Title: Living on the Margins of a Global Economy, African Families, their Work and Livelihoods in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Introduction: African Livelihoods on the Margins of a Global Economy

In Zimbabwe like in other African countries, one does not need a weather person to know which way the winds of deprivation/material insecurity or political economy insecurities blow. Most African\(^1\) (black) families have lived and continue to experience *livelihood* insecurities characterized by unemployment, inadequate incomes, which in turn has pushed individuals and families into long-term cumulative poverty.\(^2\) These livelihood insecurities are produced by the same relations that produce wealth, which tend to concentrate capital to a few, develop repressive forces for the majority\(^3\) and foster dependency on multilateral loans, the release of which hinges on adherence to the commitment of capital accumulation of others.\(^4\) When these dispossessions are combined with a peculiar history of a racialized society and include in the equation a brutal and blatant authoritarian state that has over the years brewed the prevailing political turmoil—the consequence is livelihood disaster!\(^5\)

*Living on the Margins,* speaks to work, livelihoods and family life in one of Bulawayo’s African townships.\(^6\) The focus is on how families work and provision in the face of economic crisis, highlighting emerging patterns of family forms, evolving work and provisioning strategies regardless of the oppressive reality of the political economy. The emphasis is on the resiliency and strength of African families to devise *livelihood* strategies even in the face of adversity, showing how families are trying to transform their lives during a politico-economic crisis simultaneously showing how their efforts are sometimes successful but at other times frustrated. It is my conviction that all livelihood endeavors no matter how modest, how seemingly trivial or important should be approached as part of human agency--meaning people taking initiative about their own lives even as they face adversity. As such families are viewed as strategists--meaning active
agents who use resources to survive, sometimes achieving their goals and at other times just coping with the problems of everyday living. The claim is not that all families in Bulawayo’s townships have the family structures described here or the work and provisioning strategies presented here but rather the attempt here is to show the dynamics, contradictions, conflicts and co-operations inherent in individuals and families as collectives under difficult economic circumstances. Overall, this scholarship contributes to the growing narratives on families, their work and livelihood.7

Walk down from the city center of Bulawayo towards the west—leaving the nice wide avenues and the grid style lay out of the city of Bulawayo with its plush green lawned neighborhoods in the east--to the high density areas, locations, western areas whatever the name – rows of small houses, like beehives nestled together back to back. Individuals and families are toiling but without anything visible to show for it, these are the townships, a fixture of Bulawayo landscape.9 This is where three quarters of the city’s million people reside.9 The livelihoods of township residents occupy marginal spaces characterized by massive unemployment, precarious incomes, housing shortages, overcrowding, inadequate services, crime etc. The space that African families occupy is not a result of freedom of choice by individuals who perhaps lack motivation, but rather it is a space of material hardships embedded in the institutionalized inequalities of rights, statutes and power in the Zimbabwean society. In these African townships10 the material hardships have become routine, an everyday experience. Dozens and dozens of people in Bulawayo like everywhere else in Zimbabwe have experienced the slow, frightful death of poverty, where people are progressively sentenced to death by hunger, crime, unemployment, rising food prices and with AIDS related diseases topping it all off --ferociously eating people’s flesh away to the bone and only a few services remain in the midst of those dying except perhaps family members who are themselves stunned, as their hearts full of rancor watch the atrocious demise in their livelihoods. Who cares about the heart of Zimbabwe pulsating under a cocoon of poverty?

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The story of poverty among Africans in Zimbabwe (particularly in rural areas, commercial farming areas and mines) has been told several times (see Rakodi, 1994; Killick, Carlsson & Kiekegaard, 1997; Potts & Mutambirwa, 1997; Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare’s poverty assessment survey, 1998; Makoni, Kujinga & Hall, 2000, Rutherford, 2001; Bryceson, 2002). In urban areas several studies have been undertaken in Harare, showing the extent and conditions of people living in poverty for example, Brand, Mupedziswa and Gumbo’s (1993) study on women informal sector traders in Harare, Mashangala’s studies on poverty in Harare’s townships of Tafara and Dzivarasekwa, Andersson (2001) study on rural-urban connections and migration practices of Buhera workers in Harare, Deborah Potts (1995) urban unemployment and migrants again in Harare, Rakodi’s work in Gweru, Muzvidziwa has written several articles on women’s survival in Masvingo. However, in all these efforts voices of Bulawayo residents remain absent with the exception of recent articles rereading of Bulawayo’s history by Kaarsholm (1995, 1997).

Also, several reports have been produced by non-governmental organizations, by the government of Zimbabwe and these reports provide descriptions of the hardships and the extent of poverty, facing various communities in Zimbabwe where numerous families have had to live without food, with out reliable economic activities, let alone some financial means and opportunities to create work. These descriptions of hardships facing African families in Zimbabwe are a familiar narrative of African poverty in general. The heart-wrenching stories of poverty could be told anywhere else in Zimbabwe even on the African continent. However the unfamiliar narrative is both the discursive means and the political economic processes by which African livelihoods in urban townships have been historically marginalized. Most families in Zimbabwe have been working in the social, economic and political margins. We have to understand the conditions of families but even more we have to understand the dominant and specific forms of thought and power, which enmesh them on in the townships and in broader policy and administrative
structures. As indicated above, their economic, political and social conditions has been captured in a number of studies on poverty but little is know how families in the townships have been imagined in official discourses and how this affected both their material conditions and their daily activities and struggles.

Indeed most of the studies on poverty cited here do take into account the human face in poverty and they show without doubt how people are managing through adversity. However often missing and sometimes taken for granted is the historical, political economic processes that have intermingled with recent policies (e.g. structural adjustments, government policy on land invasions, Zimbabwe’s isolation from the international political economic activities) to further livelihood hardships at personal levels of individuals and families. Moreover there are few attempts to link the local experiences of these livelihood hardships to the global economy. Yet we all understand that the present livelihood hardship, although they are reflective of local contexts are also manifestations of socio economic inequality accelerated by processes of globalization (Boli & Lerchner, 2000).

Let us first consider how African livelihoods in Bulawayo’s townships have become missing in the narratives of social practices in Zimbabwe. This considers how families have been discussed by various official discourses to render these families, their work and provisioning invisible. Here I follow histories of marginality of African families in Zimbabwe following Marxian view that has well-informed us that what is happening today is yesterday’s narrative and it is likely to be the future. But then, Foucault urges us to attend how that history is thought and taught, to question how subjectivities and identities are inscribed into our understanding of particular domains and groups (Rutherford, 2001: 3 quoting Foucault 1983). In contextualizing histories of marginality in Zimbabwe, two issues are explored, first, the discursive authority about social practices of Africans in Zimbabwe and second, the historical processes that have sculptured socio economic formations in Zimbabwe.
Contextualizing Histories of Marginality in Zimbabwe and Its Socio-Economic Structure

In understanding social practices and livelihoods in general it is critical to clarify the discourses that have portrayed that society. Discourses are critical because they operate by setting the agenda, establishing the boundaries of legitimate debate and marking some statements and arguments as meaningful and as making sense... and others as not meaningful... indeed, part of their power comes from their being widely accepted. In fact, a discourse is always the product of a specific set of historical circumstances, and always operates in favor of certain interests and social groups. (Painter, 1995:23 quoted by Margareta Espling 1999:26). Considering the above statement, I believe that the marginalization of African experience particularly of Bulawayo and the surrounding areas of Matabeleland rests with the discursive authority about social practices in Zimbabwe.

Livelihood experiences of urban African families in Bulawayo has often been secreted away on several fronts, four which relate to the discursive means on social practices and are prominent themes in this book; the establishment of official ethno-histories of Zimbabwe through politics of nationalism, which are neglectful of livelihoods and that part of the country, politics of poverty which only see deficiencies in the African population therefore creating mental maps of needs and solutions of poverty by experts, discourses that dichotomizes Zimbabwean society and also purport relativists claims. The other critical piece relates to the peculiarities of a racialized society, which has used racial politics to create governable persons through coercion. The later will be attended to in the second part of the discussion. For this moment let us consider marginalizing discourses.

Marginalizing Discourses: Locating the Problematic within the Prevailing Conversations about Social Practices of Africans

For the most part, the situation of Zimbabwe as a nation-state has
acquired different overtones for different peoples connected to Zimbabwe. The proliferation of narratives on and about Zimbabwe today is as if each person intends to uncover their own piece of the murk. However, as we try to uncover one layer, we find others beneath. As such different groups respond differently to these uncoverings of Zimbabwe, which they had not previously attended to. As such there is no unitary speaker about the Zimbabwean situation. Each speaker, writer, scholar speaks to their own politics. For example, for the ‘extra ordinary’ Zimbabwean who has endured eternal sufferings (to use Bond’s words) their social practices and undertones about their motivations often speak to the day-to-day struggles—in their personal lives, the political, economic and social struggles as epitomized by the everyday motto *rambayi makashiga!* These are words of encouragement literally meaning soldier on. As such a critical question is what is a person soldiering on in Zimbabwe doing about their livelihoods?

For the Zimbabwean living abroad it is often relayed that their social practices and activism regarding the situation in Zimbabwe are motivated by their own experiences, some of these experiences are reflected in the out cries of *Zimbabweans Abroad*, “that African governments need to be kept in check. The minute you turn your back on them they have looted. By the time your attention is back they become very aggressive, they murder, torture and are intolerant. They will always shift blame to the colonial rulers—we tell them we are hungry and they convince us that we were better than yesterday!” For those others who are enthralled by the racial politics, the sentiments favor the status quo, and lament on ‘unfinished business’ in Zimbabwe again reflective of their own positions in the local and global economy.

The traveling tourist, academician and reporter have their own versions deriving from their own positions in the global economy-- often tracking someone else’s experience in their own images. As Sylvester (1995) points out that sometimes as a tourist, academician and reporter one poses as unthreatening, merely passing through, merely telling it as it is, this traveler is the western ‘subject’ dressed up for encounters with the ‘wildernessed native’. This according to Sylvester is a form of traveling that encourages arrogant perceptions of others.
as having only the interests the traveler assigns. Which then raises the critical question whether subalterns can speak from the position of anything other than homogenous western subject—centered otherness.\textsuperscript{13} The problematic with all these voices is that Zimbabweans both within and outside, non Zimbabweans concerned about the situation of Zimbabwe we have all come to jostle along, joining in each others’ games, laughing together, sometimes talking with scorn, other times making praises of unfinished businesses, learning the ruthless games of self interest, as we all usurp the bodies, struggles and experiences of Africans for our purposes, while the toothless, hungry, workless African seated beneath us in their only presentable attire, humbles themselves to our careless games.

