



## King's Research Portal

DOI:  
[10.1111/geoj.12139](https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12139)

*Document Version*  
Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication record in King's Research Portal](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

Potts, D. (2015). Debates about African urbanisation, migration and economic growth: what can we learn from Zimbabwe and Zambia? *GEOGRAPHICAL JOURNAL*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1111/geoj.12139>

### **Citing this paper**

Please note that where the full-text provided on King's Research Portal is the Author Accepted Manuscript or Post-Print version this may differ from the final Published version. If citing, it is advised that you check and use the publisher's definitive version for pagination, volume/issue, and date of publication details. And where the final published version is provided on the Research Portal, if citing you are again advised to check the publisher's website for any subsequent corrections.

### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the Research Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognize and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the Research Portal

### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact [librarypure@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:librarypure@kcl.ac.uk) providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



## Debates about African urbanization, migration and economic growth: what can we learn from Zimbabwe and Zambia?

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Journal:         | <i>The Geographical Journal</i>  |
| Manuscript ID:   | GJ-RP-Oct-2014-0100.R1   |
| Manuscript Type: | Regular Paper  |
| Keywords:        | Urbanization, Development, Migration, Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia   |
| Abstract:        | <p>There has been much debate about whether patterns of urbanization in sub-Saharan Africa defy the usually accepted links between migration flows and economic geographies. In the 1980s and 1990s African urban economies were weak and increasingly informalised. The livelihoods of the majority of urban households became intensely vulnerable. However the most widely accepted narrative was that rural-urban migration remained strong and rates of urban growth were unaffected, suggesting that African migrants ignored economic signals and that explanations of migrant behaviour must primarily be non-economic. A new angle on this debate has now arisen: whether urbanization in Africa generates economic growth or vice versa. This has been triggered by the much improved GDP growth rates which many African countries have experienced in the 21st century, driven in large part by a commodity boom and increased demand for their natural resources. This paper seeks to contribute to these debates through a detailed analysis of the contrasting experiences of Zimbabwe and Zambia from the 1960s to today. Rates of urbanization waxed and waned in both and were evidently affected by national economic development patterns which have been highly variable – to a significant extent the experience of each country in each decade has been the mirror image of the other. From this it is argued that, as elsewhere in the world, migration flows have been strongly influenced by economic opportunity. The evidence from these countries also supports the view that it is economic development that drives urbanization, and not the other way round.</p> |

## Introduction

‘a far deeper understanding is needed of what exactly drives aggregate urbanization trends in developing and emerging economies. A question being raised is: in such economies, does urbanization cause growth or is it the other way round?’  
UN Habitat, State of African Cities Report 2014, p. 19.

This paper describes and analyses trends in urbanization and migration in Zimbabwe and Zambia over the past 50 years in order, first, to contribute to debates about the relationship between economic growth and urbanization in sub-Saharan Africa and, second, to provide insights into trends in urbanization there more broadly. It is in part a response to the central question from the current State of African Cities Report (SoAC) quoted above.

The paper outlines key elements of the current debates about African economic growth and urbanization before moving on to the empirical analysis of urbanization in Zimbabwe and Zambia. These two countries have been chosen because they provide interesting opportunities for comparative analysis. It is hard to think of a similarly alike pairing of countries elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa. They are in many ways remarkably geographically similar. They are landlocked and they share a border. They experience similar climatic regimes with strongly seasonal and variable climates, and are vulnerable to occasional droughts. Maize is their key staple food product. They were colonised by the British. They have important and longstanding mineral sectors but neither has oil. Their populations are the same size: about 13 million. However, as the paper will demonstrate, despite their similarities, their experiences have differed to an extraordinary extent: in essence they have been mirror images so that when one was urbanizing, the other was not. In neither case has there been a steady linear urbanizing trend.

It is helpful to allay some obvious objections about these countries’ similarity before proceeding further, for there are also important differences between them. Their colonial histories were significantly different, despite both being under British rule. Although

1  
2  
3 both were ruled by Rhodes' British South Africa Company from the 1890s to 1922/24  
4 under a royal charter, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) then became a conventional colony,  
5 but Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), with its much larger settler population, chose  
6 'responsible self-government' - or rather its white population opted for this. Over the next  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

both were ruled by Rhodes' British South Africa Company from the 1890s to 1922/24 under a royal charter, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) then became a conventional colony, but Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), with its much larger settler population, chose 'responsible self-government' - or rather its white population opted for this. Over the next 40 years this meant that the self-interests of the white electorate of Southern Rhodesia determined government policies, allowing continued land alienation from the indigenous Africa population and drastic urban influx controls, but also the development of manufacturing industry and some excellent economic infrastructure (albeit almost entirely outside of the reserves set aside for the African rural population). In Northern Rhodesia, social and economic developments became more similar to those in other colonies, with British commercial interests to the fore and plenty of racist and segregationist policies, but indigenous landholdings were now better protected. The crucial outcomes of these different trajectories were that Northern Rhodesia became independent Zambia in 1964, in line with a host of other newly independent former European colonies, but the 'self-governing' whites of Southern Rhodesia refused to accept the inevitable, and illegally declared their own 'independence' from Britain, whilst maintaining (and indeed worsening) racist policies which discriminated against the African majority. This led to a liberation war which eventually brought about Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. As will be seen, these differences in policy regimes and the timing of independence fed into contrasting urbanization and migration patterns in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

### **African urbanization and economic growth: the debates**

During the 'lost decades' of the 1980s and 1990s when many sub-Saharan African countries experienced long periods of recession and tragic falls in their people's welfare, a debate grew up about whether it was puzzling that rates of rural-urban migration and urbanization did not slow. The idea of 'urbanization without growth' developed (eg Jamal and Weeks 1993; Fay and Opal 2000). In fact there was accumulating evidence from censuses and surveys that net migration rates to towns and urban growth slowed in many African countries (eg see Becker et al 1994, Ferguson 1999; Africapolis undated;

1  
2  
3 Beauchemin and Bocquier 2004; Potts 1995, 2005, 2010, 2012a), so the debate was  
4 partly based on false premises and the latest SoAC 2014 (UN Habitat 2014) accepts that  
5 net migration rates did fall.  
6  
7

8  
9  
10 Very recent African censuses (eg in Mauritania, Ghana, Zambia and Tanzania) show that  
11 growth rates in some towns have now increased again. This has happened alongside very  
12 significant improvements in GDP growth. This has fed into a new debate about the  
13 relationship between rising urban populations and economic growth in Africa. An  
14 important contribution was the 2009 World Development Report which strongly  
15 emphasised the positive role of urbanization in economic development, because it  
16 countered the usual anti-urban tenor of most analyses of sub-Saharan Africa. It was not,  
17 of course, specifically about Africa but it set out the thesis that the region was under-  
18 urbanized and would benefit economically from faster urbanization, which has become  
19 part of the new debate. There are now a range of economic and urban analyses which  
20 assert either explicitly or implicitly that it is the urbanization that is *causing* the economic  
21 growth. For example, the head of UN Habitat, Joan Clos, wrote in the preface to the  
22 2010 State of African Cities report that in Africa, 'Just as the Asian powerhouses,  
23 Africa stands to benefit from the rapid expansion of its cities. Urbanization is jump-  
24 starting industrialization' (Clos, 2010, ii). A frequently cited report on Africa's fast-  
25 growing economies by the Mckinsey Global Institute (2010) argued that '[g]lobal  
26 businesses cannot afford to ignore the potential..... Africa's growth acceleration resulted  
27 from more than a resource boom..... Long-term growth also will be lifted by .....  
28 Africa's growing labor force, *urbanization*, and the related rise of middle-class  
29 consumers' [emphasis added]. The 2012 African Economic Outlook, which focused on  
30 youth unemployment, claimed that, 'the long-term perspective is good..... rapid  
31 urbanisation provides opportunities for sector development and job creation' (Africa  
32 Development Bank, 2012, p11]) Another, earlier analysis on African urbanization, stated  
33 that, 'most economists agree that urbanization can precipitate economic development in  
34 the region' (Hanson 2007). In 2013 in a presentation on African urbanization Paul Collier  
35 argued,  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 'Cities are fundamental to the miracle of productivity because ...[they] permit  
4 scale and specialisation.... The more people you can bring together, the more  
5 specialisation is possible. And in rough terms, we think that every time you double  
6 the size of a settlement, globally, you get an increase in productivity per person of  
7 about 6 per cent. .... So, whatever urban middle class romantics about rural areas  
8 say to the contrary, dispersed is dumb. .... economic activity takes density.'  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14 (Collier, 2014)  
15  
16

17  
18 Even if we confine a comparative perspective to sub-Saharan Africa, Collier's  
19 essentialist take on the relationship between city size and economic production is  
20 obviously problematic given, for example, the difference between productivity in  
21 Johannesburg and Kinshasa. With reference to urban jobs, he further argued that these  
22 result 'from ... processes initiated by policies, investments, and decisions of various  
23 actors' but again, that '[in] my mind, they are a product of density'.  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29

