outside the transnational migrant system. Based on the limiting conception that migration and capitalist work were

both masculine arenas, the state in Malawi aimed to ensure this gendered exclusion by coopting already existing customary hierarchies of power. The state worked with household heads, village headmen and district chiefs, and local and transit police, to curtail Malawian women's mobility. In this transnational exclusionary system, the Zimbabwean state also deployed the police at border points, on internal routes, and in urban areas such as Harare. Implementing transnational gendered regulations against Malawian women's migration, the state and local government in Harare used urban laws, such as the NURAA and FMLA, to deny women housing, economic and work space. This dovetailed with the masculinization of capitalist employment. Malawian women's migration to Harare and work in the city was thus a matter of resistance against exclusion. Their contestation of their expurgation from the migrant work system started from their natal homes in Malawi, where they neutralized, challenged and fled from African authorities, until their arrival in Harare.

In Harare, they also fought against local authorities, securing illegal accommodation and establishing their own work. As beer brewers, urban farmers, commercial sex workers, traders and money lenders they worked for themselves and their families, supplementing men's meager earnings and remitting money to their Malawian based families. Through migration and urban work, Malawian women powerfully contested their definition as sedentary or non-workers in a male driven urban economy and nullified the edifice of patriarchal power meant to keep them confined in Malawi.

Midlands State University

Notes

1. Ismail Serageldin, James A. Socknot, Stace Birks, and Clive A. Sinclair, *Manpower and International Labor Migration in East and North Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983); Ian Phimister, *Wangi Kolia, Coal, Capital and Labor in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890–1954* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1994); Jonathan Crush, Alan Jeeves and David Yudelman, *South Africa's Labor Empire: A History of Black Migrancy to the Gold Mines* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991); William Freund, "Labor Migration in the Northern Nigerian Tin Mines, 1903–1945," *Journal of African History* 22 (1981): 73–84; John A. Arthur, "International Labor Migration Patterns in West Africa," *African Studies Review* 34, 3 (1991): 65–87.

2. Abner Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Towns* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, New Edition, 2004).

3. Julia Wells, *"We Now Demand!" The History of Women's Resistance to Pass Laws in South Africa* (Braamfontein: Witwatersrand University Press, 1993).

4. Elizabeth Schmidt, "Negotiated Spaces and Contested Terrain: Men, Women and the Law in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1890–1939," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16, 4 (1990): 622–648; Teresa Barnes, *"We Women Worked So Hard": Gender, Urbanization and Social Reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930–1956* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1999); Siphon H. Simelane, "The State, Chiefs and the Control of Women's Migration in Colonial Swaziland, c. 1930s–1960s," *Journal of African History* 45, 1 (2004): 103–124.

5. David Coplan, "You Have Left Me Wandering About: Basotho Women and the Culture of Mobility," in *"Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa*, eds. Dorothy G. Hodgson and Sheryl A. McCurdy (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2001), 189–209; Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

6. Jean Bernard Ouedraogo, "The Girls of Nyovuuru: Dagara Female Labor Migrants to Bobo Dioulasso," in *The Migration Experience in Africa*, ed. Tade Akin Aina (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1995), 303–321.

7. Christine Obbo, *African Women: Their Struggle for Economic Independence* (London: Zed Press, 1980). See also Mariken Vaa, "Paths to the City: Migration Histories of Poor Women of Bamako," in *Small Town Africa: Studies in Rural-Urban Interactions*, ed. Jonathan Baker (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1990), 172–181.

8. Renee Pettin, "Migration of Women in Nigeria: The Hausa Case," *International Migration Review* 18, 4 (Winter, 1984): 1293–1314.

9. Gina Buijjs, "Women alone: Migrants from Transkei employed in rural Natal," in *Migrant Women: Crossing Boundaries and Changing Identities*, ed. Gina Buijjs (Oxford: Berg Press, 1993), 179–194.