The story does not end here for the “good old Africanist” has their own imaginings too about the Zimbabwe situation nurtured and cultivated by their positions in the global economy. However, theirs is indeed a critical voice because their ‘truths’ about Zimbabwe has so far reached far and wide—it remains cemented in the books and papers for the generations to come as Rutherford (2001) points out “that because of its power its assumptions are not easily shaken.” Of concern here is how its discursive authority has marginalized African families’ livelihoods in general as well as specifically the marginalization of African livelihoods in Bulawayo’s townships and the surrounding areas of Matabeleland. There are two fundamental issues that I will explore here one relates to the discourse on the politics of poverty, which I will touch on later, the other relates to the politics of nationalism.

**Marginalizing African Livelihoods Through Politics of Nationalism**

Today the state has been the most prominent feature in the global political economic system for a long time now that it has become easy to take its role for granted in most societies.\textsuperscript{14} In the rethinking of the idea of nation-state for Zimbabwe just before independence, *African Perspectives* (1976:109) White Minorities, Black Majorities, Gerold-Scheepers argued that in reading through publications covering the political, social and economic history of Zimbabwe, one
is struck by the fact that there were few publications, which dealt with *the place of Africans in society and their political aspirations*. Ranger (1962:334) quoted by Gerold- Scheepers (1976:109) argued further that this is due to the fact that western political concepts are applied, which have as their basis those publications which deal with what has been done to Africans and for Africans, but which are not well adapted to situations, in which *Africans themselves play a leading political role*.

Following these pronouncements, a prolific literature began to emerge about Zimbabwe whose focus has been on the activism of Africans in the political issues of Zimbabwe since 1890s. Notice now the absence of the place of Africans in society only the formalized political arena emerges as a space of importance. In this new literature concerned with politics of nationalism, historical materials were recast in new eyes looking at the *role of Africans in the politics of Zimbabwe in ways which Africans themselves play a leading political role*. Critical as this focus has been in understanding the formalized political history of Zimbabwe, the exclusive focus on the role of Africans in the nation state sidelined livelihood issues for the citizens who make up that nation state. To see this omission take a glance into Gerold Scheepers (1976) elaborate survey of publications addressing Africans themselves playing a political role. The survey identifies spectacular regimental system of the Ndebele society, which does not only overextend the mythology of their warrior ness but also rigidifies the myth of pioneers who created Zimbabwe fighting the horrendous battle-some persons. This image of warriors is juxtaposed with the strength of the union brought in by the Mwari cults largely of the Shona, which tends to overexploit the spirituality of Africans for its own ends--nationalism.

It is undeniable that the resistances by the Ndebele warriors and Shona spirit mediums are and were instrumental resistances to Zimbabwe’s independence, however, in the discussions of *big people and larger than life spirits* of this resistance, we are not told about heterogeneity of responses of individuals (women, men and children), their families, societies and livelihoods to the repressions of imperialism nor the dynamics among the Shona and Ndebele
during this time, in short how the majority of the people’s circumstances were changing. Further, this scholarship tends to be silent about the role of structural violence in form of killings, disposessions, exclusions in the presumed ‘main’ politics and society and how this experience highlights the power behind spiritual relationships and the politics.

The politics of big men and spectacular resistances assumes even a more prominence in the role in the economic struggles by trade unions, the voices of Burombo, Mzingeli, Nkomo are indeed major players in the politics of nationalism in Zimbabwe. Van Velsen (1964) according to Gerold-Scheepers (1976:115) “assesses that the stimulus for the development of trade unionism and political organization in Rhodesia came from South Africa and took root in Bulawayo” but what is not explored are the political, economic and social interactions of (small) Africans in this part of the country during this time. Instead what is emphasized is only big man politics, for example, the failures of Matabele National Home Movement, founded by Lobengula’s son Nyamande and the activities around the churches. Again, what emerges here is the symbolic placing of the African’s participation in Europeanized formalized political activities and not necessarily political and socio economic activities for the Africans by the Africans, which were by now criminalized by the establishment. Similarly, the voices of resistances in the mines and urban centers all were controlled by big men, the educated contrasted with uneducated, while the rural, the township dwellers were languaged as “plunged into passivity and perplexity, with their spasms of millenarian enthusiasm impossible to harness” (Ranger, 1970:140 quoted by Gerold–Scheepers, 1976:117).

In this regard, the chase on the politics of nationalism tended to confine scholarship into those areas following the leading political roles of Africans hence marginalizing the experiences of many people who have sought livelihoods in and around nation state politics. We are all aware that the activities of the nation state, involve, individuals, families, their environment, their social practices and the economic institutions therefore, the omissions of these multiple arenas tends to marginalize those who are left out. Moreover, the major survival strategies
adopted by Africans in their confrontation with the harsh realities of their condition, one of the more common is avoiding the state.\textsuperscript{16}

The other most common adaptation has been the use of spirit mediums in national politics. An entry of this scholarship into the politics of nationalism is seen in the analysis and interpretation of the struggle for independence by David Lan (1985) and post-independence struggles (Alexander, McGregor & Ranger, 2000),\textsuperscript{17} also, within the resistances and collaborations of “small” peoples with the state policies i.e. in rural development projects, the structural adjustment programs, commercial farmers etc. This scholarship on collaborations and resistances between the governors and the subjected has been critical and consistent in showing the dynamic interaction of people’s resistances and dualism of rival interpretations--by contrasting colonial state and African resistances, post independence state and resistances of local people--showing resistances between forms of “state invention” and of “imaginings” emerging from “civil society” and the resistances of local people (Kaarsholm, 1997:243).

However, what is at stake, politically, intellectually is the contemporary invocations of and exploitation of these imaginings and resistance connected to religion by various people in power including scholars. The pertinent question here is: what does invocation of resistances connected to spirit mediums do for communities situated at the margins of this rhetoric?\textsuperscript{18}

Although it is not the intention of \textit{Living on the Margins} to address this question fully, it is useful to reflect momentarily about the overemphasis on this politics of nationalism and its invocation of spirit mediums in and state politics and understand its marginalizing effects. First, by building the spirit mediums as the unifying piece for Zimbabwe this scholarship has enabled the exploitation of the spirit medium image by state, scholars et cetara to the detriment of articulating the economic, social, political struggles of Africans on a day-to-day basis. In my view this is where the problem of marginalizing African livelihoods is perpetuated in the discourses that select the spectacular struggles within the politics of nationalism. The focus on nation-state and the images of spirits has often separated the economic and social resistances and has therefore divorced
the nationalist cause from everyday experiences of Africans, to accentuate only the efforts of political leadership of Zimbabwe and the big people. While we all understand that the histories of African societies in Zimbabwe intermingle race-ethnicity, class, gender, regions, urban-rural, commercial areas, spirits et cetera, however, at least in my eyes the inclusion of spirit mediums in the politics of Zimbabwe speaks to a specific agenda setting, a setting of boundaries on debating livelihood issues without the people themselves.

Within this context of constituting an African nationalist, the unpacking of political, economic and social structures by Africans on a day- to- day basis is overlooked. Instead, spirits the imagined entities provide a powerful symbolic space through which supposedly pristine, pre-colonial African culture can be evoked to language the present. As such, the integration of spirit mediums into the politics of Zimbabwe has managed to officiate ethno histories of marginalization by centering only those struggles that are inspired by spirit mediums. In my view this scholarship derives its momentum from locking the African experience within a particular mindset deriving mainly from the neo-colonial experience and uneven relations, which grossly over play specific symbols as part of its agenda setting and maintenance of its position in the global economy. Yet we know that most African individuals, families in Zimbabwe have their own spirits but whose spirits become living, whose spirits become dead and most critical; whose spirits represent the nation state of Zimbabwe? So far the scholarship that links state politics to spirit mediums displays its greatest skill in applying history to the needs of ZANU-PF and its dispensation.

Moreover, by looking at resistances only through the eyes of spirits we refuse to see the present actors in the political economy of Zimbabwe, we refuse to identify them by names and therefore we even enable avoidance by current leaders owning to their responsibilities either negative or positive. Much more disconcerting in the current ethno-histories of Zimbabwe is often the failure to even acknowledge the vested interests of scholars in following this line of scholarship. While it is undeniable that the contemporary Africanist scholarship on “resistances and imaginings” has been critical in showing the interactive,
dynamism of local people, still the critical use of symbols presents Africans as passive except in the spaces of resistances assigned to them, in this case spaces seen as authentic and pristine African acted on by active men and women of letters who carry the debates and the urgent task of creating a national culture from outside or from their learned positions forgetting the aspirations of people who make Zimbabwe.

Also, in this nationalism politics the challenge for state building particularly in the process of constituting national identity has managed over the years to exploit superior spirits to create identities based on ethnic purity bringing the Spirit mediums of the Shona as important—(never mind that this is an imperially invented group itself), but this invented tribe begins to be seen as representing Zimbabwe, what happens to the spirits of other ethnic groups like the Ndau, Korekore, Kalanga, Tonga? On one had the discourses that have promoted spirit mediums as the politics of Africans outside the nation state has facilitated the ease in exploitation of images of superior spirits to legitimize their power --to realize this one does not need go far but observe the harnessing of Shona unity in inventing the Ndebele a group of multiethnic peoples as the enemy of the state and therefore the atrocities that were followed through.

Second, the invocation of spirits in politics of nationalism only plays on contestations of power but it is silent on the politics of patronage that accompanies this received nation-state image. Instead of locating the problematic within multiple forms of domination and the hierarchies in the global order of business, relations that bred various kinds of patronage relations and finding ways to curb it but instead we ignore the politics of patronage that breeds corruption. If we are to take the images outside the nation state we should be able to articulate the whole package not only those pieces that suit us. As such the politics that invoke resistances outside the nation state particularly the use of spirit politics has been a falsification of many people struggles with multiple systems of domination. The scholarship that invokes spirits downplays the critical piece that livelihoods of Africans are impacted by the politics of patronage both at local, international levels, which is exploiting the spirituality piece of Africans to
mask the privileged positions of a few.