30 The influence of this approach to African urbanization is evident in the quote at the start  
31 of the paper. The very positive presumptions made about how urbanization will lead to  
32 higher productivity, employment and economic growth draw upon the standard toolbox  
33 of urban economic geographers – specialization of production and labour, agglomeration  
34 economies, economies of scale, backward and forward linkages, industrial clustering,  
35 innovation and so on. That these characteristics are facilitated by conditions in dense,  
36 large urban settlements has long been established in geographical literature (eg Bourne  
37 and Simmons 1978; Lloyd and Dicken 1977; Pacione 1985) and is often the starting point  
38 for students of urban economic geography. In recent years these concepts have been  
39 revisited with renewed interest in the relationships between urbanization and economic  
40 growth (eg Scott and Storper 2013; Spence et al 2008). For example, in their recent  
41 review of urban theory and the nature of cities, Scott and Storper (2013: 6) argue that,  
42 'throughout the course of history, urbanization has been fundamentally engendered by a  
43 complex interaction between economic development, divisions of labor, agglomeration,  
44 specialization and external commerce'. The potentially positive links are also  
45 emphasised by Annez and Buckley (2008: 1) who state that '[u]rbanization and growth  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 go together'. Nonetheless these authors do not suggest that urbanization is, on its own,  
4 sufficient to drive economic growth. The links between growth and urbanization are  
5 seen as two-way. It is also recognized that positive urban economic developments require  
6 public sector planning and infrastructural investments as otherwise 'disfunctionalities  
7 would unquestionably undermine the viability of the city, for market logic alone is  
8 congenitally incapable of regulating the urban commons in the interests of economic  
9 efficiency and social wellbeing' (Scott and Storper, 2013:8). And Annez and Buckley  
10 (200? : 28] note that '[a] sound system of public finance for local public goods does not  
11 emerge naturally in poor urbanizing countries' and 'requires central government support'.  
12 This is evidently relevant for African urban economies as infrastructure in most African  
13 cities is poor.  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23

24 More significantly for this debate, a review of available evidence for the relationships  
25 between economic growth and urbanization specifically in Africa found it to be very  
26 mixed. Four such studies found no link, while three did (Turok and McGranahan 2013).  
27 Turok (2013) has also shown that while the relationship between levels of GDP per capita  
28 and urbanization levels in 1985 and 2010 for eight Asian countries was extremely  
29 positive and unambiguous, this was not true for selected African countries. He concludes  
30 that this 'clearly supports the argument that urbanisation has not been strongly  
31 associated with economic development in Africa' (ibid, 152, 154). However, this  
32 may well be because the strong variations in annual GDP per capita change for  
33 each African country over that period, with weak or even negative growth in the  
34 1980s and 1990s, and fast growth since 2000, evidently would not be reflected  
35 by two data points 25 years apart.  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46

47 One key factor not much emphasised in these studies is the strong impact of global  
48 competition and the constraints of comparative advantage on the nature of economic  
49 growth and urban economies in different countries in a liberalized trade environment.  
50 Asian cities have strongly outcompeted those in Africa (and indeed many in OECD  
51 countries) for manufacturing and the associated jobs. Much of the theorising about the  
52 positive economic aspects of cities relates to this sector with Scott and Storper (2013: 5)  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 stating that it is after the Industrial Revolution that ‘the fundamental relationship between  
4 economic development and urbanization becomes especially clear’. Indeed, the SoAC  
5 2014 Report from which the quotation at the beginning of this paper is taken, goes on to  
6 note that research by the Asian Development Bank on the correlation between  
7 urbanization and GDP growth finds that ‘the strongest direction of causality is probably  
8 from industrialization to urbanization, rather than the reverse’. This adds another layer to  
9 the debate, because much of sub-Saharan Africa de-industrialised under the impact of  
10 trade liberalization at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the process has not ended yet for  
11 some countries. Turok (2013: 147) notes that, today, protecting infant industries in  
12 African cities is likely to ‘run foul of ... WTO rules’. Much of Africa’s recent economic  
13 growth comes from stronger commodity exports and mining and thus the role of these in  
14 urbanization is attracting much interest (ibid; Robbins 2013; Potts 2013a; Bryceson and  
15 MacKinnon 2012). Gollin et al (2014: 2), for example, argue that ‘industrialization and  
16 resource exports are equally plausible sources of urbanization in the developing  
17 world’ as ‘resource rents are disproportionately spent on urban goods and  
18 services’ leading to ‘consumption cities’; however, they find these are not as  
19 ‘welfare-improving as production cities’.

20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35 The remainder of this paper contributes to these debates about trends in African  
36 urbanization, migration and economic growth by examining the trajectories of these three  
37 factors in Zimbabwe and Zambia from the 1960s. As will be shown, their experience  
38 strongly supports the position that urbanization is dependent on economic growth (and  
39 not vice versa), both at the national level and in relation to the trajectories of individual  
40 settlements.  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45

### 46 47 **Urban trends in Zimbabwe and Zambia compared**

48  
49  
50  
51 The following analysis of the past 50 years of census data from Zimbabwe and Zambia  
52 starts by looking at the broad national patterns as expressed by changes in urbanization  
53 levels. It then moves on to look more closely at individual towns, using a shift analysis  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 which identifies those which have gained or lost population share relative to the country  
4 as a whole during different intercensal periods.  
5  
6  
7

8  
9 *The national picture: urbanization and counter-urbanization from the 1960s to today*  
10

11  
12 1960s: At the beginning of the 1960s censuses were held in both Southern and  
13 Northern Rhodesia. Their levels of urbanization were close: 18.4% in Southern Rhodesia  
14 and 21% in Northern Rhodesia. By fortunate coincidence both countries held another  
15 census in 1969 and, as shown in Figure 1, a major gap had emerged in the few  
16 intervening years. Southern Rhodesia had actually counter-urbanized slightly during the  
17 1960s, whilst Zambia (as Northern Rhodesia had now become) had urbanized extremely  
18 rapidly, adding about a percentage point a year to its urbanization level to reach 29%.<sup>1</sup>  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

26  
27 FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE [Changes in level of urbanization]  
28  
29

30  
31 The explanations for these opposing trajectories lie in a combination of local and global  
32 factors. At the beginning of the 1960s, as explained in the introduction, both countries  
33 were still part of the British Empire, but their political situations were very different.  
34 From 1953 both were part of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which brought  
35 together the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland (today's Malawi) in an economic and political  
36 grouping. However, this had been strongly resisted by the African populations of all  
37 three territories who perceived, correctly, that one objective of the Federation for the  
38 white settlers was to try to avoid the imposition of elections with universal suffrage  
39 leading to independence from Britain and, inevitably, black majority governments. In  
40 Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland it was increasingly clear by the start of the 1960s that  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50

51  
52 <sup>1</sup> All the data on urban populations and growth rates cited in the text and used in the figures are derived from the  
53 relevant census reports for the respective countries. Data are never taken from sources like the World Bank or UN  
54 Habitat as these can be misleading. All urban figures are taken from the report from the census for the year reported  
55 and are always cross-checked (eg between national level reports and any regional or provincial reports) to ensure  
56 publishing errors are weeded out. All growth rates are independently calculated from raw data. Fortunately both  
57 Zimbabwe and Zambia are scrupulous about publishing their census data in a reasonably timely fashion (and now  
58 online) and the author has data sets back to the 1960s for Zambia, and earlier for Zimbabwe. A similar analysis to this  
59 one would be very much more difficult for many other African countries due to data issues.  
60

1  
2  
3 this was not going to be possible and the groundwork for eventual elections was being  
4 laid. In 1964 both became independent.  
5  
6  
7

8  
9 For Zambia this meant that a new African government now determined national policies.  
10 Laws which had constrained rural-urban migration and family migration were relaxed  
11 and major public investment began to be made in health, education and the bureaucracy as  
12 well as in industry. Much of this was urban-located. In essence Zambia followed the  
13 tenets of modernization theory which was the norm at the time, with a central role for the  
14 government and deliberate investment in social infrastructure and industries, protected  
15 from foreign competition by tariff barriers. Zambia inherited an economy which was  
16 heavily dependent on copper mining and exports. A string of mining towns linked by  
17 rail, road and energy infrastructure already existed on the Copperbelt: Ndola, Kitwe,  
18 Chingola, Luanshya, Mufulira, Chililabombwe and Kalalushi. By 1963 Kitwe's  
19 population was 123,000, and Ndola's 93,000, for example. The 1960s was a boom decade  
20 for the global economy and the terms of trade for most newly independent African  
21 countries were quite favourable, especially since oil prices were very low by  
22 contemporary standards. Copper prices were strong, and the private mining companies of  
23 the Copperbelt were highly profitable. Zambia's copper production increased 7.3%  
24 annually in the 1960s. These factors combined to create many new urban formal sector  
25 jobs, which in turn allowed the development of much informal sector work associated  
26 with the multiplier effects of the new consumption power in Zambia's cities.  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41

42 The impact of these developments on rural-urban migration was huge. In the six years  
43 between 1963 and the next census in 1969 Zambia's main towns attracted very large  
44 numbers of in-migrants, many of whom brought their families with them; female in-  
45 migration increased significantly, urban birth rates shot up, and urban sex ratios,  
46 previously heavily favouring men, began to even out. The effects of the burgeoning  
47 government expenditure were most strongly felt in the capital city, Lusaka, which grew at  
48 nearly 14% per year, and therefore more than doubled its population from 121,000 to  
49 262,000. Net in-migration was also strong to the Copperbelt towns. The level of  
50 urbanization increased by an astonishing 8%. Most urban residents were in-migrants  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 rather than urban-born. Significantly, however, long-established practices, which had  
4 been encouraged by colonial policies, of maintaining rural links and some rural  
5 retirement continued. The lack of viable livelihoods for those not in work, such as the  
6 old and disabled, affected these decisions, as well as various cultural influences (see Potts  
7 2010a).

