



The Diversification of Rural Livelihoods After the Year 2000 in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

The article explores rural livelihood diversification patterns after the year 2000 using the Zimbabwean case. It relied on 30 households' life history accounts alongside document analysis by examining the processes, determinants, and outcomes of these livelihood configurations. While rural households' livelihoods had come to entirely rely on either agriculture or wage employment or both before the 2000s, evidence has demonstrated that after the year 2000, the means of survival have been diversified into a number of a complicated archaeology of occupational testing through the streamlining of land and labour away from agriculture, and the consequent following of such occupations like hair-cutting, vending, migration among others. These livelihood patterns have been due to a complicated archaeology of events ranging from rural households' socio-economic changes, the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme, the unemployment effects of the fourth Industrial revolution and ecological destabilisation. Policy interventions, thus, need to acknowledge rural livelihoods diversification and help citizens by incorporating and helping these rural households into rural development projects and programmes to better their livelihoods.

Keywords: determinants of livelihoods, Fast-Track Land Reform Programme, livelihood diversification, rural households, Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

Livelihood diversification, a term that became popular after the 1970s, denotes additional economic activities performed by households to supplement their income apart from farming [1]. Recent times have, thus, recognised an explosion of scholarly literature and other related studies concerning rural households, livelihoods, and their well-being and food security particularly after the year 2000.

At the centre of this scholarship is an assortment of publications on rural livelihoods and the precarious nature of livelihood patterns on general well-being [2]. These studies, most of them case-based in Africa, Asia and South America, have often been framed around market integration and the streamlining of the global economy following the popularisation of the Bretton Woods Institutions' neo-liberal agenda [3, 4]. Accordingly, peasants in the Less Mature Economies have been incorporated into the global economy, diversifying their livelihood portfolios leading to the creation of a semi-proletarian class [5]. Unfortunately, general well-being of rural households in the Global South has been on a plummeting path since the 2000s

owing to lack of adequate resources to meet subsistence needs [6, 7], including the unemployment challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution as admitted by Xu et al., [8]. In India, the erosion of legitimacy privilege of the peasantries resulting from the penetration of the silent process of globalization or commercialization has been recognised [9, 10]. In other settings, the attrition of agricultural prospects has led to a social crisis due to migration of villagers to urban areas and this has divided households, hollowed out settlements and left families scattered [11].

This early literature has been grounded in the early depeasantisation and deagrarianisation notions that became popular from the mid-1970s [12], ideas which have been influenced by popular accounts around the characterisation of rural farmers as worker-peasants [13]. These accounts have been associated with expatriate cost-cutting economies and signified a major reorganisation of labour and land practices, determining the smallholder farmers' livelihoods for which the World Emerging Economies are recognised with in the current.

Whilst I acknowledge this increasing body of scholarship on livelihood change [12, 14], my focus in this paper spreads out to investigate processes, determinants, outcomes of the post-2000 rural livelihood configurations. I hope to widen both thinking and action on livelihood transformation and argue that policy in the Global South should acknowledge livelihood change and likewise help the poor to move out of poverty. Owing to the disruption of the Global Food Supply Chains due to the impacts of COVID-19 [15], the precarious nature of agricultural-based livelihoods due to climate change [16], higher unemployment levels and the habitual dodging of rural agriculture by the youths, livelihoods diversification appears to be the only panacea to the current socio-economic problems in the Global South. This paper, thus, contributes greatly to the post-2000 livelihoods literature because it inco-operates a mixture of challenges that rural households have faced after the millennium turn meaning that rural households' livelihoods challenges need to be addressed using multiple lenses in government's rural development projects and programmes. From field-work evidence, the paper illuminates on the urbanization conundrum of Zimbabwe's rural areas because livelihood activities that had entirely been regarded as city or town-based have become common sites in the rural areas, especially haircutting.

The article is chronologically organised: immediately after this introduction, I discuss rural livelihoods upto the late 1990s and then present the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework Approach as it helped to build up a framework of analysis that guided the study. After this, I discuss the field sites and methods used. The section that follows is a presentation of results followed by a discussion. Finally, the article provides a conclusion.