Finally, through the images of spirits Africans are perceived to enter politics only as possessed persons (perhaps inner health—I don’t know) but not as people with aspirations who possess an outlook to the world. Oppositions can be maintained by this centralized power through violence because the spirits spoke! As such I believe this kind of scholarship acts as an avoiding to confront the level of deprivation experienced by African families, the worklessness, the hunger, so in our attempts to bring dignity we avoid this reality and focus instead on the pristine traditions maintained in this deprived conditions. One is left to wonder if this focus is only a façade to mask contextualizing the livelihood hardships of African families today within the privileges enjoyed by a few in the global economy, instead of imaginings and contestations why don’t we talk about the immediate problems affecting the majority of African families in Zimbabwe today—their livelihoods.

In my view, mobilizing a constituency of scholarship along the boundaries drawn in and for dominance tends to reinforce these boundaries and so continue to marginalize people who are supposedly being helped. Moreover, the making of these ethnohistories creates categories that make for continued ethnic separations in Zimbabwe making those not included in such ethnohistories easy targets for state policing as outlined by (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger 2000) I can conclude this argument by stating that the discourses on imaginings and resistances centering on the nation-state politics as perceived today in the Africanist literature present a “white, African elite centered project” discursively and symbolically mediated through the body and experiences of poor Africans. Therefore in its present form the poor African experience’s provides a symbolic space through which asymmetry power relations between Africans, Europeans and various other such categories articulate their interests and secure their positions in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

**Marginalizing African Livelihoods Through Politics of Poverty**

The second argument still addressing: how African livelihoods have been
secreted away relates to the politics of poverty in Zimbabwe. So far, there has been a heavy emphasis on documentation of the extent of poverty, the nature of poverty to the neglect of structural processes that have sculptured these hardships and the strengths of the families in building their own agencies. In general African societies have been studied to show their deficiencies and problems. This is by far the most traveled path, and commands the vast majority of financial and human resources from such agencies as World Bank, International Monetary Funds and international non-governmental organization as well as local ones.

The politics of poverty uses deficiencies in African livelihoods, not that problems of poverty don’t exist, but poverty politics captures poor people’s hardships to create mental maps to secure assistance from international agencies, non governmental agencies; so this scholarship tends to count numbers, the extent of the problem. As illustrated in the introductory paragraph of this book, when one talks about poverty problems in Zimbabwe a rush of images come forth and these images are often overwhelmingly negative, sickness, joblessness, hunger, crime, lawlessness etc. These are images of deprivation, which signify lack of necessities. According to McKnight (1998), in the politics of poverty these negative images are captured and conceived as a kind of mental ‘map’ for the area taken as conveying part of the truth about the actual conditions of a marginalized society. However, instead of being regarded as part of the truth, they are regarded as the whole truth about the area. Once accepted, as the whole truth about the poverty troubles, this deficiency map determines how the problems are to be addressed through reactive policies and programs. Public and private service systems, often supported by university research and funding foundations translate the programs into local activities that teach people the nature and extent of their problems. Considering, these mental maps, the work of individuals, their families and societies is often marginalized because their well-being depends upon these families becoming clients (Heilbroner, 1989).

Societies and individuals encased in this discourse also begin to see
themselves and their needs as only met by outsiders and sometimes by experts. McKnight (1998) argues that there is nothing natural or inevitable about the process that leads to the creation of Africans as a beggar. The issue here is the power that African individuals and families have to affect the pervasive nature of the mental maps created by this deficiency model, mainly because a number of Zimbabwe and global society’s most influential institutions have themselves developed a stake in maintaining this focus (McKnight, 1998). In Zimbabwe countless institutions and individuals exists whose efforts are always underway to capitalize on the needs of those people who are poor. As soon as people’s lives are cemented into this mental map --this map appears to be the only guide ever used by scholars, members of the mass media, whose appetite for the violent and the spectacular problematic narratives seems insatiable (McKnight, 1998). This politics of poverty combine with several other issues to create a wall that marginalizes African families and the effects have not only been marginalizing but also devastating (Moyo, 2001).

The most tragic is that the marginalized families often begin to accept these mental maps as their only guide to the reality of their lives. As their deprivation deepens, some of the scraps of this patronage are shared as a way of maintaining power. Moreover, this poverty politics also denies the basic community wisdom which regards problems as tightly intertwined, as symptoms in fact of the breakdown of a community’s own problem solving—revolving community, independence (McKnight, 1998). For a long time the acceptable image of Zimbabwe was a country of hardworking subsistent farmers working together with their government, following the right policies. The information on the good image of Zimbabwe can be gleaned in various pronouncements by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and donor agencies, the same agencies that endorse “goodness” until Zimbabwe began to trumpet a different tune in the late 1990s. Thereafter Zimbabwe was placed on a blacklist of bad payers, which meant that Zimbabwe could no longer be eligible for any World Bank loans. This stand meant that other international banks, donors, investors etcetera were more likely to shun the country resulting in worsening of economic
crisis in the local situation because of its budget’s dependency on loans.

Today Zimbabwe’s assets to overcome these obstacles are invariable the same to its deficiencies; they include the country’s political stability, orderly land reforms, macro economic stabilization, good governance in the form of adhering to democracy and free markets. All what this shows is how the politics of poverty is played on poor people’s lives. As such the mental maps of deficiency are critical to the experts and their agencies because these mental maps fit into the kinds of assistance that the World Bank, IMF and other aid agencies possess (Ferguson, 1990). The issue here is institutionalized inequalities in the global economy. Moreover, the reliance on the problems mental maps as the exclusive guide to resources gathering virtually ensures the inevitable deepening of the cycle of dependence and patronage systems. As the sole policy guide these mental maps of deficiencies ensure a maintenance and survival strategy targeted at isolated individual clients, not as plans than can involve the energies of an entire society (McKnight, 1998). Because the problems mental map and its strategies can guarantee only survival, and can never led to serious change, this orientation must be regarded as one of the major cause of the sense of hopelessness that pervades discussions about poverty in Zimbabwe. Therefore the relationships that count most for locals are no longer inside their society, rather the most important relationships involves the experts. In Zimbabwe these problems are part of the structural issues that correspond to real differences in power between individuals, families, societies and agencies involved in the Zimbabwe. These structural processes and relations are interwoven into the local fabric in ways that render livelihoods of African families marginal.

**Marginalizing African Livelihoods Through Dichotomized and Relativist Discourses**

The situation of African families is secreted away by those discourses that presume Zimbabwe to be relatively better endowed in infrastructure and faring better in terms of social indicators compared to other African societies (see
World Bank Reports; Rakodi, 1994). This relativists discourse is part of the making and remaking of official discourses about livelihoods of Africans in Zimbabwe, which has had the power to systematically influence popular conceptions of what constitutes African well being and/or what the established hierarchy should be. Under this ‘hierarchy of credibility’ the crisis facing African families is presumed relatively ‘better’ yet, hidden from this discourse are histories of structural violence ushered in by exclusion from the labor market and denial of various societal power resources, which over the years has led to various forms of marginalization. Its legacy pervades all areas of human activity in the economic, political, social, cultural, environmental space of African families in urban areas.

The dichotomizing discourses are not limited to relativism about Zimbabwe’s ‘development’ but extend to imagining of African livelihoods through a dualistic space, of urban and rural, with urban areas presumed to fair better than rural. Rutherford (2001) argues that this dualistic notion is extended to the identification of people residing in rural areas as ‘underdeveloped’ as illiterates, as peasants, as the masses, backward, passive, these are terms continuously used by government officials, by some of the urbanites who have arrived and presume themselves educated who continuously treat those not in their circles in a condescending and paternalistic manner and with this view those materially rich, the political powerful are always given priority over those not endowed in power, those people without jobs, those who have no regular economic activities and without privileges of an education. In Zimbabwe the lack of respect for those on the margins is epitomized in calling them ‘masses’. Such terms further marginalizes livelihoods of African by humiliating, speaking for them as if their own efforts are useless.

What Living on the Margins offers is a glimpse to the many experiences of families in Zimbabwe to help the reader fell their situation and see the assets that individuals and families have and don’t have to move their own lives. For listening to many voices dissipates the dominance of a single voice. To build context to the experiences of African families in urban townships, I contextualize
their livelihoods within the peculiarities of the historical politico-economy of Zimbabwe and the historical context that these families have lived to understand changes in family organization, economic behavior and survival strategies of individual members and their families. Moving from a brief survey of the historical era stretching from 1890s to the present, *Living on the Margins* seeks to show the connections that an understanding of today and future social practices of families hinges on learning from their yesterday experiences. It is also important to note that this book does not pose as a historical context nor as a global processes theory rather an attempt is made to contextualize livelihood experiences of individuals, families and societies in contemporary times.

**Histories of Marginality in Zimbabwe and its Socio-Economic Formations**

African families, their work and livelihoods have also been secreted away by peculiar histories of marginalization in Zimbabwe. A full discussion of the historical processes that have sculptured socio economic formations in Zimbabwe extends beyond the scope of this paper. However, the historical processes that have influenced African families’ work and provisioning are important to the current place these families' livelihood command in the global economy. I have summarized these ideas into three conversational areas: (1) the peculiarities of Zimbabwe as a racialized society under the hegemony of the colonial state; (2) the peculiarities of Zimbabwe negotiating the liberal order under socialist rhetoric at post independence; (3) the peculiarities of Zimbabwe negotiating its place under neo-liberalism and globalizing economy where global lenders those who are charged with executing liberal projects dictate socio-economic structures that increase livelihood insecurities.