8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14 In Southern Rhodesia the situation was very different. An illegal white settler  
15 government declared 'independence' from Britain in 1965 and proceeded to tighten urban  
16 influx controls for Africans (Gargett 1977), seriously constraining rates of net in-  
17 migration (Mutambirwa and Potts 1990; Potts 2010). Family migration was discouraged,  
18 so sex ratios remained skewed towards men. International sanctions on the illegal  
19 government imposed some limitations on economic growth but also, ironically, provided  
20 strategic enforced protection from global competition for many productive enterprises in  
21 the urban economy. This was a benefit in the short-term for manufacturing (Stoneman,  
22 1982; Riddell 1990) which was already stronger in Rhodesia than almost anywhere else  
23 in sub-Saharan Africa due to its encouragement during the years of white settler self-  
24 government. The new illegal government also provided strong support for strategic  
25 industries, for example renationalizing the iron and steel industry.

26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37 The overall outcomes of these policies was that Rhodesia (as it became in 1965) counter-  
38 urbanized as already noted. The fall in the urbanization level was small but contrasted  
39 very strongly with Zambia's experience, evidently, and indeed with the upward trends of  
40 rural-urban migration and urbanization across independent sub-Saharan Africa in the  
41 1960s. The combined impact on migration and urbanization masks important  
42 differentiation between racial groups. There was net in-migration of the already highly  
43 urbanized white population and their urban share increased from 78.3% to 79.8% during  
44 this intercensal period. They accounted for about one quarter of the total urban  
45 population of Salisbury, the capital city, by 1969. However, the urbanized African  
46 population fell from 14.5% to 13.9% (Ministry of Finance 1979).

47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 1970s: Zambia's next census was conducted in 1980 and Zimbabwe's in 1982, two  
4 years first after independence in 1980. Since then both countries have held censuses  
5 every ten years, which has by no means been common in sub-Saharan Africa, allowing  
6 continued easy comparisons between them. Both countries urbanized strongly during the  
7 1970s: Zambia's urbanization level increased to 40%, yet again adding a percentage point  
8 per year, and Zimbabwe's rose to 26% (nine percentage points over thirteen years). The  
9 urban share of Zambia's population had almost doubled in eighteen years. Again a  
10 mixture of local and global economic and political factors influenced these changes.  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17

18  
19 At the beginning of the 1970s Zambia's economy remained strong and the copper sector  
20 highly profitable and the rapid in-migration of the 1960s was maintained. However in  
21 1973 the first oil price shock of the decade hit the global economy and the copper price  
22 plummeted. Zambian economic growth slowed dramatically. Alongside other non-oil  
23 exporting African countries hit by rising import bills and falling export revenues as the  
24 global economy slowed, Zambia borrowed on the assumption that this was a temporary  
25 shift in its terms of trade. There were also major regional disruptions to cope with.  
26 Sanctions on Rhodesia led landlocked Zambia's transport costs to soar as transit routes to  
27 the sea for its bulky copper exports were severely affected. More debt was incurred  
28 building a second railway north to the Tanzanian coast which would be unaffected by the  
29 unstable situation in the southern African region. Finally, the second oil price shock  
30 came in 1979. As global recession set in it became evident that the negative shift in the  
31 terms of trade was going to be of a longterm nature and Zambia's debts were  
32 unupportable. By the end of the 1970s, the economy was reeling, urban incomes were  
33 in decline, the copper mines were reducing their workforce, poverty was increasing, and  
34 formal employment growth had slowed (Ferguson 1999). The seeds of a dramatic change  
35 in Zambia's urbanization were therefore already germinating by the end of the 1970s.  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49

50  
51 In Rhodesia, the surge in urbanization occurred because of a shift to rapid net in-  
52 migration. Partly this was due to refugees from the liberation war, some of whom settled  
53 informally. Efforts were still made to maintain control through housing policies and by  
54 far the largest housing project of that decade was built in Chitungwiza, a huge  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 'dormitory' town for Salisbury located in a nearby African reserve in a last ditch attempt  
4 to displace African urban population growth away from 'white' cities. This is  
5 functionally part of the capital city and is discussed as such below. Once independence  
6 was attained in 1980, all influx controls were dismantled; their enforcement had anyway  
7 been waning as political change became increasingly inevitable. Economic migrants who  
8 had been pent up in African rural areas by the old laws surged into towns and were  
9 sometimes joined by family members, so sex ratios started to normalise, and urban birth  
10 rates increased.  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17

18  
19 1980s: In the 1980s the paths of urbanization in Zimbabwe and Zambia again diverged,  
20 as in the 1960s, but now the situations were reversed: Zimbabwe was urbanizing whilst  
21 Zambia began to counter-urbanize. The fall in Zambia was small (see Figure 1) but of  
22 great significance. Here was the country which was often touted, at the time, as a beacon  
23 of modernization in Tropical Africa, with an integrated and complex urban system  
24 (compared to most other African countries), but now migration had shifted in net terms  
25 from rural- urban, to urban-rural (Potts 2005). Copper prices remained low and  
26 production fell by 3.4% per year in the 1980s (Meller and Simpasa 2011). The buying  
27 power of Zambia's exports, already reduced from an index of 100 in 1970 to 38 by 1980,  
28 had fallen to 13 by 1986 (Jamal and Weeks, 1993, cited in Ferguson, 1999). Unable to  
29 pay its debts, it soon came under the auspices of the international financial institutions  
30 which began to force the government to impose austerity measures and structural  
31 adjustment programmes, thus shifting the country away from state-led development  
32 towards the standard neo-liberal set of economic policies. These waxed and waned in the  
33 1980s as the government of the time (a one-party state) sometimes resisted and  
34 backtracked. Nonetheless the rises in urban poverty which had already set in by the late  
35 1970s continued. Riots broke out in towns as food costs rose. The relative attractiveness  
36 of livelihoods in urban areas fell below those in some rural areas, as the rural-urban  
37 income gap dwindled (Potts 1995). More and more people began to find they could not  
38 afford to live in town as their incomes could not cover their costs.  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54

55  
56 Things were very different in Zimbabwe in the 1980s and its urbanization level rose a  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 further 4.6%. Having arrived fifteen to twenty years late to 'independence', the new  
4 African majority government embarked on a state-led modernization path, similar to that  
5 practised by newly independent African countries from Senegal to Tanzania. It remained  
6 essentially capitalist in its economic character (if socialist in its rhetoric) but the previous  
7 white settler governments had been strongly directive and their protectionist policies  
8 were maintained. The inherited economy had eventually been weakened by sanctions  
9 and the liberation war but was very diverse and integrated by African standards, with iron  
10 and steel and textile industries, and strong interlinkages between agricultural and  
11 industrial sectors (Stoneman 1981). The government also poured money into health and  
12 education, as had other governments when newly independent, and had some remarkable  
13 successes in these areas at first. Thus whilst Zambia's infant mortality rates rose by about  
14 a quarter in the 1980s, Zimbabwe's fell by nearly a half. Urban formal employment  
15 growth was sufficient to encourage much net in-migration, including many family  
16 members. Minimum wages were introduced and enforced, leading to job losses in  
17 agriculture, mining and domestic services, but many mainly urban-based jobs fared  
18 reasonably well. Manufacturing employment grew at 2.9% per year from 1980 to 1990,  
19 electricity and water 2.6%, finance and distribution at 3.5%, and hotel and catering at  
20 3.6% (Chitiga 2004). By the end of the 1980s non-traditional manufactured exports were  
21 growing strongly (Stoneman 1989). Poverty levels in towns were reducing. Family  
22 migration and the expected length of stay for migrants in town increased; nonetheless  
23 most migrants in Harare (formerly Salisbury) still expected to 'retire' to rural areas due to  
24 the lack of urban safety nets and many rural-urban links were maintained, increasing  
25 household livelihood resilience (Potts 2010a).

26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47 1990s: In the 1990s Zambia continued to counter-urbanize and Zimbabwe to urbanize.  
48 By 2000 Zambia's level was 35% and Zimbabwe's 33.6%, so at this point their levels  
49 were again almost the same, as they had been at the beginning of the 1960s. However  
50 their trajectories had obviously been very different.