10. Jonathan Crush (ed.), *Gender, Migration and Remittances in Southern Africa* (Cape Town: IDASA, 2008); A. P. Cheater and R. Gaidzanwa, "Citizenship in Neopatriarchal States: Gender and Mobility in Southern Africa" *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22, 2 (1996): 189–200; F. O. Mohammad-Jamie, "Gender and Migration in Africa: Female Ethiopian Migration in Post-2008 Sudan," *Journal of Politics and Law* 6, 1 (2013): 186–192.

11. Malawi Archives (MA), Annual Reports, Nyasaland Protectorate, 1900–1929. See also File 2239, Migratory Labor Carried by Southern Rhodesia Government Migrant Labor Transport, 1920–1960.

12. MA, Annual Reports, Nyasaland Protectorate, 1900–1929.

13. Barnes, *We Women Worked So Hard*, 5.

14. Angwaula Mlepa, interview by author, Mufakose, Harare, 6 February 2009.

15. National Archives of Zimbabwe, (NAZ), File S482/136/3/48, Nyasaland labor Recruited for Southern Rhodesia, 1900–1948.

16. Bendasi Arumenda, interview by author, Mbare, 5 August 2008.

17. NAZ, File S482/136/3/48, Nyasaland labor Recruited for Southern Rhodesia, 1900–1948.

18. NAZ, File S3292/37/5, Migrant labor routes and depots, 1940–1960. See also File S881/288, Native Aliens: Recruitment of labor in Nyasaland, 1942–1963.

19. NAZ, File S3292/37/5, Migrant labor routes and depots.
20. NAZ, File S482/136/3/48, Nyasaland labor Recruited for Southern Rhodesia, 1900–1948.
21. NAZ, File137/1934-1952, Report, February, 1944.
22. Ireen Mudeka, “‘We Faced Mabvuto’: A Gendered Socio-Economic History of Malawian Women’s Migration and Survival in Harare, 1940 to 1980” (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2011), 108.
23. Elizabeth Francis, “Gender, Migration and Multiple Livelihoods: Cases from Eastern and Southern Africa,” *The Journal of Development Studies* 38, 5 (2002): 167–190.
24. Statistics recorded in Embassy of Malawi, Harare, Mt Pleasant, Tract entitled “Marching From the past to the future: Improving the health and mortality of infants in Malawi,” Ministry of Health, 8 June 1965, p. 3.
25. NAZ, File 137/1934-52, Report, February, 1944.
26. NAZ, File 137/1934-1952, 1936 Migrant Workers Ordinance.
27. NAZ, File 482/22/42-48, Ordinances enacted by the Governor of Nyasaland Protectorate in agreement with the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia. See in same file 1940; 1942 and 1946 Migrant Workers Agreements; Migrant Workers Bill, 1947; Migrant Workers Act, 1948.
28. Certificates lasted till 1947 and were replaced by work books from 1948.
29. NAZ, File 137/1934-1952, 1936 Ordinance.
30. NAZ, File 482/22/42-48, Ordinances.
31. NAZ, File 482/22/42-48, Ordinances.
32. NAZ, File 482/22/42-48, Ordinances.
33. Information drawn from testimonies of male and female former migrants in Harare, Zimbabwe as well as in Blantyre and Zomba, Malawi.
34. NAZ, File NCK 6/1/1, Notes on Nyau, Witchcraft and other African customs in Nkotakota District by Wrangley W.H.J., 1947. To best comprehend gender relations in matrilineal communities as compared to patrilineal ones, one should consider applying the oxymoron matrilineal patriarchy.
35. NAZ, File S3615/7/1, Responsibility of Employer to provide Accommodation for African Employees in terms of Part 1 of the Native Urban Areas Registration and Accommodation Act, 50/51: Minutes, 19 October 1951.
36. Alice Gomeza, interview by author, Rugare, Harare, 2 November 2008; Fania Chaya, interview by author, Mufakose, Harare, 8 March 2008; Luwina Jasi, interview by author, Mbayani, Malawi, 10 July 2009. Jasi reiterated Gomeza’s testimony.
37. Concept applied by Eithne Luibheid, *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), xxvii.
38. Interview with Luwina Jasi; Jessie Maluwa, interview by author, 27 December 2008.
39. Interview with Jessie Maluwa. Most of the interviewees who came from North, South and Central Malawi between 1949 and 1960 mentioned the story of Muroro in their accounts, even though he was a Northern chief.
40. MA, File LB5/11, Native Tax Ordinance; District Census and Payments, 1941–50.
41. Native Tax Ordinance.