RURAL LIVELIHOODS UP TO THE LATE 1990S: UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Available scholarship on human presence on the planet earth reveals that human existence is approximately 4 million years and that during these early days, human beings heavily relied on hunting and gathering as survival strategies, particularly during the Stone Age [17]. With the development of iron tools during the Iron Age, hunting and gathering ceased to be important means of survival and were subsequently replaced by crop production; a strategy of living that enabled communities to at least produce their own food through settled farming even though some African communities continued with a hunter-gatherer' life-style well into the twenty-first century [18].

While a hunter-gatherer's life was gradually deputised by food production, evidence show that international trade then became another livelihood portfolio to run in tandem with crop production from the 10th century [19]. During this period, the Arabs and the Swahili merchants had become the business middlemen between Indian traders in the east and the South-Eastern African communities [19].

With the establishment of colonial rule in the 1890s, scholarship on Zimbabwe's colonial history has shown that peasants were able to respond to new agricultural and market demands following the opening up of mines by the whites, particularly in high rainfall regions [20]. In this literature, African peasants responded to the European demand for maize and the need to pay hut tax by producing marketable surplus that was required to support settler mining capital [21, 22, 23].

Black African competition in the product market created anxieties among settler whites, and was eventually eroded through various state legal initiatives including discriminatory pricing policies as guided by the Maize Control Act of 1931 [23]. On the other hand, the state poured resources on commercial agriculture and created Native Purchase Areas for the African rural elite, which automatically implied neglecting reserve area agriculture [24]. Similarly, the subsequent enactment of the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) of 1930 usurped the bulk of productive land from the Africans [25] and this fundamentally changed their livelihood portfolios. Though wage employment had been harnessed as an important livelihood trajectory well before, it became increasingly important in their day-to-day living and this led to the creation of the wage-hoe/hoe-wage combinations from the 1930s [5], leading to the proletarianisation of the African peasantry. It was arguably these policies, which also fostered the out-migration of men to mines and towns that set-in motion the destruction of African peasant commercial production in the post-1930 period. The more important point here is that the policies had a strong bearing in the reserves that they undermined later efforts to intervene in reserve area agriculture after World War II, especially with regard to developing 'yeomen farmers' that produced for the market [26].

Attempts by the colonial state after WWII to improve African peasant production lacked any sincerity, and was clouded by racial concerns. As Bush and Cliffe [24, p.80] put it, while there was a recognition 'that the reserves would have to be able to produce more foodstuffs for market, but this must be done without posing an 'unfair' disadvantage to white settler farming interests'. Compounding this dilemma of having to play a balancing act was the hostile reception the intervention received among the peasantry, with some communities openly resisting their implementation leading to 'ungovernability' in the countryside [26], and the subsequent abandonment of the policy in the early 1960 [27].

The failure of the policy was further compounded by the war of liberation, which was mostly fought in the rural areas. As the war intensified in the 1970s, the resultant displacements further constrained peasant agriculture production, and the waging war similarly prevented households from concentrating full on the farming enterprise. While commercial farmers were targeted by guerrilla armies, they continued to dominate the agriculture product market together with the grain market in the 1970s, whereas even maize production, which has been the peasantry's principal farm enterprise, stagnated in the small farm sector [28]. Commercial farmers produced nearly 70 per cent of outputs, and 80 per cent of marketed products including

95 per cent of tobacco, which was the main export crop [29]. The contribution of the peasant sector to the grain market remained negligible as the sector earned a meagre 10 per cent despite the sector being made up of many producers [28].

With the dawning of independence in 1980, Zimbabwe began to enjoy what can be called a dual economy, where both agriculture and wage employment became important livelihood portfolios. This period also marked a turning point in the history of agriculture in the country as peasants began to take a large share in the marketing of the country's grain to the GMB [30, 31], and as such spearheaded the country's maize-based Green Revolution in the 1980s. From 1980, the small farm sector was marketing the bulk of maize to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) [31], as white commercial farmers focused on the production of commercial crops. Between 1980 and 2000, more than 60% of marketed maize was produced by households in the communal areas [30], while the commercial farming sector switched to cash crops. On the economic front, inflation was low and the local currency was stable, running almost at parity with the United States dollar, enabling the country to be self-sufficient in food production [32].