51  
52  
53  
54  
55 For Zambia the underlying causes were basically 'more of the same'. The economy was  
56 liberalised more consistently, under a new government. Urban labour markets became  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 highly informal; there were more retrenchments at the copper mines, in the public sector  
4 and uncompetitive industries; and urban poverty worsened. Migration data in the 2000  
5 census report showed that during the 1990s net migration rates (per thousand) were +2.8  
6 into rural areas, and -4.7 out of urban areas.<sup>2</sup> The evidence for strengthening circular  
7 migration was increasingly being picked up in qualitative surveys as well (eg Ferguson  
8 1990; Purbrick 1990).  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15

16 In Zimbabwe there were quite dramatic shifts in various demographic factors in the  
17 1990s. Fertility levels were falling, and death rates were rising. Emigration became an  
18 important influence on population change. The 2002 census reported that the growth of  
19 the national population had fallen very significantly from an annual rate of 3.3% in the  
20 1980s to 1.1%.<sup>3</sup> The urbanization level increased by 3%, but this was slower than the  
21 rise in the previous decade of 4.6%. Over the decade there was net in-migration to towns  
22 but their growth rates were much lower than they were in the 1980s: Harare's was 75%  
23 lower, for example. Furthermore, migration data for the year before the census, and birth  
24 and death rate data, indicated that many urban areas, including the largest, were  
25 beginning to lose population share by the end of the intercensal period: net migration  
26 rates had turned negative (Potts 2008). This fitted the predictions of survey data on  
27 migrants to Harare in 1994 and 2001 which found that the propensity to leave the city  
28 was increasing sharply (Potts 2010a). The migration changes were linked to very  
29 significant economic changes. At the end of 1991 the country embarked on a structural  
30 adjustment programme which very swiftly undermined many urban-located productive  
31 enterprises previously protected from international competition. The public sector was  
32 also cut back. There were mass formal job losses and Zimbabwe's towns, where informal  
33 work had been fairly insignificant for livelihoods compared to most of sub-Saharan  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49

---

50 <sup>2</sup> There are evidently other demographic issues at work influencing rural versus urban population change in Zambia but  
51 careful analysis of fertility, mortality and HIV/AIDS data has shown that the shifts between the rural and urban  
52 population share described here mainly accounted for by migration (see Potts 2006). Fox (2014) has argued that the  
53 changes are more due to an 'urban penalty' whereby urban mortality outcomes have been worse than rural but this  
54 cannot be correct as it was not the case in the 1980s and 1990s. Although it has become so, marginally, for some  
55 indices in the 2000s, obviously this cannot explain the earlier patterns, and anyway the country was re-urbanizing by  
56 the 2000s so the tragic impact on the urban population has been outweighed by the effects of net in-migration. In any  
57 case the net migration data in the censuses are clear on this point.

58 <sup>3</sup> Although there was much political argument about this figure, in fact it fitted with a range of other demographic  
59 trends and indices and is regarded as reasonable (see Potts 2008 for a detailed analysis).  
60

1  
2  
3 Africa, began rapidly to informalise (Mhone 1995). Real urban incomes fell. Rural-urban  
4 linkages were strengthening to counter urban vulnerabilities (Mutambirwa and Potts  
5 1990). There were increasingly regular strikes (Dansereau 1997).  
6  
7  
8  
9

10 Zimbabwe's urban and migration patterns for this decade were playing out against a  
11 backdrop of increasing political turmoil which needs to be briefly outlined as they were  
12 of such significance for economic outcomes. There had been slow land reform since  
13 1980 to address the most difficult legacy of its history of white settler rule: extreme  
14 inequalities in the division of land between whites and blacks (Kinsey 1999). As rural  
15 and urban livelihoods weakened in the 1990s, this issue came sharply to the fore.  
16 Pressure from war veterans for better pensions led to a calamitous budget in 1997, when  
17 the Zimbabwean dollar collapsed. Threats to expropriate land without compensation  
18 began, and donor support to wane. Economic management abandoned any conventional  
19 developmental model such as modernization or neo-liberalism, and had slid into crisis  
20 management by the end of the 1990s. In 2000 the ruling party, ZANU (PF), lost a  
21 referendum and only held on to power at an election through violence. Land  
22 expropriation began in earnest, accompanied by violence, and the country stopped paying  
23 its debts. It was soon cut off from most international finance except for humanitarian aid.  
24 The impact on rural and urban livelihoods was drastic, and is the key explanation for the  
25 emigration. This was occurring from both rural and urban areas.  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39

40 2000s: The next census rounds showed that yet again Zimbabwe and Zambia were  
41 experiencing contrasting patterns of urbanization but this time it was Zimbabwe that was  
42 counter-urbanizing, and Zambia that was now (re)-urbanizing.  
43  
44  
45  
46

47 By 2010 Zambia's urbanization level was back to about where it had been in 1980. The  
48 main causes were the re-establishment of some key global economic conditions of the  
49 1960s and early 1970s: high copper prices driven by a strong global economy. This time  
50 the main source of demand was the Far East (particularly China) rather than western  
51 countries. Zambia's GDP growth rate soared from about 2003, the mines started to re-  
52 hire and some new mines opened. In 1978 there had been 62,222 employees in mining  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 most of whom would have been in the formal sector. By 2004 there were only 19,900  
4 (Matenga, 2010 cited in Evans 2014). However, by 2008 there were 62,082 formal  
5 mining employees (Republic of Zambia 2011) and in 2012 this had risen further to  
6  
7 74,254.<sup>4</sup>  
8  
9

10  
11  
12 In Zimbabwe economic conditions up to 2008 were nothing short of disastrous, and  
13 although there has been some normalization since, the urban economy has remained  
14 weak and unstable (Chitiyo and Kibble 2014). By the census in 2012 its urbanization  
15 level had fallen 1% to 32.6%. National population growth remained similar to the 1990s  
16 averaging 1.2% per year, but the urban population grew at just 0.6% per year, well below  
17 the rate of natural increase (discussed later), so net out-migration was occurring to rural  
18 Zimbabwe and to other countries. Cut off from international finance the government  
19 printed money, leading to some of the highest levels of inflation ever recorded in the  
20 world, reaching billions of per cent by the end of 2008 when a degree of normality  
21 returned after the Zimbabwean dollar was abandoned. Food security in both rural and  
22 urban areas was in crisis for much of the decade. Formal sector pay became almost  
23 meaningless in relation to urban living costs for most of the time, since inflation  
24 destroyed buying power almost as soon as pay increases were announced. By 2004 the  
25 primary inputs by real value into most *urban* livelihoods were sourced from beyond the  
26 city (Potts 2011): a combination of agricultural crops, livestock, and gold panning. A  
27 government campaign against urban informality in 2005 made it even harder to live in  
28 towns; although informal work gradually restarted (or the cities would truly have  
29 collapsed), hundreds of thousands had lost their houses. Emigration continued, providing  
30 crucial remittance incomes for many, although many migrants were impermanent and  
31 involved in cross border trading, going back and forth between Zimbabwe and South  
32 Africa, or Botswana, or even Mozambique and Zambia. The discovery of very  
33 significant diamond resources in this decade provided a crucial lifeline for corrupt elites,  
34 and fed into many other livelihoods, but had few direct impacts on urbanization.  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52

---

53  
54  
55  
56  
57 <sup>4</sup> The 2010/11 Zambian income and earning report, using different survey methods, records only 53,326 in this sector  
58 all of whom would have been formal workers.  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 To summarise the paper so far: Zimbabwe and Zambia since the 1960s have had directly  
4 contrasting urbanization experiences. Both experienced decades in which they have  
5 counter-urbanized. In each decade the urban outcomes have been caused by broad  
6 economic trends and influences, as well as some country-specific policies: thus  
7 urbanization has followed economic growth except when draconian restrictions on  
8 migration have been in place. However the national urbanization data only tell us so  
9 much; they mask many variations within the countries' urban networks. The next  
10 sections turn to these patterns which provide further insights into the links between  
11 economic patterns and urbanization.  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20

## 21 **Deconstructing Zimbabwe and Zambia's urban patterns**

### 22 *Urban shift analysis*

23  
24 A shift analysis of urbanization takes the national growth rates for each intercensal period  
25 and compares these with those for individual towns. It shows which towns grew faster or  
26 slower than the country's population overall, and thus which were increasing or losing  
27 relative population share. This is a helpful approach, because rapid growth rates in  
28 African towns of say, 3% per year (which would double the population in 23 years) are  
29 sometimes assumed to mean that urbanization fuelled by net rural-urban migration is  
30 occurring, when in reality very little real change is occurring in rural:urban shares simply  
31 because the national population is growing at much the same rate. It is a simple  
32 approach which is easy to do with available data but is indicative only, since natural  
33 increase rates may vary somewhat between towns and of course between rural and urban  
34 areas. However natural increase remains higher in African towns than suggested by their  
35 fertility rates, which are lower now than in rural areas<sup>5</sup>, because towns often have high  
36 birth rates as they tend to have a larger proportion of people in their fertile years than  
37 rural areas. Also their death rates tend to be lower than rural ones. Growth rates similar  
38 to, or even less than, national rates do not mean there has been no in-migration either – it  
39 simply means that *net* in-migration has been limited.  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55

---

56 <sup>5</sup> There are regular Demographic Health Surveys held in most African countries. These show that in 1994 Zimbabwe  
57 urban fertility rates were 3.1 and rural rates were 4.9. In 2011 the rates had changed very little and stood at 3.1 and 4.8.  
58 In Zambia in 1992 the urban rate was 4.8 and the rural rate 7.1. These had fallen by 2014 to 3.7 and 6.6.  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 FIGURES 2, 3 ABOUT HERE  
4  
5  
6