42. Native Tax Ordinance.
43. NAZ, File 137/1934-1952, Payments, REF 52C.
44. NAZ, File 137/1934-1952, Payments, REF 52C.
45. NAZ, File 482/22/42-48, The Migrant Workers Act, 1948.
46. NAZ, File 137/1934-1952, Payments, REF 52C.
47. MA, Report, 1950 and 1953.
48. NAZ, File 482/22/42-48, The Migrant Workers Act, 1948.
49. Annual Report, 1956.
50. NAZ, File 137/1934-1952, Payments, REF 52C.
51. Interview with Alice Gomeza; interview with Fania Chaya; interview with Luwina Jasi.
52. *The African Weekly*, 4 January 1961.
53. Information drawn from testimonies of male and female former migrants in Harare, Zimbabwe as well as in Blantyre and Zomba, Malawi.
54. NAZ, File 482/22/42-48, The Migrant Workers Bill, 1947; The Migrant Workers Act, 1948. See also File 137/1934-52, ref 51G, Migrant labor in Southern Rhodesia.
55. NAZ, File 2239, Migratory Labor Carried by Southern Rhodesia Government Migrant Labor Transport, 1920–1960.
56. Ume Kambalata, interview by author, Mpondabwino, Malawi, 12 May 2009; Tiwara Lima, interview by author, Mpondabwino, Malawi, 19 May 2009; Leya Limpi, interview by author, Mbayani, Malawi, 8 July 2009.
57. NAZ, File S1007/8, Office of the Chief Native Commissioner: Repatriation of Native aliens, 1949–1971.
58. NAZ, File 2239, Migratory Labor Carried by Southern Rhodesia Government Migrant Labor Transport, 1920–1960.
59. NAZ, File RHB360/71, Native Urban Areas Registration and Accommodation Act, 50/51.
60. NAZ, File 482/22/42-48, The Migrant Workers Act.
61. NAZ, File 482/22/42-48, Migrant Workers Act.
62. NAZ, File S3615/7/1, Responsibility of Employer to provide Accommodation for African Employees: Minutes.
63. NAZ, File S3615/7/1, Responsibility of Employer to provide Accommodation: Report on Proceedings of a Conference held in Salisbury, 6–12 June 1947.
64. NAZ, File 482/22/42-48, Migrant Workers Bill, 1947; Migrant Workers Act, 1948. Also File RHB360/71, Native Urban Areas Registration and Accommodation Act, 50/51.
65. Paul Ocobock, “‘Joy Rides for Juveniles’: Vagrant Youth and Colonial Control in Nairobi, Kenya, 1901–52,” *Social History* 31, 1 (2006): 39–59. See also Andrew Burton and Paul Ocobock, “‘The Travelling Native’: Vagrancy and Colonial Control in British East Africa,” in *Cast Out: Vagrancy and Homelessness in Global and Historical Perspective*, eds. A. L. Beier and Paul Ocobock (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2008), 295.
66. Interview with Tiwara Lima; interview with Leya Limpi.

67. People in the earliest African locations under study, and in Zimbabwe in general, still separate the three police systems.