However, towards the late 1980s, the whole system of peasant success faced a sharp decline, driving economic growth almost to zero [32]. To fix these challenges, the government adopted the much-publicised International Monetary Fund/World Bank inspired free market economy. Despite these policies, smallholder agricultural production began folding, leading to greater food shortages alongside political and economic unrest towards the late 1990s and these spilled over into the 2000s. The shrinking of this once prosperous economy has generated much controversy amongst scholars, with some pointing to the implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform and Redistribution Programme (FTLRDP) as the chief cause [33] while some point to the usual focus on the natural environment, particularly the changing climatic conditions, experienced during and after the turn of the century. According to proponents of this view, climatic variability and droughts, although common in the country, have increased in frequency in the past years [34]. To these perspectives, Chiba and Thebe [35] have added the social change perspective that has reduced peasant agricultural performance alongside the denigration of rural agriculture by the youths.

THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS FRAMEWORK APPROACH (SLF)

Although the idea of the SLF is commonly associated with Chambers and Conway [36], its origins can be traced back to the work of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Zambia over the past 50 years [37]. However, some argue that the origins of the SLF approach took centre stage in development thinking from the 1980s [38]. Such arguments attribute the approach to the work of Sen [39], and that of Robert Chambers [40]. Others associate it with the United Nations World Conference on Environment and Development in 1987, which culminated in the publication of the Brundtland Report on World Development and the Environment, but this report, as disputed by some, was an aftermath of early development thinking on People-Environment interactions [40]. Nevertheless, the SLF approach became popular towards the late 1990s, as many charity organisations started mapping out plans to help the poor [41].

Following inconsistencies in identifying when and where the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework originated, it has also become difficult to attribute the approach to one single individual or organisation. Some associate it with Chambers who wrote an introductory paper on livelihoods with others [37]. Others attribute the idea to Ashley and Carney [42], who were

among those assigned by the New Labour Government in Britain to formulate policies that were intended at giving credit to the Blair Administration for helping the poor [42] or with Ellis and Biggs or Anthony Bebbington [40].

Owing to these arguments, different kinds of Sustainable livelihoods frameworks have, thus, emerged: The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework associated with Carney and Scoones [37], The Sustainable Livelihoods Diamond by the United Nations Development Programme, The Capitals and Capabilities Approach by Bebbington and The Framework for thinking about Diverse Rural Livelihoods by Ellis in 2000 [43]. Whichever way, a thorough reading of all this literature yields one thing: The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework, which emphasises the role of assets in enhancing people's livelihoods.

Essentially, the SLF approach places ordinary people at the centre of discussions in development projects [38]. Accordingly, a livelihood entails capabilities, actions and strategies or activities needed to sustain a means of living [44]. It is sustainable if it can exploit its capabilities, activities and available assets in withstanding shocks and stresses. The approach puts much emphasis on the following 5 important elements in people's livelihoods: The vulnerability context, assets, transforming structures and processes, livelihood strategies and livelihood outcomes.

The Vulnerability context outlines a description of the external environment in which the people in question live [41]. This should include trends (demographic and population patterns), shocks and seasonality (fluctuations in prices or production, unemployment due to different time intervals) [41].

The approach also considers how people survive using available assets [45]. These assets include financial capital, social, natural, human and physical capitals [37]. Assets are integral components of people's livelihoods as they determine the ability of people to enjoy well-being [46]. According to the SLF approach, financial capital relates to the ability of people to access income either through wage employment or by getting loans from financial institutions [44]. Social capital relates to the strength of relationships between and among members of a given community within a particular community. Whilst natural capital relates to livelihood assets like land, physical capital is taken to mean tangible assets like livestock, farming implements and equipment [44]. Conversely, human capital refers to skills and knowledge that certain members possess.