7 Figures 2 and 3 show the extent to which the ten largest urban areas at the last census in  
8 Zimbabwe and Zambia were gaining or losing population share over the past fifty years.  
9 Taking Zambia first: the most obvious issue is how the counter-urbanization of the 1980s  
10 and 1990s was because urban growth on the Copperbelt fell below the national level; the  
11 fall was not spread evenly across urban areas. The towns involved were Ndola, Kitwe,  
12 Chingola, Mufulira and Luanshya. Kabwe, another mining town (but not a copper  
13 producer) was similarly affected. Also clearly depicted is how the period of net out-  
14 migration for most copper towns began in the 1970s, when copper prices fell so sharply.  
15 Kabwe, by contrast, continued to grow strongly in that decade. Very significantly, all  
16 these mining towns continued losing population share in the 2000s (except Kitwe  
17 although its growth was very little faster than Zambia's), even as the country's economic  
18 growth rate sharply improved and the country overall began to re-urbanize.  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29

30 On the other hand, as shown, Lusaka has consistently grown at rates above Zambia's. Its  
31 relative growth did fall right back to just 1% faster in the 1990s, when liberalizing  
32 economic reforms were at their height; in the same decade the mining towns were losing  
33 population share fastest as the shift analysis shows. However the gap increased to +2%  
34 from 2000-2010, although the rate of in-migration is less than it was in the 1970s and  
35 1980s.  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41

42 The experience of the other three Zambian towns in Figure 2 has been variable. Space  
43 precludes detailed analysis but it is worth noting that their recent growth rates all  
44 exceeded the national growth rate. Chipata's growth is associated with its role as a  
45 transport and trading post on the border with Malawi, and Kasama's growth in the 1970s  
46 was because the, then new, Tazara railway passed through it.  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 Turning to Zimbabwe (Figure 3), there has also been notable variation in population  
4 growth between towns. As shown, only the largest towns (the Harare agglomeration,<sup>6</sup>  
5 Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru and KweKwe) experienced periods when they lost population  
6 share in the 1960s and 2000s, causing the counter-urbanization during those decades. In  
7 the 1960s influx controls were more vigorously enforced in larger centres. The strong net  
8 in-migration for most of the large towns in the 1970s as influx controls dwindled, and  
9 again during the positive economic phase of the 1980s is clearly depicted. The shift to  
10 lower rates of net in-migration in the 1990s is apparent. Finally, it can be seen that the  
11 shift to counter-urbanization in the last intercensal period was caused by very slow  
12 growth in the largest towns which lost population share: the Harare agglomeration,  
13 Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru and KweKwe. Harare on its own (ie disaggregated from the  
14 agglomeration) grew at only 0.3% per year. Bulawayo's growth rate was -0.3% so it lost  
15 population in absolute, as well as relative terms.  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27

28 While the shift analysis identifies the towns worst affected in Zimbabwe, in fact the  
29 situation in these towns has been even worse than it suggests. A shift analysis, like a  
30 census, can only account for internal population change between urban and rural areas,  
31 and between towns. Yet many migrants from towns (and rural areas) have been going to  
32 other countries, rather than Zimbabwean destinations. My rough estimate of net  
33 emigration from 2002 to 2012 is 774,000, based on the census totals and the expected  
34 additions from natural increase rates.<sup>7</sup> Since emigrants are not recorded by the census,  
35 the internal migration patterns recorded in the census tell only part of the urban economic  
36 story. The published data are only for inter-provincial migration, which limits the  
37 analysis to Bulawayo and the Harare agglomeration, where the urban populations make  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46

---

47 <sup>6</sup> Harare is best analysed in terms of three urban areas within Harare province, which operate functionally as one town  
48 since nearly all the employment is in Harare. These are Harare, Epworth (a former informal settlement) and  
49 Chitungwiza. Housing shortages in Harare and high housing costs have led also to the development of another  
50 associated residential area to the east of Harare Province at Ruwa. Its population in 2012 was 56,678, compared to  
51 22,155 in 2002, making it the fastest growing 'town' in the country at 9.8% per year. Nonetheless, even if Ruwa is  
52 added on to the Harare agglomeration, it makes little difference to its growth rate and it was still losing population  
53 share. The same is true if the so-called Harare Western Suburbs (Zvimba District) are added in, which are adjacent to  
54 Harare's to the west. This area has complex political origins, and is only partly 'urban'.

55 <sup>7</sup> The estimate uses an annual growth rate of 1.75%, an average of the natural increase rates recorded in 2002 and  
56 2012, which yields an expected 2012 population of 13,835,210. The recorded population was only 13,061,239. The  
57 estimate obviously depends on the growth rate used: a 2.2% rate (the figure for 2011-2012) nearly doubles the deficit to  
58 1,398,170. This would definitely be an overestimate. Much would depend on the timing and speed of the fall of adult  
59 death rates as the HIV incidence decreased, and in child mortality rates as the economy normalised after 2008.  
60

1  
2  
3 up all, or nearly all, of their province's population. Lifetime migration data, which record  
4 the current residence of people born elsewhere, shows negative shifts in both cities. The  
5 net gain to Harare from people born elsewhere accounted for 22% of its population in  
6 2002 but only 17% in 2012. For Bulawayo the respective figures were 19% and 16%.  
7 Intercensal migration data demonstrate clearly how net in-migration to both cities has  
8 fallen compared to the 1990s (Table 1), when it was already reducing; it also shows how  
9 dominant circular migration has been with much movement in and out (see Potts 2010b).  
10 Both towns nonetheless experienced net gains in population from *internal* migration:  
11 Harare's population was about 5% higher in 2012 than it would otherwise have been,  
12 equivalent to about 100,00 people; Bulawayo gained about 26,000. However, as the shift  
13 analysis already identified both cities as losing population share, we know that there has  
14 been net out-migration overall so the balance must be accounted for by emigrants. As  
15 with the national population, it is possible to calculate rough 'city deficits' using  
16 provincial natural increase data from the censuses (see Table 2). These calculations  
17 suggest net emigration from Harare of about 303,000 and from Bulawayo of 123,000. In  
18 sum, the analysis suggests net out-migration from Harare in the intercensal period of  
19 about 200,00 people, equivalent to about 10% of its 2012 population; and around 100,000  
20 from Bulawayo, 15% of its population. Triangulation between different demographic data  
21 thus provides insights into the depth of the impact of Zimbabwe's urban economic crisis  
22 on urbanization and migration patterns.  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39

40 TABLES 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE  
41  
42  
43

44 The fact that the four smallest urban centres depicted in Figure 2 gained population share  
45 in the terrible economic condition of the last intercensal period is significant. First, this  
46 points to a relative lack of resilience of urban livelihoods in the larger centres compared  
47 to smaller towns. In other words, the larger the town, the more vulnerable its people have  
48 been during the dramatic economic downturn. The falls in formal sector employment and  
49 real incomes in urban Zimbabwe which began in the 1990s and worsened dramatically in  
50 the 2000s brought about major changes in migrants' perceptions of the economic  
51 advantages of towns. The lack of economic safety nets in towns was crucial in their  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3 judgements. This was very evident from research in Harare in 2001, when most migrants  
4 surveyed felt that their standards of living, compared to their previous place of residence,  
5 had either not improved or had actually declined, and most said they planned to leave the  
6 city in the short to medium term (Potts 2010). During a real economic crisis, the big  
7 problems in the larger centres, relative to smaller towns, are higher costs of living,  
8 particularly for housing and transport to work, and the greater difficulty of defraying  
9 these by various livelihood adaptations. In smaller towns it is easier to walk to work,  
10 planning regulations on informality are less vigorously enforced, and food security is  
11 much more easily addressed by urban agriculture within or just beyond the urban  
12 boundaries (which are obviously nearer in small towns), or by links to nearby rural areas  
13 from which many migrants originate. Not only has this been demonstrated in Zimbabwe  
14 by a detailed study of people's views in the small town of Rusape (Andersson 2002)  
15 which had a population of around 30,000 in 2012,<sup>8</sup> but it was also evident from the  
16 migrant surveys in Harare as some respondents intended to move to smaller towns for  
17 these sorts of reasons (Potts 2010a). Food security was a very serious problem in urban  
18 Zimbabwe up until at least 2008; in 2004 a national urban vulnerability assessment found  
19 it to be as bad as in the rural areas but almost all international humanitarian food  
20 programmes only operated in rural areas.  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39

## 40 Conclusions

41  
42 How do these patterns of urbanization and migration in Zambia and Zimbabwe inform  
43 the debates outlined in the introduction on the 'chicken and egg' question about  
44 economic growth and urbanization in African countries, and the rationality of migrants?  
45 First, the waxing and waning of urbanization in both countries, for which the proximate  
46 cause is variations in the net rates of in-migration to towns, surely demonstrates beyond  
47 any doubt that these processes do not occur 'in the absence of economic growth' in  
48 Africa. Migration rates go up when employment is being generated but are not sustained  
49 in the face of strong negative changes in urban economies, incomes and conditions; they  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56

57  
58 <sup>8</sup> Rusape's average growth rate 2000-2012 was 2.9% per year, about two and half times that of the national population.  
59  
60