**The Peculiarities of Zimbabwe as a Racialized Society**

For the most part African families, their work and well-being occurs within
a context of a racialized society. A racialized society does not necessarily mean bodily differences which many of us have come to know and celebrate under such concepts as multiculturalism and diversity which derive their meanings from a reaction to racial bigotry and prejudice but rather racialization defines the emergence of racism as a tool to exclude. This became embedded in the social practices and institutions throughout the Zimbabwean society for at least 100 years of colonial rule until Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980. This was state sponsored racism—the overarching ideology was racial supremacy, where what is white was the urban, educated, modern, developed while that which was African was underdeveloped, rural, illiterate. Through this ideology, most Africans were considered backward, ignorant and passive and were often treated in a condescending, paternalistic manner and as such were marginalized. The lifestyles of Africans, their culture if not distorted were considered inferior and given no recognition or space.

The principles of this racialization was to treat Africans as a ‘subject race’, not because of racial prejudice, as some would have us believe, but rather, the treatment of Africans as subject race was going to be economically profitable to create ‘socialism for white people’ in Zimbabwe with the economic oppression and exploitation of the African population. As a “subject population” a barrage of laws and regulations were designed and utilized by the settler regime to achieve its objectives, basically to ensure that Africans continued to be suppliers of cheap (Sylvester, 1993). The range of policies and laws such as land acts, which has deprived individual private property holdings to this day, influx controls, physical and political coercion of Africans to labor, legislative discrimination, segregated residence, controlled movement particularly of Africa males through the pass laws and control of African women as minors for life (Barnes, 1992), later suppression of terrorism, state of emergency were all policies used to limit the political and economic participation of Africans. Simultaneously, educational, agricultural, taxation, land and wage policies were all instituted to ensure that Africans did not develop independent markets, and to ensure that they participated in the formal economy in the manner that
complemented settler interests (see Gaidzanwa, 1990; Sylvester, 1993; Ndoro, 1996). Religious proselytization altered the symbolic meanings of religion and African family life. Also, social science scholarship blinded by theoretical presuppositions patterned by dominant ideologies that sought a total restructuring of the presumed underdeveloped (Escobar, 1995:4) reconstructed, African families, their work and livelihood experiences accordingly.

As such, the Zimbabwean political economy became incorporated into the global economic system on the margins through colonial capitalism. Several theories of underdevelopment have shown how colonialism and neocolonialism led to the underdevelopment of Africa. (See Ake, 1987; Amin 1999). There is no need for elaboration here but a brief commentary is in order. Through colonization by European nations (notably by Britain) Zimbabwe was brought into the global economic system. As a colony, Zimbabwe became a reservoir from which surplus was drawn in the form of mineral resources and cheap labor, since as laborers Africans were supposed to love the work but not the pay. In this process local institutions were destroyed and/or incorporated as inferior (Ndoro, 1996). At the same time, that this was happening the resistances of individuals and African collectives were subsumed into the idioms of the time (for example, the continued teaching of culture the presumed African culture by the city councils to control African youth).

Under colonialism several new institutions were set up, mainly for moving goods to and from the colonies--these included colonial trading companies, banks, shipping companies etc. Of crucial importance for the success of these economic operations was the existence of a conducive political climate. This was made possible by the colonial administration and its military and policing machinery. Not only did these institutions guarantee optimum conditions under which private companies could exploit African resources, they also imposed a system of taxation whereby the colonial administrative structure could be maintained (Ndoro, 1996). As such the Zimbabwe economy like other African economies functioned essentially to develop countries outside of African and to make profits for people who belong primarily to the Caucasian race. Further,
civic institutions and lobby institutions that were set up maintained these privileges for example, the Farmers Union, Miners Union.

The growth and processes of colonial capitalists mode of production and the concomitant value orientations resulted in the reinforcement of patriarchal, racialized systems in which African labor had to do what it can to survive (Gaidzanwa, 1996). Through this command a hierarchy developed in the labor processes, which led to different values being placed not only on male and female labor but also on Black and White labor. With wage labor the individual rather than the family became the center of production. Initially, the market’s demand for wage labor was primarily for male labor, as such, male labor was given an exchange value over female labor which was given only use value—but the story did not end here, African labor was devalued. The labor shortages for family production, resulting from the demands of male wage labor, and new skills led to the migration of men, and were remedied by women (Gaidzanwa, 1996). This led to the feminization of the labor force in self-employment, doing this and that to survive. In this final analysis the use value of female labor is a necessary concomitant of capital development, since it subsidized male labor, increased profits for owners of the means of production and contributed to greater capital accumulation and marginalization of Africans. Moreover, in an environment where entry into secondary and tertiary education is the result of color and influence rather than knowledge and perseverance, in an environment where the best jobs were allocated on the basis not of competency but the color, gender, ethnicity and connections African people began to lose faith in the presented system.

Another factor that contributed to marginality of African families is the existence and systematic enforcement of a multitude of limitations on people’s mobility. Through influx control, pass laws, zoning regulations, restrictive labor practices, police harassment, the state was always present in the life of Africans who sought to produce or sell a product. These policies often sought to discourage people from doing so (see Barnes, 1992; Schmidt, 1995). Also, during this time internal and international migration was made all but impossible.
through deliberate government policies so that the African population had to devise their own ways of tackling this system again on the margins. Moreover, residence permits were a requirement for any stay anywhere, but also travel permits were needed to move too. As such freedom to move and residence was restricted for Africans.

In some arguments the justification for these policies was to combat urban poverty and slums goals that for the most part were accomplished because the urban centers were never planned for the whole populations. However, after independence with the eradication of these policies we begin to see massive movements resulting in the strain in social services only designed for a few. These processes have negative repercussions on the Zimbabwean families today. Restrictions on movement and on urbanization have impeded the development of market centers essential to sustain a market economy (Ndoro, 1996). This has increased poverty by limiting options for most of the African population and greatly reduced their consumer potential. Moreover, the opportunities for education, health care and small enterprise and commerce and even social mobility were highest in urban areas, as such these policies contributed to the marginalization of the African population from the white/settler economy (Mhone, 1996). Moreover, in terms of the production system, these processes also led to the decline of indigenous systems of production with serious consequences in capital accumulation and asset accumulation (Mhone, 1995; Bond 1998). The use of best lands for cash crop production and the deliberate down grading of produce by Africans so as not to compete with white commercial production destroyed the production by and for local communities (Ndoro, 1996). Other manifestations of these processes of economic marginalization can be seen the in study of internal marketing systems in urban areas and the precariousness of such marketing activities when dominated by powerful world economic forces (see discussion by Ndoro, 1996). The precarious nature of the internal marketing is a feature of underdevelopment, which undermines local efforts and local needs.

The whole politico economy of colonial Zimbabwe reflects uneven
development (Bond, 1998) and marginalization of African livelihoods. An unequal economic system inevitably developed which favored the few rich and well endowed over the poor additionally the dichotomization of spaces into rural and urban, into informal and formalized sectors. The vestiges of this politico-economy have given way towards capital-intensive rather than labor-intensive industrialization, which over the years has rendered African labor cheap but also obsolete because of new technologies to substitute labor and raw materials. Those who are unemployed move from places of deprivation to where capital is concentrated and pick up the dead end jobs. The aftermath of colonial administration was political independence, but economic dependence continues in full force today lining both men and women in dependency relationships--unequal relationships to the main European and American metropolitan cities of central capital.

Serious problems of inequality occurred with colonial capitalism--these are the facts of the situation of Africans. Some would argue this is a futile pursuit, but these historical processes, which integrated Zimbabwe into the world economic system on the margins. The unequal relations to production which developed were manifest not only in sexual division of labor which typical but a racialized politico economy. With the embeddedness of exclusion by race within the functioning of Zimbabwean society at this time, the picture that emerges from these processes is convoluted depending on individuals, families and societies positions within this system. As such several dimensions define experience of marginality, for example, one’s social standing, regional, racial, ethnic, age, and gender and in this book we will feel the experiences of individuals and families in these multi dimensional forms of marginality. Again, the rise in the massive inequalities in all areas of social life in Zimbabwe is not so much from differences in natural resources endowments or individual motivations, individual dynamism but the social-political system based on multiple exclusions which have cemented marginality.

*The Peculiarities of Zimbabwe Negotiating the Liberal Order under*
Socialist Rhetoric

At independence, in 1980, radical policies were made by the new African government to counter the effects of colonialism in most areas of social life, in education, health; housing and blatant racism became intolerable (See Bond, 1999). Since, it was clear that colonial capitalism had not served the majority of the people well, considering all the socio-economic imbalances during the colonial period. For the new government, the way forward could not be sought directly within the capitalist/free market, and, so began the new government’s posturing about socialist ideals (Raftopoulos, 1992:67). However, hidden in this socialist rhetoric was the ruling ZANU-PF’ reliance on coercion to governable persons. Individuals, societies, regions that had any political oppositions were treated with an iron fist and even went on to attack opponents even when such a policy was not necessary for example, the ruling party’s atrocities in Matebeleland in the 1980s. This policy relied on invocations of the elite spirits of Zimbabwe to legitimize authority of ZANU-PF and to demonize the Ndebele society as the evil. This stand was aided by the South African policies and efforts to destabilize Zimbabwe at this time (Stiff, 2002).

All these tendencies began to feature in Zimbabwe’s social practices and development plans.²⁸ For example, at the same time that the Zimbabwean government was publicly posturing socialist ideals, settler capitalism and social fabric remained supreme (Bond, 1999). When the instabilities were going on in Matebeleland the white population had largely resigned itself from the politics of Zimbabwe, preferring to continue to live as ‘tourists’ as Chenjerai Hove once said, watching from afar in their comforts. It is within this muddle that most of Zimbabwe’s troubles and failures lie (see Raftopoulos, 1992; Bond, 1999).

For example, following independence, the Zimbabwean economy became big on redistribution but not necessarily on wealth creation. Because of this, Zimbabwe is an example of the “crisis of enclave socialist capitalism”, characterized by rapid growth in expenditures, more than the means of financing. In particular, wage employment in the public sector continued to grow throughout the 1980s(Rakodi, 1994:656). At the same time that a black government was
established, white capitalists also started deinvesting from Zimbabwe moving to those economies that they felt protected. Therefore, as workers demanded improvements in wages and social benefits, the state also demanded that capital (from the profits of private sector) pay but instead it was easier for capital to fold and move to away. Since livelihoods of most families were increasingly revolving around wage employment deinvestment from Zimbabwe had profound impact on family’s work and provisioning. It is important to note here that farm workers strikes intensified in Mashonaland between 1997 and 1998 and the government deployed the army to stop the protests. However by year 2000 onwards the same workers who had suffered from poor wages were now in collaboration with reemerging white political activism, which was now surfacing because its interests were threatened.