68. NAZ, File S3615/7/1, Responsibility of Employer to provide Accommodation: Report on Proceedings of a Conference held in Salisbury, 6–12 June 1947. File RHB/17/1, Illegal settlement: Squatters, vagrants and alien Africans 1949–79. Rhodesia Railways (Salisbury Depot), File 16/50-58, Memorandum, Area Personnel Officer, Control Unit, 25 August 1958.

69. NAZ, File 482/22/42-48, The Migrant Workers Bill, 1947; The Migrant Workers Act, 1948. See also File 137/1934-52, ref 51G, Migrant labor in Southern Rhodesia. Italicization by author.

70. Interview with Bendasi Arumenda; interview with Alice Gomeza; interview with Fania Chaya; interview with Luwina Jasi.

71. Rhodesia Railways (Salisbury Depot), File 16/50-58, Memorandum, Area Personnel Officer, Control Unit, 25 August 1958. See also Rhodesia Railways, Personnel File 180895/Soza Tembo, 27/07/1950 to 29/08/80. File 180038/John Linkson, 18 June 1952 to 30 July 1969. File RHB/17/1, Illegal settlement: Squatters, vagrants and alien Africans 1949–79.

72. The house card and work book systems are also well remembered among urban residents of the earliest African locations, like Mbare, Highfield, Mufakose, and Rugare, even among the descendants of first generation migrants.

73. NAZ, File S1007/8, Repatriation of Native Aliens.

74. NAZ, File S1007/8 Repatriation of Native Aliens.

75. J R.T. Wood, *The Welensky Papers* (Durban: Graham Publishing, 1983): 42.

76. Harare City Archives (HCA), File RHB3/3/I, Memo: Foreign Migratory Labor Act 1960. See also R. Blake, *A History of Rhodesia* (Salisbury: Alfred Knopf, 1977), 194.

77. Foreign Migratory Labor Act. I have used italics to draw attention to the official shift in emphasis to include “new” migrants.

78. Interview with Tiwara Lima; interview with Leya Limpfi; HCA, File RHB/1, Native Urban Housing, 1945–1979.

79. Serageldin et. al., *Manpower and International Labor Migration*.

80. Harare City Archives (HCA), File RHB/17/1, Illegal settlement: Squatters, vagrants and alien Africans 1949–79; Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*, 178; Wood, *The Welensky Papers*, 76.

81. Memo: Foreign Migratory Labor Act 1960; Blake, *A History of Rhodesia*; Wood, *The Welensky Papers*.

82. Selina Kumbanga, interview by author, Highfield. 19 September 2008; interview with Alice Gomeza.

83. Interview with Selina Kumbanga; interview with Alice Gomeza.

84. Interview with Twasume Chigwegwere, Rugare, 10 November, 2008

85. Interview with Jessie Maluwa.

86. Interview with Banda Estere, Rugare, 7 December 2008.

87. Interview with Angwaula Mlepa; Mary Kadamika, interview by author, Mufakose, Harare, 16 January 2009; Musatimute Kufansiyanji, interview by author,

Mbayani, Malawi, 21 May 2009; Mbombe Malaiki, interview by author, Rugare, Harare, 18 November 2008.

88. Interview with Angwaula Mlepa.

89. Interview with Luwina Jasi.

90. Interview with Angwaula Mlepa; interview with Mary Kadamika; interview with Musatimute Kufansiyajji; interview with Bendasi Arumenda.

91. Interview with Bendasi Arumenda; interview with Mbombe Malaiki.

92. Kachenzi Banda, a former *madhobhadhobha* and migrant worker, interview by author, Mbayani, Malawi, 21 May 2009. For scattered references to *madhobhadhobha*, see NAZ, File 482/22/42-48, The Migrant Workers Bill, 1947; The Migrant Workers Act, 1948. File 137/1934-52, ref 51G, Migrant labor in Southern Rhodesia.