1  
2  
3  
4 change in logical ways and according to the basic precepts of standard neo-classical  
5 migration theory. Second, both when looking at overall changes in the urban population  
6 share, and when boring down into the data and disaggregating by town, most shifts in in-  
7 migration rates and urban population growth can be explicitly linked to an economic  
8 factor; exceptions are due to specific political influences. In other words, positive (or  
9 negative) economic changes which either create (or undermine) livelihoods occur before  
10 migration changes. Put another way, if in-migration and the establishment of densely  
11 settled, large urban populations were enough to create self-sustaining economic growth,  
12 there would have been no 'waning' of urbanization levels or of the populations of  
13 individual large towns in either country. The same point could be argued about sub-  
14 Saharan African countries more generally: why did the periods of very strong  
15 urbanization established in the early decades of independence not establish sustained  
16 economic growth trends across the continent if urbanization itself triggers economic  
17 development?  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29

30 Some urban geographers might regard the central debate here as a 'straw man': an  
31 academic position artificially constructed and easily proven wrong for the sake of making  
32 an analysis seem more relevant. The post-industrial landscape of the USA and Europe is  
33 littered with towns (eg Baltimore, Detroit, Liverpool) which have 'waned' as the  
34 geography of global economic forces has rendered them relatively uncompetitive: merely  
35 being large and dense, facilitating agglomeration economies, was not enough to maintain  
36 their economic growth (Beauregard 2009; Haase 2012). Mining towns have always been  
37 prone to ups and downs, or even disappearing ('ghost' towns), depending on the price of  
38 the mineral. However, as the introduction to this paper demonstrated, there really is a  
39 conviction amongst some analysts that contemporary urbanization in Africa can self-  
40 generate economic growth. There is something of a parallel here with the ideas promoted  
41 by Florida (2002) that promoting the growth of certain types of labour (young creative  
42 people) in struggling cities can regenerate their economies. The idea of the economic  
43 growth following the urban people is similar, although the African debate is much  
44 broader brush. However Florida's policies have been very effectively criticised as  
45 ineffectual by Peck (2005).  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3  
4  
5 The earlier debate about African urbanization in the 1980s and 1990s was different from  
6 the current one: the issue was not whether urbanization and rapid in-migration could  
7 generate urban economic growth but why the obvious weakness of urban economies did  
8 not deter rapid in-migration. It has been interesting to watch how one debate somehow  
9 segued into the other without much reflection on the fundamentally different  
10 understandings of the key 'factors' (urbanization, migration, economic production)  
11 involved. Misunderstandings of the complexities of migration flows have played some  
12 part. Knowing that rural-urban migration is occurring is enough for there to be a  
13 presumption, as in the two first SoAC reports, for example, that rapid urbanization is  
14 occurring. The points that out-migration back to rural areas or to other countries occurs,  
15 that both migration flows vary in logical ways according to the relative strengths of  
16 livelihoods, and that net migration can end up being quite small or occasionally negative,  
17 are missed. The case studies of Zambia and Zimbabwe exemplify the significance of a  
18 broader understanding. Another problematic over-simplification is to assume that if urban  
19 net in-migration is at all positive, and there is any net gain in population share of a town  
20 or range of towns, even when economic conditions have been trending down, then that  
21 disproves that migration flows are affected by economic signals. Lusaka, for example,  
22 has always experienced net in-migration. Yet well conducted migration surveys always  
23 show that there are some flows for which the proximate causes are non-economic (eg to  
24 join family members; attend higher education; obtain medical care), or where there is a  
25 desperate need for cash to support family members elsewhere, or where personal (eg  
26 divorce, disputes) or structural (eg war) disasters push people to towns. Put differently,  
27 small rises in urbanization levels do not prove that there is some sort of new urban  
28 'model' whereby migration flows are virtually divorced from a country's economic  
29 geography. When rates of net in-migration, and shifts in the share of national population,  
30 are analysed over long periods of time as in the shift analysis conducted for this paper,  
31 rather than looking at a particular year or short time period, the underlying role of  
32 economic factors becomes clear.  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3 Finally, although the discussion above has focused on economic issues, the cases of both  
4 Zambia and Zimbabwe show very clearly the significance of political factors and regional  
5 geography for understanding urban trajectories, as well as exogenous economic forces,  
6 none of which are much recognized in the debates this paper mainly addresses. The  
7 nature and strength of implementation of policies on influx control and land have been  
8 fundamental influences in the past and continue to shape urbanization patterns, and both  
9 reflect the nature of the state and the significance of white settlers. Zambia's economic  
10 decline in the 1970s was greatly exacerbated by being landlocked and trying to comply  
11 with economic sanctions on its neighbour which was also its transit route state. All these  
12 factors need to be combined to have a true understanding of the urban narratives at the  
13 core of this paper. The migration trajectories depicted are nonetheless clear: they shift as  
14 urban economies and labour markets have strengthened or weakened and those shifts are  
15 always embedded in broader global forces, from international sanctions on Rhodesia  
16 during UDI, to shifts in the terms of trade, to the imposition of neoliberal policy  
17 conditions in aid packages and advice, to the rise of China.  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34

35 **Africa Development Bank** 2012 *African Economic Outlook 2012* Paris, OECD

36 **Africapolis** no date *Urbanization trends 1950-2010: a geo-statistical approach* West  
37 Africa, AFD-SEDET, Africapolis

38 **Andersson A** 2002 *The Bright Lights Grow Fainter: Livelihoods, Migration and a Small*  
39 *Town in Zimbabwe* Stockholm, Dept of Geography, Stockholm University, Almquist and  
40 Wiksell International

41 **Annez P and Buckley R** 2009 *Urbanization and Growth: Setting the Context in* **Spence**  
42 **M Annez P and Buckley R** eds *Urbanization and growth: Commission on Growth and*  
43 *Development: World Bank Publications*

44 **Beauchemin C and P Bocquier** 2004 *Migration and urbanization in Francophone West*  
45 *Africa: a review of the recent empirical evidence* *Urban Studies* 41 (11):2245-72

46 **Beauregard R** 2009 *Urban population loss in historical perspective: United States,*  
47 *1820s- 2000* *Environment and Planning A* 41, 3,514-528

48 **Becker C Hamer A and Morrison A** 1994 *Beyond urban bias: African urbanisation in*  
49 *an era of structural adjustment* London, James Currey

50 **Bourne L and Simmons J** eds 1978 *Systems of cities: readings on structure growth and*  
51 *policy* New York, Oxford University Press

52 **Bryceson D and MacKinnon D** 2012 *Eureka and beyond: mining's impact on African*  
53 *urbanisation* *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 30 (4)

54 **Central Statistical Office [Zimbabwe]** 2004 *Census 2002: national report* Harare, CSO  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

- 1  
2  
3 **Chitiga M** 2004 'Trade Policies and Poverty in Zimbabwe: a Computable General  
4 Equilibrium Micro-Simulation Analysis' *Poverty and Economic Policy Research*  
5 *Network Report*, Pretoria
- 6 **Chitiyo K and Kibble S** 2014 *Zimbabwe's international re-engagement: the long haul*  
7 *to recovery* London, Chatham House Report
- 8 **Clos J** 2010 Foreword to *The State of African Cities 2010: Governance, Inequality and*  
9 *Urban Land Markets* Nairobi, UN-Habitat
- 10 **Collier P** 2013 Presentation for Round Table convened by Centre for Development and  
11 Enterprise on Cities of Hope, *CDE Round Table* 24 March 2014  
12 <http://www.cde.org.za/publications/jobs-growth/83-jobs-and-growth/428-cities-of-hope>
- 13 **Dansereau S** 1997 Rebirth of resistance: labour and structural adjustment in Zimbabwe,  
14 *Labour, Capital and Society* 30 (1):90-122
- 15 **Evans A** 2014 'Women Can Do What Men Can Do': The Causes and Consequences of  
16 Growing Flexibility in Gender Divisions of Labour in Kitwe, *Zambia Journal of*  
17 *Southern African Studies* 40, 5 981-998
- 18 **Fay M and C Opal** 2000 Urbanization without growth: a not so uncommon phenomenon  
19 Washington DC, World Bank
- 20 **Ferguson J** 1990 Mobile workers, modernist narratives: a critique of the historiography  
21 of transitions on the Zambian copperbelt: Part 1 *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16,  
22 3 385-412
- 23 **Ferguson J** 1999 *Expectation Of Modernity: myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the*  
24 *Zambian Copperbelt* Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, University of California Press
- 25 **Florida R** 2002 *The rise of the creative class* New York, Basic Books
- 26 **Fox S** 2014 Urbanisation as a global historical process: theory and evidence from sub-  
27 Saharan Africa in **Parnell S and Pieterse E** eds *Africa's urban revolution* London, Zed  
28 Books
- 29 **Gargett E** 1977 *The administration of transition: African urban settlement in Rhodesia*  
30 Gwelo, Mambo Press
- 31 **Gollin D Jedwab R and Vollrath D** 2014 *Urbanization with and without*  
32 *industrialization* Paper presented at US Department of State meeting on Strategic  
33 Consequences of Urbanization in Sub-Saharan Africa to 2025, April 3, 2014  
34 [http://home.gwu.edu/~jedwab/gjv\\_Apr2014.pdf](http://home.gwu.edu/~jedwab/gjv_Apr2014.pdf)
- 35 **Haase D** 2012 Shrinking cities, biodiversity and ecosystem services in **Elmqvist T** ed  
36 *Urbanization, biodiversity and ecosystem services: challenges and opportunities: a global*  
37 *assessment* Dordrecht, Springer
- 38 **Hanson S** 2007 *Urbanization in sub-Saharan Africa: Backgrounder* Council on  
39 Foreign Relations [http://www.cfr.org/africa-sub-saharan/urbanization-sub-saharan-](http://www.cfr.org/africa-sub-saharan/urbanization-sub-saharan-africa/p14327)  
40 [africa/p14327](http://www.cfr.org/africa-sub-saharan/urbanization-sub-saharan-africa/p14327)
- 41 **Jamal V and J Weeks** 1993 *Africa misunderstood: or whatever happened to the rural-*  
42 *urban gap?* Basingstoke, Macmillan
- 43 **Kinsey B** 1999 Land Reform, Growth and Equity: Emerging Evidence from Zimbabwe's  
44 Resettlement Programme *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25 (2)173-96
- 45 **Lloyd P and Dicken P** 1977 *Location in space: a theoretical approach to economic*  
46 *geography* London: Harper and Row
- 47 **Mckinsey Global Institute** 2010 *Lions on the move – the progress and potential of*  
48 *African economies* Mckinsey Institute
- 49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