Transforming structures and processes include policies, organisations and institutions that opt to support people's access to assets or expose them to risk [47]. Examples of structures include government ministries and financial institutions which give loans to people. In this respect, processes relate to laws that legalise rights to property ownership. The approach also emphasises livelihoods strategies like agriculture, migration and other means for survival [40]. People are engaged in these strategies because they want to increase their income, food security, and reduce vulnerability [44].

LIVELIHOODS FRAMEWORK

Using the SLF approach, the Vulnerability Context and Transforming Structures and Processes were taken to represent the determinants of livelihood patterns after 2000. These determinants

include Climate change, the Fast-Track Land Reform and Redistribution Programme (FTLRRP), social and economic changes. Due to these processes, rural households-their members in particular-opted to follow a complicated archaeology of livelihood patterns like hair-cutting, outward migration, pop-corning, rearing day-old chicks among others. These livelihood trajectories are quite different from earlier livelihood portfolios because evidence demonstrate that before 2000, there were two major livelihood pathways which were wage employment and rural farming. Though other livelihood activities like migration could be felt before the millennium turn, they were relatively lower when compared to the post-2000 era. Finally, an assessment of the post-2000 rural livelihood portfolios indicated poor well-being of most households as they lacked assets of value (See figure a below).

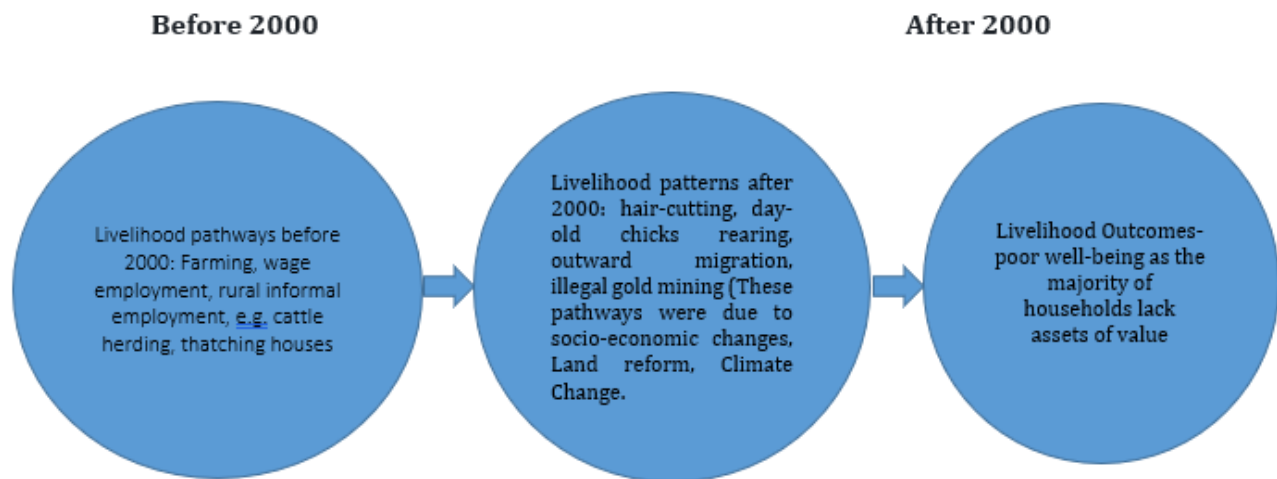


Figure a: Livelihoods Framework
Source: Field-work (2017-2018)

Field Sites and Methods

I centred my field-work research in two study communities in Shamva, lying in a valley ribbon positioned in-between Mazowe River to the south and Mupfurudzi River to the north. These two hamlets were Bushu and Mupfurudzi-Dombojena fast-track farm. Field-work research for a master's degree had initially introduced me to Shamva and as such got fascinated by historical narratives of the district's past livelihood activities. In this study, a resettlement site established at the millennium turn at the implementation of the Fast Track Land Reform and Redistribution Programme (Mupfurudzi-Dombojena) was included to generate diversified cases. Similarly, a resettlement scheme provided diverse experiences since many people having different backgrounds had come and converged in these schemes.