Wage employment particularly in the private sector failed to keep pace with human capital investment (Zimbabwe, 1991). With the exist of the few foreign businesses and aid from the international organizations that serve to pave way for foreign investment, the burden of creation of revenues was transferred to workers in the form of heavy taxes. When taxes were causing public outcry, the government would resort to deficit financing (as described by Mamdani 1994:129) printing more worthless money to hide the real sources of oncoming poverty. Thereafter, the standard of living that had picked up at independence rapidly declined, low wages, high unemployment, rapid currency devaluation, high inflation all precipitated insecure livelihoods (Bond, 1999). Massive unemployment gave way to ‘a little of this and that’. Also, increasingly those with fixed incomes began to peddle with traders for various commodities.

Moreover, the use of socialist ideals in the public arena particularly the fronting for state controlled capitalism meant economic opportunities were doled to specific ethnic and class cronies of the ruling party. Similarly, in terms of production of goods and services ordinary people were controlled from effectively participating in the economy as individuals at this time since “economic growth and progress” was largely articulated through the cooperatives and development projects—Zimbabwe became “a country of projects” as one
local columnist commented. This and the ruling party sponsored atrocities in the western part of Zimbabwe deepened exclusion for most minority populations. Thus, as the new government began to use its political muscle to control the political economy under the umbrella of socialism, families in and around Bulawayo were negotiating their livelihoods out of the narrow opportunities presenting themselves within the rhetoric of ‘socialism’ in production cooperatives as individuals were not permitted and/or encouraged to be entrepreneurs, with the newly excluded mostly seeing the from Zimbabwe option—as migrants, political and ‘economic refugees’.

The Peculiarities of Reordering of Zimbabwe under Neoliberalism

By the 1990s, the euphoria of independence and its socialist rhetoric had long disappeared from the Zimbabwean political scene and the ZANU-PF led government and its party loyalists had entrenched themselves as exclusive conductors of state politics and public policies along the lines carved by the colonial government now for the few in the ZANU-PF circle. On the global scene, the new fervor on globalization ‘democracy and freemarkets’ had taken its grip. New restructuring packages were designed and implemented for African economies (Cheru, 1996).

In Zimbabwe, the changes that followed structural adjustment policies crippled the already ailing economy. Liberalization increased global competition to an economy that was largely small and protected. Private companies (largely foreign owned) found Zimbabwe not profitable. What followed in the 1990s was massive deindustrialization of most manufacturing industries in Zimbabwe (Sachikonye, 1999). Bulawayo, like other cities in Zimbabwe lost its industrial base, which had acted to provide skilled, semi skilled and unskilled employment to the population in the western part of the country. The nation and city public services lost its tax base. Fee for service was reintroduced in education, health care and other essential goods and services that had been previously subsidized.
The failure of the economy to provide adequate means of material sustenance for the majority of the people in Zimbabwe revealed itself dramatically over the late 1990s to the present. Bond (1999: 2) points out that by 1995 at least one third of Zimbabwe's twelve million people were unable to afford basic food basket (60 percent of average household expenditure), shelter (another 25 percent), minimal clothing, education, health care and transport. Because of the problems of social decline, the country erupted into social turmoil. Thus, the ZANU-PF led government was quickly caught in a dilemma whether to continue supporting adjustment policies and claims of lending institutions, in particularly, the need to control its spending on the domestic population, the pressure to create a good environment for foreign capital by depressing local wages, by proving tax breaks for foreign companies, discouraging labor organization, deinstitutionalizing minimum wages that were never sufficient to hoist most workers out of poverty and/or to meet the demands of disgruntled citizens. Again, government policy continued to fleece its own poor citizens through deficit financing and devaluations. But as Mamdani (1994) points out devaluation is not only an external adjustment but internal adjustment too, most of the devaluations hit the few people with fixed incomes, as devaluation was not accompanied by corresponding increase in these incomes. Pressure mounted for the government as livelihoods of the majority of the population began to suffer.

Instead, the government chose to meet demands of certain groups that could hurt it most—the ex-combatants. The ZANU-PF led government silenced nearly 50,000 liberation war veterans who challenged its legitimacy by granting them Z$50,000 each (US$2,800 at the time), plus a pension of Z$2,000 per month (Bond, 1999:9). However, this payout had to be recovered somehow, massive tax hikes were instituted initially as income tax, then followed by fuel tax increases and general sales taxes. These actions and government's involvement in the Congo fueled further social turmoil. The visible fleecing of the poor by the ruling party turned the country into turmoil. To curb the upheavals, the government decided to resuscitate the land ‘maldistribution’ issue as a way to
appease the public. Under the Land Designation Act, of 1993 1500 mainly white-owned farms were identified for redistribution. However, the ambitious land designation exercise did not come to any fruition, for the World Bank, the IMF, the British government and other groups sided with white farmers and effectively vetoed any forced sales in early 1998.34 By late 1999 into year 2000, the ZANU-PF was forcefully taking over these farms, an act that was met with sanctions from the international ‘community’. In any case, recipients of these farms were wealthy politicians and their cronies.35 Such responses led to ordinary people also staking out their own claims on the land, the only available resource. Both commercial and subsistence agriculture suffered and the related industries crumpled. But this time around a new enemy of the state had surfaced this time around it was white farmers. Whites entered politics when they realized that the ZANU-PF’s referendum had serious implications on the land and began to use the numbers of farm workers to challenge the government. Their reemergence into the political arena at a time when ZANU-PF was in trouble was interpreted as a way to keep land privileges – the old tactics of inventing ‘weakest link’ in Zimbabwean society for demonization as the enemy resurfaced again.

The collapse of the economy, the actions of ZANU-PF led government deepened massive social and political upheavals (described by Bond, 1999 as Zimbabwe’s Reawakening). Those individuals and families connected to the ruling party prospered enormously from the upheavals of economic restructuring. Public companies were privately transferred to individuals as private properties and capital siphoned from the same businesses followed by bankruptcy. The few businesses that remained responded to economic decline by demanding that their foreign currencies remain outside of Zimbabwe while at home these businesses engaged in cost cutting practices that hurt the ordinary workers for example, used part time labor thus informalizing the formal economy (Meagher, 1995). For a population that has come to depend on money to survive, the extreme economic hardships forced more people to become economic refugees. After Zimbabwe was blacklisted by western institutions in the late 1990s; the ruling party began to turn towards Libya for assistance particularly with fuel. But
the continued struggles for livelihoods did not abate people began to queue for virtual all necessities and the political violence pushed more and more people outside of Zimbabwe. With massive social protests, ZANU-PF continues to hold on the image of the nation-state, the power that comes with it and the land but people continue to seek their livelihoods through various means, by avoiding the state, collaborating with the state, with various agencies and structures in the global economy but these are all livelihoods on the margins. At least in Zimbabwe, the changes described here define how families have become insecure let us now consider what this insecurity means in everyday life experiences by exploring a couple of vignettes from the families in Bulawayo’s townships.

Living on the Edge: A Glimpse to Urban African Families on the Margins

Vignette 1- MaMpofu and Nkosi

The first time that I met Nkosi my eyes fell to his bandaged leg. Nkosi did not explain what had happened to him but his wife MaMpofu explained that Nkosi was recovering from bullet wounds gotten from the war in the DRC. Nkosi was a soldier with the Zimbabwean Republic Army and had been posted to the DRC. He remained aloof with his situation because according to his wife’s comments soldiers were not supposed to share anything with the public but MaMpofu was surely boiling from the whole DRC situation. She took a big swiff of her snuff and after a few seconds of sneezes she explained that she was sick with ‘spirits’!

As if the snuff had liberated her tongue, she complained that the government does not want ‘us’/general public to know that it is in a war. Several men were dying and each day there are body bags coming here. During the time of these interviews (1999-2000) there were few public reports about the extent of Zimbabwe’s involvement in this war. Many of the men who are dying are from this side of the country (they are the ones who are denied opportunities for advancement, they are the ones that are sent to die! In the confrontation that Nkosi got wounded there were 80 Zimbabwe deaths and more than hundreds of the enemy who died. MaMpofu also had another brother in law still
deployed to the DRC, who had indicated to them that the situation those days was a little better because they can go about and talk with people, buy whatever they can buy, she displayed some of her gifts from her husband and brother in law acquired from the Congo—expensive watches. MaMpotu explained about the trading that went on in this war but I wondered about the looting that was going on with this war.

MaMpotu spoke at length about her family and their livelihoods, which were fluid and ever changing. She was born in 1966 and was married by age 20 and they now had two girl children who were fostered with a sister who was a nurse and living in West Nicholson in a government house. MaMpotu’s sister had agreed to foster her sister’s children because of her sisters’ precarious living situation. The sister feared that the constant moving would interfere with children’s schooling. MaMpotu and Nkosi were lodgers—renting small two-roomed house. MaMpotu explained that they had moved from a bigger three-roomed house because the person whom they were renting from was a civil servant and had been reposted back to Bulawayo from Gwanda. Her girls came to visit her during the holidays and sometimes she does send groceries with them but her sister believed that MaMpotu gave her a different life by paying her school fees a domestic workers wages. The sister had always been grateful and was willing to reciprocate. But MaMpotu explained that she was going to take her girls back as soon as she moved to her own house.

She and her husband Nkosi were taking care of a late brother’s child Welcome, who was in grade five attending the local primary school. MaMpotu explained that her brother had passed away and her nephew was living with his mother and other relatives in her rural home in Mberengwa. The boy’s mother was herself struggling without any means of supporting herself so she decided to raise the child herself perhaps offer him an education.