- 1  
2  
3 **Meller P and Simpasa A** 2011 Role of Copper in the Chilean & Zambian Economies:  
4 Main Economic and Policy Issues *GDN Working Paper No 43* New Delhi, Global  
5 Development Network  
6  
7 **Ministry of Finance** 1979 'Urban Development in Main Centres: A report on the  
8 population influx problem as part of the five year rural development plan' Salisbury  
9  
10 **Mhone G** 1995 *The impact of the structural adjustment program on the urban informal*  
11 *sector in Zimbabwe* Discussion paper 2, SAPES. Harare: SAPES.  
12  
13 **Mutambirwa C and Potts D** 1990 Changing patterns of African rural-urban migration  
14 and urbanization in Zimbabwe *Eastern and Southern African Geographical Journal* 1  
15 (1): 26-39  
16  
17 **Pacione M** ed 1985 *Progress in industrial geography* London: Croom Helm  
18  
19 **Peck J** 2005 Struggling with the creative class *International Journal of Urban and*  
20 *Regional Research* 29 (4): 740-770  
21  
22 **Potts D** 1995 'Shall we go home? Increasing urban poverty in African cities and  
23 migration processes' *Geographical Journal* 161 (3):245-264  
24  
25 **Potts D** 2005 Counter-urbanization on the Zambian Copperbelt? Interpretations and  
26 Implications *Urban Studies* 42 (4):583-609  
27  
28 **Potts D** 2008 Displacement and livelihoods: the longer term impacts of Operation  
29 Murambatsvina in **Vambe M** ed *Zimbabwe: The Hidden Dimensions of Operation*  
30 *Murambatsvina* Harare, Weaver Press  
31  
32 **Potts D** 2010a *Circular migration in Zimbabwe and contemporary sub-Saharan Africa*  
33 James Currey, Oxford  
34  
35 **Potts D** 2010b Internal migration in Zimbabwe: the impact of livelihood destruction in  
36 rural and urban areas in **Crush J and Tevera D** eds *Zimbabwe's Exodus* Cape Town,  
37 Southern African Migration Project; Ottawa, International Development Research  
38 Centre  
39  
40 **Potts D** 2011 Making a livelihood in (and beyond) the African city: the experience of  
41 Zimbabwe *Africa* 81, 4 588-605  
42  
43 **Potts D** 2012a Challenging the Myths of Urban Dynamics in Sub-Saharan Africa: The  
44 Evidence from Nigeria *World Development* 40, 7 1382-1393  
45  
46 **Potts D** 2013a Urban economies, urban livelihoods and natural resource-based economic  
47 growth in sub-Saharan Africa: the constraints of a liberalized world economy *Local*  
48 *Economy* 28, 2 168 - 185  
49  
50 **Purbrick C** 1990 'Migrant labour in Zambia: understanding the rural-urban and regional  
51 divides' MPhil thesis, University of Liverpool  
52  
53 **Republic of Zambia** 2011 *Labour Force Survey Report 2008* Lusaka, Central Statistical  
54 Office  
55  
56 **Riddell R** 1990 Zimbabwe in **Riddell R** ed *Manufacturing Africa: performance and*  
57 *prospects of seven countries in sub-Saharan Africa* London, James Currey  
58  
59 **Robbins G** 2013 Mining FDI and urban economies in sub-Saharan Africa: Exploring the  
60 possible linkages *Local Economy* 28 (2):158-16942-157  
**Spence M Annez P and Buckley R** eds 2009 *Urbanization and growth: Commission on*  
*Growth and Development* World Bank Publications  
**Stoneman C** ed 1981 *Zimbabwe's inheritance* London, Macmillan  
**Stoneman C** 1982 Industrialisation and self-reliance in Zimbabwe in **Fransman M** ed  
*Industrialisation and accumulation in Africa* London, Heinemann

- 1  
2  
3 **Stoneman C** 1989 The World Bank and the IMF in Zimbabwe in **Campbell B and**  
4 **Loxley J** eds *Structural adjustment in Africa* London, James Currey  
5 **Turok I and McGranahan G** 2013 Urbanization and economic growth: the arguments  
6 and evidence for Africa and Asia *Environment and Urbanization* 25 (2):465–482  
7 **Turok, I** 2013 Securing the resurgence of African cities *Local Economy* 28, 2 142-157  
8 **UN Habitat** 2014 *The State of African Cities 2014: Re-imagining sustainable urban*  
9 *transitions* Nairobi, United Nations Human Settlements Programme  
10 **ZimStat** (nd) *Census 2012 National Report* Harare, Population Census Office  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

For Peer Review

Table 1: Inter-censal Inter-provincial Migration in Zimbabwe 1992-2002 and 2002-2012

| Province and census date | Census population >10 yrs <sup>a</sup> | As % of population aged >10 years at census |                         |                          |                                     |
|--------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|                          |  | Resident at census and previous census      | Intercensal in-migrants | Intercensal out-migrants | Net gain from intercensal migration |
| Harare 2002              | 1,397,596                              | 75  | 34                      | -23                      | 11                                  |
| Harare 2012              | 1,568,529                              | 67  | 33                      | -29                      | 5                                   |
| Bulawayo 2002            | 514,524                                | 75  | 30                      | -24                      | 6                                   |
| Bulawayo 2012            | 490,881                                | 69  | 31                      | -27                      | 4                                   |

Source: calculated and compiled from data in 2002 and 2012 census tables on intercensal migration rates; CSO (2004a), ZimStat (n.d.)

Notes: a. to compare populations between one census and the previous one, it is necessary to exclude those under ten years of age at the current census as they had not been born at the previous one; to retain comparability the matrices used to generate inter-censal flows also exclude the under-tens at the earlier census. The Zimbabwean statistical office also excludes from the population used those who reported that their place of enumeration had not been their main place of usual residence during the 12 months before that census.

b. Percentages may not add exactly due to rounding

Table 2: Demographic indices: Zimbabwe and Harare and Bulawayo Provinces

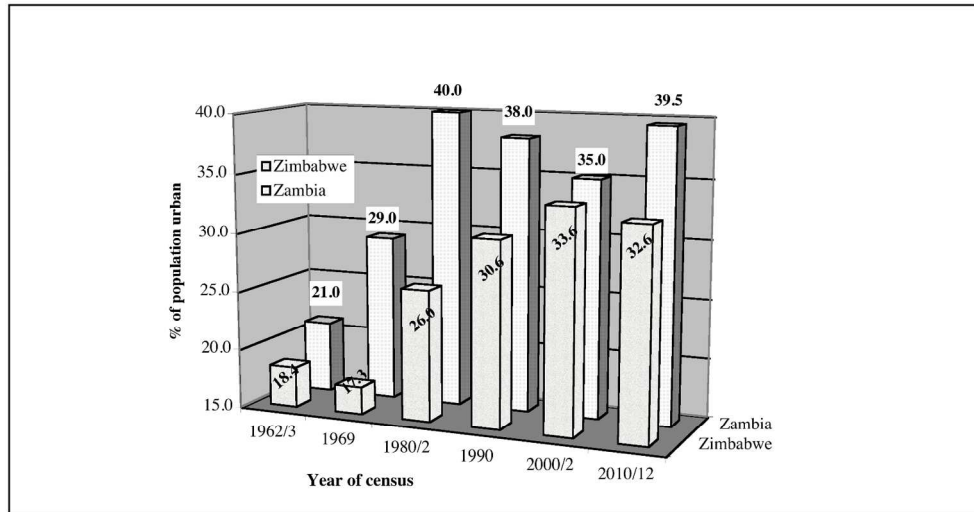
| Population index           | Zimbabwe | Harare province <sup>a</sup> | Bulawayo province <sup>b</sup> |
|----------------------------|----------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Population 1992 ('000s)    | 10,412   | 1,537                        | 622                            |
| Population 2002 ('000s)    | 11,632   | 1,896                        | 677                            |
| Population 2012 ('000s)    | 13,061   | 2,123                        | 653                            |
| Crude birth rate 2001-02   | 30.3     | 30.5                         | 27                             |
| Crude birth rate 2011-12   | 31.9     | 33.3                         | 27.3                           |
| Crude death rate 2001-02   | 17.2     | 10.6                         | 13.9                           |
| Crude death rate 2011-12   | 10.2     | 7.7                          | 9.3                            |
| Natural increase 2001-02 % | 1.3      | 2.0                          | 1.3                            |
| Natural increase 2011-12 % | 2.2      | 2.6                          | 1.8                            |
| AAGR 1992-2002 %           | 1.1      | 2.1                          | 0.8                            |
| AAGR 2002-2012 %           | 1.2      | 1.1                          | -0.3                           |