93. Interview with Mbombe Maliki; interview with Tavhina Masongera; Nachi Milinyu, interview by author, Mpondabwino, Malawi, 17 August 2009; Enesia Zagwa, interview by author, Highfield, Harare, 9 October 2008; Eneresi Paliza, interview by author, Highfield, Harare, 18 October 2008.

94. Interview with Kachenzi Banda.

95. Interview with Luwina Jasi: interview with Mbombe Maliki; interview with Nachi Milinyu; Loda Dhaka, interview by author, Highfield, Harare, 11 September 2008.

96. Interview with Tavhina Masongera; interview with Nachi Milinyu; interview with Eneresi Paliza.

97. Mwaiwatu Mwale, interview by author, Mbare, Harare, August 18, 2008.

98. Interview with Mbombe Maliki; interview with Tavhina Masongera; interview with Nachi Milinyu; interview with Enesia Zagwa; interview with Eneresi Paliza.

99. Katesi Chirima, interview by author, Mufakose, Harare, 6 January 2009; interview with Mbombe Maliki; interview with Luwina Jasi; interview with Selina Kumbanga; interview with Alice Gomeza; interview with Twasume Chigwegwere.

100. HCA, File RHB/17/1, Illegal settlement: Squatters, vagrants and alien Africans 1949–79.

101. HCA, File RHB/17/1, Illegal settlement.

102. HCA, File RHB/17/1, Illegal settlement; C. Mangame, interview by author, Mbare, Harare, 21 August 2008; Royus Mapundu, interview by author, Mbare, Harare, 17 July 2008; Julia Marizani, interview by author, Mbayani, Malawi, 9 May 2009.

103. Interview with Tavhina Masongera; interview with Eneresi Paliza; interview with Nachi Milinyu; interview with Enesia Zagwa.

104. Interview with Tavhina Masongera.

105. Interview with Enesia Zagwa.

106. HCA, File RHB/238/15/49-77, Native Markets and Illegal Vending in Salisbury, 1949–1977; Reports. The colonial name for Harare was Salisbury, and that for Mbare, the oldest African location, was Harari.

107. Interview with Eneresi Paliza.

108. Interview with Mary Kadamika; Levison Sisamara, interview by author, Highfield, Harare, 30 October 2008; Brighton Mwechande, interview by author, Mufakose, Harare, 10 March 2009.

109. J. M. Bujra, "Women Entrepreneurs of Nairobi," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 9, 2 (1975): 213–234; P. Bonner, "Desirable or Undesirable Basotho Women?"

110. Interview with Mary Kadamika: interview with Musatimute Kufansiyanji.

111. Agnes Kunjika, interview by author, Mbayani, Malawi, 13 August 2009; Alice Mbalami Kutengo, interview by author, Highfield, 10 September 2008.

112. Harare City Archives (HCA), File RHB/17/1, Illegal settlement: Squatters, vagrants and alien Africans 1949–79.

113. *The African Weekly*, 1 September, 1963.

114. Interview with Angwaula Mlepa.

115. White, *The Comforts of Home*; Bonner, "Desirable or Undesirable Basotho Women?"; Coplan, "'You Have Left Me Wandering About'"; Ouedraogo, "The Girls of Nyovuuru."

116. Interview with Angwaula Mlepa; interview with Mbombe Maliki.

117. Interview with Alice Mbalami Kutengo.

118. Interview with Angwaula Mlepa. Different migrant women reiterated the same experiences.

119. Interview with Tavhina Masongera. See also Rhodesia Railways, Personnel File 180895/Soza Tembo, 27/07/1950 to 29/08/80; File 180038/John Linkson, 18 June 1952 to 30 July 1969.

120. NAZ, File S51/3-6, Evidence to the Urban African Affairs Commission, 1957.

121. Evidence to the Urban African Affairs Commission.

122. Interview with Alice Mbalami Kutengo.

123. Interview with Mbombe Maliki.

124. Interview with Angwaula Mlepa.

125. Interview with Luwina Jasi.