MaMpotu grew up in difficult circumstances in her rural home in Mberengwa, their father died when she was very young. MaMpotu’s mother was from Tembisa in Jo’burg. She had met their father when he was working there. MaMpotu’s mother had worked as a domestic worker most of her life but after they married she came to settle in Zimbabwe and built her rural home in Mberengwa. However, when her father died when MaMpotu was about five years old, her mother returned to her home in South Africa leaving the three siblings with paternal relatives. MaMpotu explained that life was tough in this rural home. She was not able to attend school. When she was in first grade her school was closed down during the liberation struggle. She explained that their school was closed down by (Pasi) the nickname of ZANLA military forces who used to congregate people into their all night PUNGWEs, activities presumed to indoctrinate ‘socialist ideology’ but was mostly singing, beatings. She further describes how the villagers detested these PUNGWEs because small children were forced into sexual relations and described the beatings they endured from the Rhodesian army because they were presumed to be harboring ‘terrorists’. After independence, MaMpotu was unable to return to school because she had to work as a domestic work to help herself and her siblings.

She moved into the city and married Nkosi who was once a soldier with the Rhodesian army and was incorporated into the Zimbabwean army at independence. However, Nkosi was not eligible for the Z$ 50 000 gratuities which were given to ex-combatants in the late 1990s because he had fought on the wrong side of the struggle. The two had multiple sources of income, one was the fixed income of Nkosi’s army salary and MaMpotu commented that the salary only managed to pay their month’s rent and groceries for two weeks. Because of the inadequacy of her husband’s wages MaMpotu had had own livelihood activities she used to travel twice a week to Binga to
buy fish to sell in Bulawayo. Sometimes her husband and nephew move around the lanes helping her to make her sell. The fish selling business was good for her and she had managed to save a substantial amount and diversified her work into cash loaning scheme—lending $100 and charging 40 to 50% interest. She described her own sanctions for dealing with bad creditors, one example was to claim that the money belonged to a collective and usually borrowers would be pressured if they heard that the money belonged to more people. MaMpofu explained further that she sometimes goes to Tembisa Jo’burg to visit her mother. She was quick to say that these were not just visits but each time she was selling something in South Africa and returning with items to sell in Zimbabwe. But at the time of the interviews she had not been able to make her trips because of the visa problems—the demands placed on visiting visas.

Vignette 2

Mwale is a 13-year-old boy who grew up on a commercial farm in Somabhula about 100 kilometers from Bulawayo. He is the oldest of four children. Originally, Mwale’s family had come from Malawi in the federation of then Rhodesia(s) and Nyasaland to work in the asbestos mines in Zvishabane. With the business decline in these mines, the Mwale’s father lost his job, his house and their general livelihoods. Mwale’s family had to move into a commercial farm where they continue to live as squatters, without any tenure to the land they inhabit.

Mwale’s father and mother were farm workers for a commercial livestock ranch and small-scale vegetable production. Mwale’s father and mother lived as ‘squatters’ on this farm, they could not create a permanent structure on the farm, their home was reported to be a little make shift hut. Their farm wages are very little. Before the troubles, it was reported that Mwale’s father and mother were only paid in alcohol for their work on the farm, which forced Mwale and his siblings to find food on their own. Sometimes the children survived by pilfering whatever they can lay their hands on. At other times Mwale’s family was paid in rations and would get meager food and sometimes clothing from the local store owned by the white farmer (at least during the time of the interviews it was reported as such). Mwale’s family was forever, debt from friends and neighbors, in debt at the white men store and this indebtedness meant that they could not leave the farm because of the money they owed in the white owned store.

Mwale used to work alongside his mother and father on the farm before he moved to the city to live with his grandmother in Khanyile township in Bulawayo. Even though Mwale’s days at the farm were miserable, his life has not changed much for him at his grandmother’s place. Mwale attends school erratically because his grandmother cannot afford to pay the fees. Because of the late payment of fees, Mwale is not receiving his school progress reports so his grandmother had no idea about his grandson’s progress in school. Hardships keep his grandmother from addressing Mwale’s school problems. Often times Mwale skips school to work on the streets—hustling, selling cigarettes in the beer garden, and sometimes as a ‘tote’ for the emergency taxis. Sometimes he returns to his grandmother’s home with money, food, or whatever he has found. When the rains are good, Mwale and the other children in his grandmother’s house cultivate the city’s open lands to supplement their erratic food sources. However, Mwale does not do much of the routine domestic chores because there are several ‘girl’ cousins in his grandmother’s house. They are responsible for those chores.
Vignette 3

Sihle is a ten-year girl who used to live in rural areas (euphemistical term for reserves or segregated spaces created for Africans to reside) in her mothers’ natal homestead. Sihle’s family had come from some place else, her great grandmother’s family had been removed from Fort Rexon and relocated during the 1950s to make way for the white settlement. When I met Sihle she had recently moved to Bulawayo to help her aunt (younger mother- mama omncane) who was chronically ill.

Before Sihle came to the township her ordinary days in her rural home began with collection of water a ‘communal’ borehole two miles away— and the water level at this borehole was so low that they had to pump for hours to fill their 20 liter buckets with water. She would return home with a water bucket on her head then prepare to go to school. Morning breakfast is often leftover ‘isitshwala’ –stiff meal-mealie porridge and carries her lunch, which is boiled maize/corn. Thereafter, Sihle would leave for school, which is another two miles away from her home. If her day did not begin with water collection, which they often did the previous night during ploughing season; at the crack of dawn she would help span the cattle and led the way to the fields to plough (at least two furrows) before the child leaves for a school two miles away. As she related Sihle expressed that she often arrived in school tired but was expected to be attentive and build her knowledge and skills to become part of a cohort of young learners competing in the fabled globalizing world ladder of opportunity.

During the children’s break time, Sihle and her school mates were supposed to carry water back and forth for teaching staff or for the school garden project and the borehole is another mile away. After school, Sihle would walk back home the two miles. At home she had to help around the home, fetching firewood, pounding maize for food, cooking before doing her homework. This is Sihle’s life in her rural home. But when I met Sihle, she had recently moved to the city and was living in a two-room house in one of Bulawayo’s townships. Her life in town has changed somewhat; she still helps around the house and her day begins more or less the same way it did in her rural home. She cleans the house before leaving for school but at least her aunt’s house has tap water in the house (except Sihle’s younger mother has lately been unable to pay her water bill and they have often had to go without water and borrowed water from their neighbors). Sihle’s school is less than a kilometer away. In her township school she doesn’t have to carry water on her head but she has to help her sick aunt who still makes mats for sell for an income. After school there are still routine domestic chores and Sihle goes up and down the lanes selling her auntie’s handicrafts. She returns home to help prepare supper and with rampant food shortages sometimes Sihle has to spend hours after school looking for food for that day, standing on the lines virtually for everything. Sihle used to return to her rural home on school vacations but nowadays with transport problems, her aunt has not managed the transport fare so for now Sihle is cut off from her family and her rural home. The aunt reported that their family in rural areas was also counting on them in town to bring other necessities (soap, sugar, cooking oil, maize seeds etc.) but all that is gone now—we are just surviving.
Vignette 4

Sipho was a 14-year-old girl in secondary school was living with an aunt with three other small children in the home. Sipho’s aunt ran a shebeen (beer selling in the home) as a major source of income. Sipho’s aunt had been married before; she had married a man who used to be a freedom fighter. They had managed to secure money to extend/remodel their house through his demobilization money but now all that was gone and he had no stable job. He had tried self-employment with the taxis then moved to find employment in South Africa and never returned living Sipho’s aunt to raise the children.

Sipho’s mother had died and had left Sipho with her grandmother who was not able to material manage raising Sipho because there were several other children living with grandmother. So, Sipho’s aunt had taken Sipho to her custody. In this case, Sipho’s aunt related Sipho’s story because Sipho was dead.

Sipho like many other high scholars had given up on school because of shattered dreams and expectations—Sipho was forced to leave home and attempt to seek employment in South Africa. Sipho’s aunt was tearfully protesting the present situation in Zimbabwe—the hardships, but most critical to her was the fact that as parents they worked hard to support their children through school on meager incomes; scraping here and there for children to go to school. Children too were pressured to work hard in school only to be rewarded with no jobs and with hardly any feasible prospects of creating work for their children, parents have to watch their children waste away—being subjected to sitting and waiting. If one is lucky to get a job—the wages are so low that they cannot meet basic necessities for a single person let alone a family.

With increased emigration and the lure of harder currencies, Sipho and her friends decided to travel to ‘Egoli’ Johannesburg to try their luck working there. As travel money, Sipho secretly diverted her aunt’s utilities money. Sipho had been entrusted to pay bills on her way from or to school at the housing office. At the end of each month her aunt would give Sipho the money to pay the bills—but Sipho was secretly putting this money away. Often times Sipho was left in charge of the house because her aunts’ “multiple work activities” often took her away of the home—and Sipho remained responsible for the house and younger children. For three consecutive months’ Sipho secretly saved the ‘utilities money’ for her journey to South Africa. Their scheme came to fruition quicker because one of her friends managed to pilfer a substantial amount of money from his family. Sipho and her friends paid for their ride to Beitbridge and managed to negotiate their way through the network of people who smuggle people into South Africa. However, after crossing over to SA they were unable to pay their way to Jo’burg and therefore negotiated further with a driver who later placed Sipho as a domestic work job in SA to complete the payment of her transportation—never mind that these were 14 year olds children.

Sipho had to pay back her transportation in several substantial installments for sometime. And she had managed to write her aunt informing her where she was. Her aunt had forgiven her for stealing and disappearing—what could I do—the aunt kept saying to herself. In Jo’burg Sipho constantly lived in fear of the brutalities of SA police and public insults and harassments as a foreigner. She rarely left her domestic work place as a result worked long days and often times had to bear emotional abuse by her employer at the same time she could not leave because she did not have the right papers—where could she go? On one of those rare occasions that she visited her relatives in a crime infested part of Johannesburg, Sipho was caught in gun crossfire and died, only to return home to her aunt as a corpse and face the immigration system that had criminalized her existence and a country that shattered her hopes.
The Issue: Families on the Margin of a Global Economy

These are families on the margins and clearly, family life and the livelihood strategies are shaped by natural factors within families, the socio economic contours of Zimbabwean society and power relations on the international scene. In these vignettes, the rural meets the urban, the international, people’s experiences unfold in the context of major social changes in Zimbabwe, the war of independence, structural adjustments etc. What can be gleaned from these vignettes is the idea that marginality draws our attention to unequal relations, unequal life chances, usually caused by deliberate exclusion, massive equality, injustice, exclusion and needlessly limiting people’s economic, political, physical, social, psychological well being. The livelihoods emerging from this scenario are cluttered, complex, sometimes contradictory and other times they complement the goings on. Further, livelihoods on the margins are visible and tangible in many dimensions, politico-economic, physical space, cultural, ideological/religion, social and psychological dimensions of the African families in the townships. In this regard, marginalization is not one-dimensional but it encompasses many dimensions where individuals and whole groups of people are excluded from meaningful participation in social life and this potentially subjects these people to lives on the edge.