Source: compiled or calculated from data in CSO (2004), CSO (nd.), ZimStat (n.d.)

a. Harare province mainly comprised three separately designated urban areas in 2002: Harare, Chitungwiza and Epworth. The provincial boundaries were extended by 2012 largely for electoral gerrymandering reasons, which increased its population (and apparent growth rate); but the annual growth rate between 2002 and 2012 of the original urban conglomeration was 0.7%.

b. Bulawayo province comprises Bulawayo city; the two are synonymous

Figure 1: Changes in level of urbanization in Zambia and Zimbabwe 1960s to 2010/12

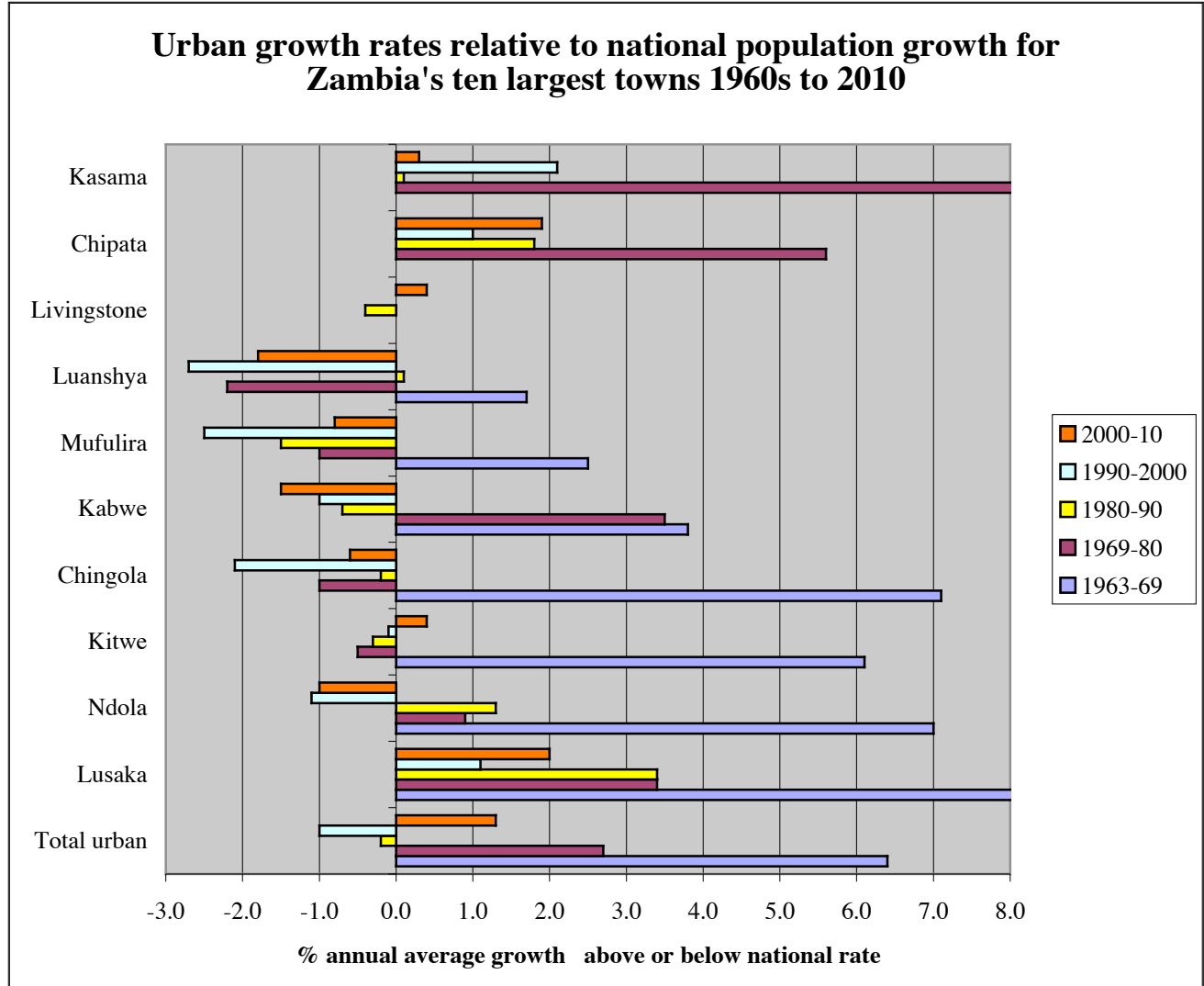


Note: Zambia's last three censuses provide both de facto and de jure data for many population figures, but only de jure figures for individual town populations. For the sake of comparability with later analyses of individual towns in 2000 and 2010, the *de jure* data are used here. The effect is very small eg in 2010 the urbanization level using *de facto* data was 40.1%. The Zimbabwean data are *de facto*.

Figure 1: Changes in level of urbanization in Zambia and Zimbabwe 1960s to 2010/12  
151x104mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Review

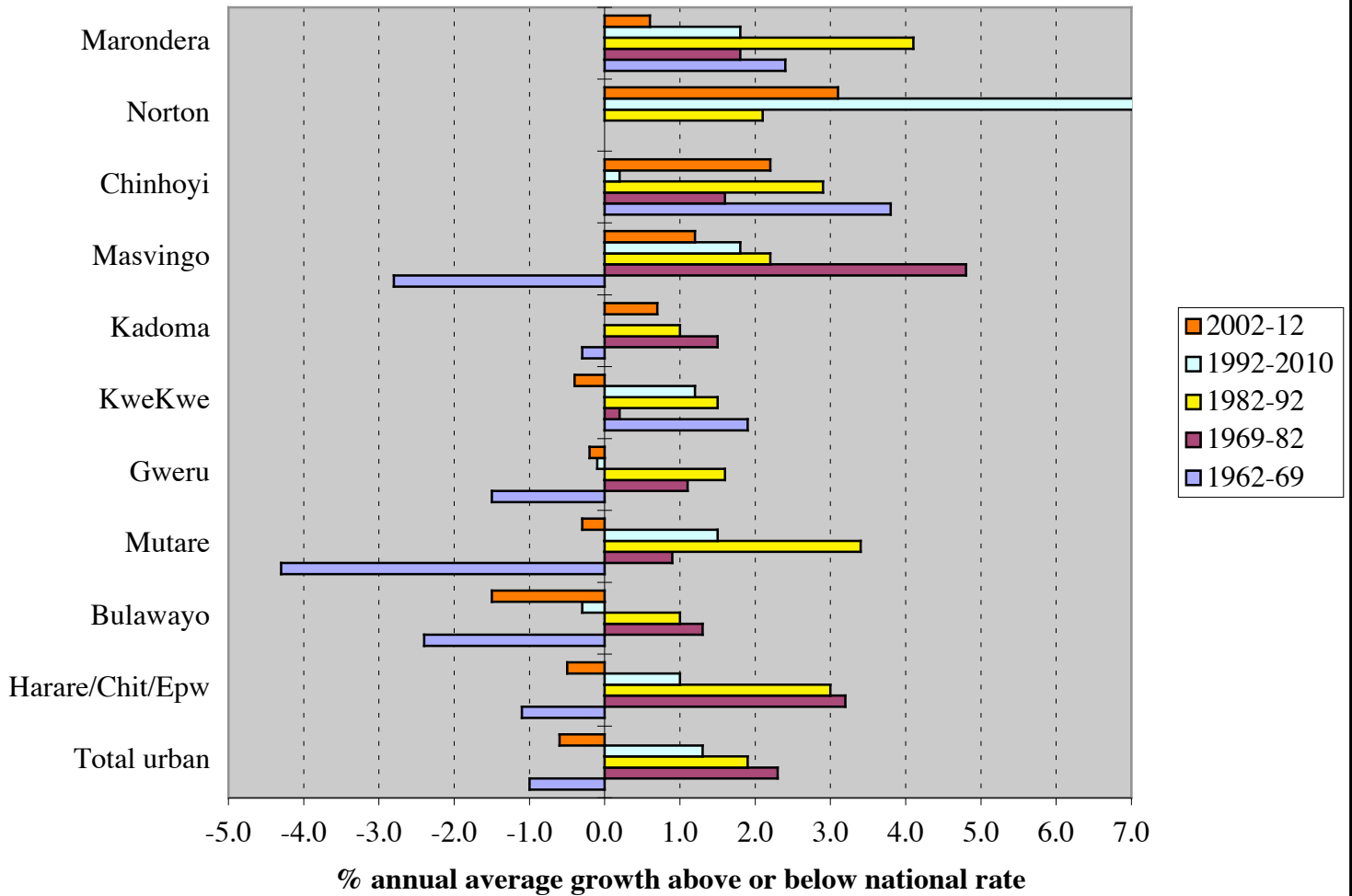
1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



iew

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

**Urban growth rates relative to national population growth for Zimbabwe's ten largest towns 1960s to 2012**



1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60