The two study sites, thus, cross-examined rural households' post-2000 circumstantial livelihood portfolios and this was done through direct interaction with different household members, totalling 30 households; implying that from each study site, 15 households were selected and then life history interviews were then utilised. The households that participated in this research followed a certain criterion; those with a history of farming, those with a history of wage employment and those that had never been engaged in wage employment. This criterion was important as it allowed me to trace livelihood change using the previous livelihoods portfolios of these three types of households. Before the conduct of the life history

interviews, consent was sought first from the research participants including consent from the country's political administration echelons: The Provincial Governor, Chief and the respective village heads. It is also necessary to understand that the names used in this study are pseudonyms and the idea was to hide the identification of the research participants.

These were complemented by document analysis and the conducting of more rural households' life history interviews in the different parts of the country which included Bikita East rural, my original rural home and Domboshava where I am now residing. Utilising this methodological framework, I was able to collect data on the processes, determinants and outcomes of the post-2000 livelihood pathways.

The results from Bushu Communal Area and Mupfurudzi (Dombojena) Resettlement Scheme (RS) can be viewed as a complete package of Zimbabwe's rural households owing to the diverse application of a broad mix of research tools. Areas like Mupfurudzi (Dombojena) RS that comprise different people from different communal areas who came together in search of a home confirmed that what rural households have undergone in the two study publics are a complete replica of what happened in Zimbabwe's other communal areas. Such views on generalisations from case study findings are possible given that conclusions drawn carry direct implications for individuals being studied [48]. The study sites are shown below and have been highlighted for easy identification (Figure b).

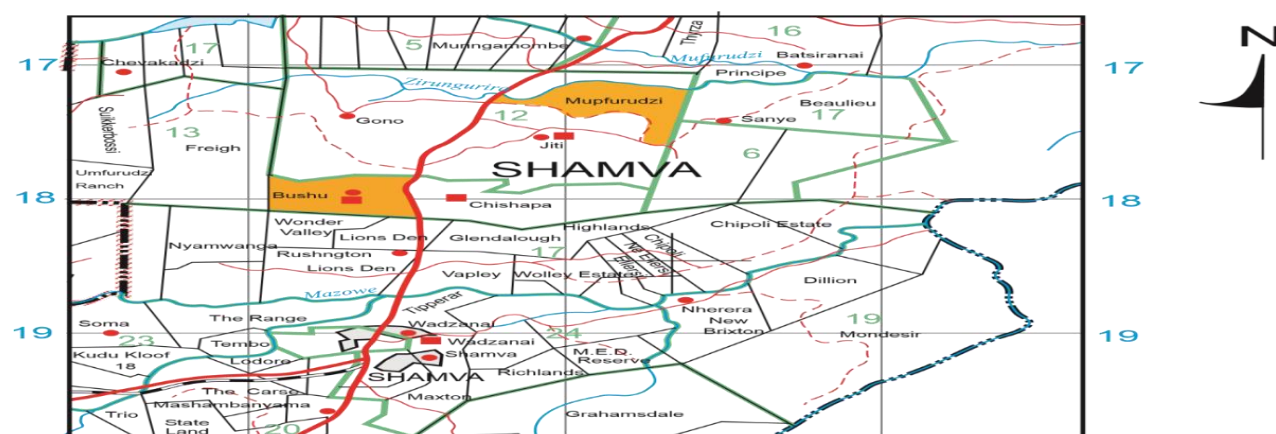


Figure b: The location of the study sites: Map of Bushu and Mupfurudzi

Source: Surveyor General 2018, Harare, Zimbabwe

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Livelihood Trajectories Up to the 2000s

Before the year 2000, evidence shows that villagers in Bushu and Mupfurudzi¹ (in the former areas of residence before joining the fast-track farms) had been engaged in activities like agriculture, wage employment and self-employment activities. Evidence has shown that all households made attempts to engage in agricultural activities, albeit in different ways. Some households have been regarded as historical agricultural success stories than others. Among them was an entrepreneurial group of farmers that had big land areas, and had joined the Master Farmer Scheme, and were participating in agricultural shows and field shows. Some