From the glimpse of these vignettes it is clear that the changing social, political and economic conditions have impacted work and livelihoods of African families, in this regard, Living on the Margins offers insights into emerging family forms, gendered experiences of work and livelihoods and contemporary urban livelihoods. As such the approach to this book is to bring together ideas that rediscover the practical work of urban families through the narratives of householders (persons speaking on behalf of each of the fifty households that were interviewed). The book rejects traditionalist views on family, their work and provisioning instead explores householders’ own narratives about who is family and showing the ways in which women, men and children are working and
provisioning. Through the narratives of householders there is not a rigid plot line about what is family because family here incorporates the possibility of

*Living on the Margins*, attempts to connect the socio-historical context, structural context and the lived experiences of individuals and families who have lived through institutionalized structures of exclusion where the denial of access to political and/or economic resources has meant not only marginal incorporation but also spells the accompanying structural violence, in which most African families are denied decent and dignified lives because of institutionalized inequalities that have lowered the real level of needs both (social and physical) satisfaction below what is humanly possible, through unequal relations ushered in by colonialism and contemporary political economic systems because at macro-level of society it is within the political economy where social relationships are conducted and legitimized. As such policies pursued by a given political and economic system whether, locally, internationally do set limits on choices, which individuals can exercise within a particular area of jurisdiction, such as a given country or region, hence marginalization (Ramphele, 1993).

The idea of *living on the margins* is used in this book because it does not only integrate loosely connected notions of social disadvantage but also broadens the notion of material deprivation by directing more attention to poverty as a cumulative process, which involves multiple agents and institutions. The notion of marginality also makes explicit the interplay between material and non-material dimensions, the local and global context as well as experiences of each of these relations and their interrelationships at different levels. *Living on the Margins* also connects the micro and macro level dimensions of livelihoods. At micro level livelihoods on the margins refer to those limits within the families and their township environment, which have an impact on the immediate, day to day to day-to-day, experiences of people living in townships. The macro-level dimension, on the other hand refers to the influence of various institutional levels, within the city government, on the national scene, internationally, which has an impact on livelihoods as well as the capacity for transformative action, of individuals, families, neighborhoods and societies. Further, macro level
dimension also encompasses the global dynamics, which it will be argued has a significant bearing on national and local level power relations.

**The Meaning and Importance of Livelihoods**

Perhaps the most telling deficiency in our concern about and for Zimbabwe and especially for Bulawayo is the failure to register the singular importance of the problem of *livelihoods*. Always on the formal level the problems related to assuring our livelihoods is acknowledged through the idea of material deprivation—poverty. At every opportunity the determination to solve poverty is proclaimed. At operational levels these proclamations are put to test. Yet the problem of livelihoods for African families remains so critical that the problems of poverty may be resolved into this problem.

Let me clarify what livelihood means, a human being is first and foremost a worker and work is the most critical activity of society. It is by our work that we furnish our living, our sources of incomes, our work and well-being. As such livelihood relates to a person’s state of existence as a living individual and for the social collective i.e. family and society. It also entails means of living, which includes work, employment, incomes and those social practices related to life in collectives such as family and society. In this light, livelihoods depend on social relations, on security both physical and psychological. In a segmented world of labor markets, livelihood also relates to occupations that, which sustains one’s position in society. Also, livelihood includes the manner of day-to-day existence and this depends on the local experiences, which are also inextricable linked to the international and global processes.

Now, whether we conceive our well being as linked to improvements in livelihood opportunities and/or overcoming problems of poverty, whether we consider our well being to be assurance of our voice and freedom, of security, of realizing our full potential, it is a matter of our livelihoods, how we work and deploy and use the product of our work that is critical. *Livelihoods* are about working, about securing material resources, it is also about securing social and political resources to ensure well being. *Livelihood* in this case can entail
purposeful activities but it may be haphazard it does not matter but the quality of well being assured by the livelihood strategies is critical. Most African families’ livelihoods are threaten by lack of employment because even as they work the activities involved have very low returns that one is hardly able to produce oneself let alone a family.

It is important to note that the concept of livelihoods can sometimes assume a trivializing connotation of the issues. For example, the common use of livelihoods to denote macro generalizations about ways of living such as subsistent living, which tends to give the impression of self-sufficiency thus underplaying families’ situated ness in asymmetrical power relations, socially constructed actors and human agency, local dynamics and the ever changing social world which livelihoods occur (Kaag et.al. 2003). On the other hand, livelihoods as individual innovation can set the tone of the romanticization of micro level as an alternative. People being innovative even in the face of adversity. However, if we make over generalizations and romanticize livelihoods we risk not only trivializing hardships facing African families but also we run into the danger of engaging in thoughts and practices that are dehumanizing. So that when, we begin to see the livelihood struggles of Africans as normal, we are definitely losing sight of the moral and political significance of the differences between work of a galley slave and that of the architect says Ake (1987:98).

Livelihoods and Global Economy

To think about livelihoods of African families in urban Zimbabwe we have to include macro structures and processes--the global economic system and the use of power in this order. Borrowing from Emmanuel Wallestein’s world systems approach, the point of departure for Living on the Margins is livelihoods in a global economy. The context of a global economy consists of structures, processes, made up of groups and individuals, existing for a specific purpose of the interests of profits. These structures employ different systems, the state, religion, international agencies, universities, corporations etc., which are pursuing their own goals according to their own incentives and calculations.
The complexity of livelihoods in urban townships of Bulawayo results from the interactions between the various parts of this global economy. The general notion of global economy is a useful analytical tool for understanding livelihoods; it indicates the overall type work and quality (well being) of persons. The idea here is that livelihood changes within a society or a country can only be fully understood within the context of the global economy. Since all individuals, families and societies are being incorporated into the global system, their relative position to the center/core is of importance.\(^{42}\)

While the focus is on the families and their livelihoods, a three tier framework is seen here, the global, the national and the local scene is used to connect how power and politics as social interaction transcend different levels and thus link the local to the other analytical levels (Espling, 1999). These three arenas are results of a particular worldview taking nation state as the basic unit within the global economic system. But the three arenas cannot be treated separately and the processes going on are not three different ones, but it is one process of change taking on different expressions or structures at different levels. For example, Espling (1999:24) quoting Taylor 1993 argues that the crucial events that structure our livelihoods at a specific local level occur at the global arena, these global occurrences are filtered through the policies and norms of the national level, which in turn, structure and shape outcomes at local level. It is the position within the hierarchical structure of the global economy that determines what will be the outcome of the global processes at the local level irrespective of the situated local dynamics. Therefore, treating local level processes as reflective of the global trends and macro processes means that we are not reducing these livelihoods to “mere backdrops of the predetermined societal processes”. Instead the local and national level processes become a ‘meeting place’.\(^{43}\) In this regard, the global economic system is seen as an organizing framework for ideas about the processes of change and how interconnectedness of various arenas form a mesh around people’s lives, constraining them to varying degrees at different levels but even with these constraints individual agency is critical. In the chapters that follow we will observe
that while individual and family initiatives are stifled by the economic and political structures, people’s experience on the margins also vary according to the economic, political and economic context.

Living on the margins is also about my own politics. As Mudimbe (1988:x) suggests that we as scholars should problematize our own positions. Therefore my personal motivations for Living on the Margins, is my interest in families’ own discourses about their livelihoods. I grew up in Bulawayo. I have personal memories of colonial occupation, the turmoil of the brutalities of racialized social practices. The experiences of my grandparents and parents tell about the ‘small’ person’s resistances to all forms of domination. I saw the viciousness of the war of independence and even witnessed some of the government atrocities in Matabeleland. It pains me to think that ordinary persons like myself can inflict such cruelty in other people’s lives. Living on the Margins is perhaps on one medium for healing those wounds by sharing voices that have become silenced on the other hand, it is part of my living Zimbabwe reshaping destinies.

This book draws on an ethnographic study of work and provisioning strategies undertaken by fifty households in a township in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. In this study, I sought to document everyday lives of African households to understand how households work and provision during an economic crisis. A local school was used as a point of entry to access the fifty households that were interviewed. As such, the narratives on livelihood and work are confined to families with primary school children. A household list was constructed by this researcher from a list of household of children attending a single primary school and fifty households were randomly selected from the list of 1084 households. And, I negotiated entry into the homes of the children by asking who was related to the child whose name I had derived from the school register. (For an elaborate discussion on methodology refer to the appendix).

Living on the Margins is divided into five chapters. Each one of these five chapters is build to stand alone so that readers may select topics of interest however, as a comprehensive entity this book offers a window for viewing the changing internal dynamics of Zimbabwean urban households in a period of
intense political and economic pressure. Taking a thematic approach, the book shifts perspective in each chapter, moving between different levels of analysis from the city’s historical development, to its economic makeup and urbanization, to international issues that have a bearing on local lives, to dynamics of families their work and provisioning strategies into narratives illustrating the diversity of work and provisioning strategies and the successes and frustrations of these experiences.

**Tracing the Contours of Bulawayo’s Marginality and its Socio Economic Structure**

**Chapter 2.** *Tracing the Contours of Bulawayo’s Marginality and its Socio Economic Structure*, is devoted to describing the changes and social formations ushered in by colonial capitalism, settler governments, and struggles of Zimbabwe’s independence, independence era, and post independence era to current processes with specific attention to exploring the multidimensionality of marginality within Bulawayo city. The chapter begins with the statement that the social, economic and political history of urban Bulawayo, Zimbabwe’s second largest city has been molded by peculiar circumstances, conquest and colonial occupation, the rooting of colonial capitalism with its circulatory migration, policy controversies regarding the control of space, control of African movement, instituted both by municipality and national government. These issues and its consequences are expanded throughout the chapter. For example, the 1930 Land Apportionment Act had provisions that enabled the removal of Africans settlement near the urban center establishing Luveve village in 1938 15-20 km away from the center.

**Who is family? A Rich Mosaic of Diversity**

**Chapter 3.** *Who is family? A Rich Mosaic of Diversity*, while chapter 2 provides a backdrop from which to explore continuity and change in African families, their
work and livelihoods, chapter 3 asks the question who is family? This chapter begins with an exploration of the usefulness of family and households as a concept in understanding work and provisioning then, extends the discussion by highlighting narratives exploring the diversity of family and emerging family forms in Bulawayo’s townships.

Living on the Margins: Families their Work and Provisioning Strategies in Bulawayo’s Townships

Chapter 4, Living on the Margins: Families their Work and Provisioning Strategies in Bulawayo’s Townships, this chapter explores work and provisioning strategies of all the fifty interviewed households, looking at divisions of labor, the work that women, men and children do as well as the report on well being of these families.
Getting by Through Multiplex Livelihoods

Chapter 5, *Getting by Through Multiplex Livelihoods*, presents five family case profiles with accompanying narratives showing how families get by on a day-to-day basis. This chapter discusses emerging family forms and social practices of these families to show how families negotiate and renegotiate their lives on the margins of a global economy.

**Case One**: Family and Livelihoods Reconstituted by Transnationality

**Case Two**: Married to their Children, Sibling Families and their Livelihoods

**Case Three**: Keeping House with Another Woman’s Men, Lone Mothers and their Livelihoods

**Case Four**: Children of Independence: Livelihoods of the Born Frees

**Case Five**: Livelihoods Through Claims on Governments, Secure but do they Burn?

**Families, Work and Provisioning Strategies and the Wider Societal Context: Conclusions and Paths for Reflection**

Chapter 5, *Families, Work and Provisioning Strategies and the Wider Societal Context*, chapter five pulls the four chapters together focusing on families, their work and society –addressing the question: What does the nature and patterns of work and livelihood of these families mean within a wider societal context?

**Appendix**: Overview of the study and methods and reflections on fieldwork as an insider, reflections on the challenges of connecting socio-historical context, life histories, lived experiences of individuals and families who have lived through dramatic changes in the Zimbabwean society. Also, discussing plans for long-term research with these families.
Notes

1 I use African because this is how the census of Zimbabwe uses the word along with Coloured, White, Asian. African this is the way ‘we’ talk about ourselves.


5 For a discussion of poverty written out of daily contact with people and an attempt to make the plight of the poor known see Poverty in the ESAP Era: 1996-98 poverty studies in Zimbabwe’s mining, commercial farming and communal areas. Edited by Nigel Hall and written by Kudzai Makoni and Zvashe Kujinga. Silveira House Social Series No.15.

6 Khanyile is a pseudonym for the township where this study was undertaken. Because of political violence during the fieldwork of this study, between December 1999 and December 2000 I used a pseudonym to conceal the identity of the participants. This study is part of my dissertation titled: Dealing with Work in its Context: An Analysis of Household Work Strategies in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. For elaborate details on the research methodology and reflections on my fieldwork experiences see Appendix A.

7 See Brand, Mupedziswa & Gumbo their research on women informal sectors traders in Harare, Carole Rakodi’s research in Gweru, Deborah Potts and Chris Mutambirwa on urban lives in Harare and Deborah Bryceson in rural Mashonaland. This work is distinct in the sense that it focuses on the city of Bulawayo, a place that I refer to as a site of obliterated histories because of the historical events surrounding this area.

8 Most townships in Zimbabwe were developed during the colonial period as segregated spaces to house African labor and designed without any comforts enjoyed by the European settlers in the eastern suburbs or the center’s fringe, which housed most Asians and Coloreds (persons of mixed race). In Bulawayo most townships emerged through laws and policies of racial segregation before Zimbabwe’s independence in 1980. After independence few townships were built the most visible change has been the name changes, today townships are refereed to as high density suburbs and what used to be exclusive white suburbs is refereed to as low density areas for an elaborate discussion on the origins of townships in Zimbabwe see Patrick Bond, Economic Origins of Black Townships in Zimbabwe: Contradictions of Industrial and Financial Capital in the 1950s to 1960s. Economic Geography, 69, 1:72-89. Also, see Miriam Grant (1998) Strangers in Our Home: Spatiality and Locale of Monomotapa Township, Gwelo, Rhodesia (1953-1979) Canadian Journal of African Studies, 32, 1: 32-63.

9 See the report, City of Bulawayo: Local Development Plan. Number 1, Western Area 1980-1995.

10 Townships occupy a marginal space but they are not to be confused with ‘shanty settlement’ also prevalent within the African context but often refers to the settlement that is not
laid out by the cities, towns or government but it is open land that people occupy to house
themselves.

11 Numerous articles, books have emerged about the troubles facing Zimbabweans
see Patrick Bond (1998) Uneven Zimbabwe: A Study of Finance, Development and

12 For example, Peter Stiff (2000) Cry Zimbabwe: Independence -Twenty
Jocelyn Alexander, JoAnn McGregor and Terence Ranger (2000) Violence and Memory:

13 For elaborate discussions on the World Traveling, see Christine Sylvester
(1995) African and Western Feminisms: World Traveling the Tendencies and
Possibilities, Signs p 941-969. Also, see Blair Rutherford’s comments on the localized
discourses informing policies in Zimbabwe, often blinded by their narrow assumptions.
Most important his comments on that the firm lines taken by the polarizing sides over
the “Crisis in Zimbabwe” reflected in the special issue “the New Agrarian Politics in
Zimbabwe”, edited by Eric Worby in the Journal of Agrarian Change (Vol. 1, No. 4,
2001), and papers presented at the conference “the Zimbabwe Crisis” hosted by the
Center for Development Research, Copenhagen 3-5 September 2001
(http://www.cdr.dk/seminars/Zimbabwe/), tend to miss out the heterogeneous
responses, informed by an increasing desperation, of Zimbabwean women and men to
the politicized land invasions, the accompanying and expanding violence, and growing
economic crisis in the county.

Volume 48, Number 10: 50-52.

15 These experiences of Africans playing an important role in their own lives is

16 See Africa Watch: The End of the Post-Colonial State System in Africa.
Richard Cornwell: Africa Early Warning Programme, Institute for Security Studies

17 I am aware of those studies that have inserted women’s experiences, for
example, Elizabeth Schmidt, Teresa A. Barnes We Women Worked so Hard: Gender
Family and African Politics in Zimbabwe, Werbner’s Tears of the Dead is an important
piece on the socio biography of a Kalanga family.

18 This critique should not be misconstrued as acceptance of the existence of
these images, these inventions, and imaginings existed before the Europeans swindled
Zimbabwe from the local societies.

19 This argument borrows from John McKnight seminal work on Client
Communities.

Bank.

21 For an elaborate discussion of major social changes and the resultant socio
economic structures see Ibbo Mandaza (1985) Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of
2 pp 82-96

22 For an elaborate discussion, see Christine Sylvester (2000) Sylvester, C.

23 See Tendayi J. Kumbula (1979) *Education and Social Control in Southern Rhodesia*. Palo Alto, California: R&E Research Associates. A description of the limited African educational opportunities at secondary and higher levels during 1946-1974, the discussion takes into account the socio economic, socio politics and racial divisions in this country.


28 See the new journal on social change in Zimbabwe, which has always maintained a conversation that evaluates the Zimbabwe political economy using situation against the socialist ideas.


30 This expansion of human capital and the inclusion of an otherwise excluded population is often miss read as population increase which resulted in limitations in economic growth as the prevailing growth is presumed to be shared by more mouths.

31 See the discussion from growth with equity to structural adjustment by Raftopoulos (1992). In addition, Ake argues that this heavy state control of the economy was accentuated by two factors, which were more important still; one has to distinguish with the embryonic development of indigenous capitalist class and the associated paucity of private indigenous capital. State control offered the only way to mobilize the economic resources, which would allow the local political class to initiate any kind of policies, and at the same time begin to challenge foreign capital for the control of the economy.


Pseudonyms are used in these vignettes and throughout the book –where names may coincide with presented narratives this may only is just coincidence because pseudonyms used here are common names and surnames.


Notice the narratives for these vignettes are drawn from experiences of children while the book focuses on the families the entry into these families is through children who were attending a local primary school, therefore the focus is child centered. For an elaborate discussion on methodology refer to the appendix.

It is important to note that the original usage of marginality in urban studies was by Robert E. Park a sociologist on urban cultures particularly addressing assimilation of immigrants in Chicago. In 1928 Human Migration and Marginal Man was written expanded later by Stonequist (1937) in his book the *Marginal Man*. The usage of marginality in this American context referred to cultural marginality where an individual was presumed to be suspended between two cultural realities. As such marginality results in difficulties in establishing identity, as the marginal person is presumed to be poised in the psychological uncertainty between two or more social worlds, reflecting in their soul the discords and harmonies, repulsions and attractions of these worlds. In the US literature the concept of marginal man has been transformed into three general categories, cultural marginality, social role marginality and structural marginality (Billson, 1988: 184-185) No Owner Soil: The Concept of Marginality Revisited on its Sixtieth Birthday. *International Review of Modern Sociology*, 18 (Autumn) 183-204. As such the term marginality is limited because it does not take into account coloniality. While I understand the usage of the term here-, the criticism leveled against adaptation of western concepts to fit into the African setting—the issue here is that I am not testing this term but I am using it because of its explanatory power in this particular works.


For an elaborate discussion on the term livelihoods see Mayke Kaag, Rik van Berkel, Johan Brons, Mirjam de Bruijn, Han van Dijk, Leo de Haan, Gerben Nooteboom and Annelies Zoomers, members of Research School for Resource Studies for Development (CERES), article, Poverty is Bad: Ways Forward in Livelihood Research. Kaag@fsw.leidenuniv.nl.

This discussion borrows from Claude Ake’s seminal article Notes for a Political Economy of Unemployment.