¹ For Mupfurudzi households, these activities formed part of their daily living before moving into the resettlement area in 2004.

were initially headed by migrant labourers who invested income from migrant labour. Others had accumulated income from migrant labour, which they injected into agriculture: livestock, equipment, inputs and labour. Some of these men had worked as teachers, miners, civil servants or industrial workers. As one respondent put it:

At our household, we were a kind of part-time farmers before the year 2000. My husband would be in Harare for the most part of the year. During the winter season, I would leave the rural area to join him in the city. Then from October at the onset of the rains, I would leave the city for the rural area to carry out our subsistence farming activities. But honestly, we were to a greater extent reliant on the wage from my husband for survival though we were involved in rural farming (Interview, Gogo Chihera 25.12.2018)

From another respondent, I was advised:

Before the year 2000, my father was basically one of the master farmers in this area. Formerly, he had worked as a teacher in the government and then retired in 1995 after accumulating a lot of farming assets including cultivator, plough and cattle (Cherechedzai-son of Gerald Mukombe-Interview 14.09.2018)

Others had never identified themselves with the world of capitalism and had lived in the rural area for the greater part of their lives. The members of these households depended on doing piece-work jobs that were availed by the other households that were better-off economically, particularly migrant labour and farming households. An example was provided by Chinamanenji Onesai. Onesai had never joined the labour migrants in town. He had lived in the countryside doing part-time jobs for other households. He had at one time worked as a herdboys at Gerald Mukombe's household in the mid-1990s. This pattern of livelihoods, which was mainly based on wage employment including informal rural employment and agriculture changed after the year 2000 (See next section).

Livelihood Pathways after the year 2000

While rural households' livelihoods had used to rely on either agriculture or wage employment or both before the 2000s, evidence has demonstrated that the means of survival have been diversified into a number of a complicated archaeology of occupational portfolios through the streamlining of land and labour away from agriculture after the millennium turn. This section, thus, traces rural livelihood pathways after the year 2000.

Haircutting:

Haircutting emerged as one of the livelihood portfolios that arose at the dawning of the millennium turn. What was particularly striking during field-work was that certain economic activities that formerly had been the essential features of urban areas were similarly being undertaken even in rural areas. To substantiate my point, I turn to the case of Tonderai (28). Tonderai had been born, bred and attended school in the city of Gweru, but unfortunately left for his rural home in Mupfurudzi at the death of his father in 2006. At the time of field-work, Tonderai was a barber who operated a haircut shop at the Magetsi Shopping Centre in Mupfurudzi-Dombojena.

The Rearing of Day-Old Chicks:

Another interesting feature that became an important means of survival in the rural areas was the keeping of the quick growing chicken, locally known as broilers. Though this livelihood portfolio was not being practiced by a greater majority of households in my research sample, evidence demonstrated that the venture had become one of the most popular business ventures to characterize the rural neighbourhoods particularly from the 2000s. Mai Tanaka, a 38-year-old lady living in Bushu Communal area provides quite a revealing picture:

I started the rearing of poultry in 2005 when my husband left the government teaching job and headed for South Africa. During the early days of his departure, we suffered as he (my husband) was always telling me that he hadn't found a job. As a result, my elder blood brother gave me start-up capital which I then injected into this project (Mai Tanaka, 38).

Rearing of broilers², though having been practiced before the millennium turn, became so common. Prior to the 2000s, most households used to keep these birds and sold them during Christmas holidays in most cases. However, after the year 2000, the rearing of these broilers became the characteristic features of both rural and urban households throughout the year as part of a survival package owing to a biting economy in the context of high levels of unemployment.

Outward Migration:

Another noticeable livelihood strategy after the year 2000 has been the movement of household members to pursue other livelihood opportunities elsewhere, away from their places of residence. Though labour migration to South African Mines had been common during the early days of the settler economy establishment, after the year 2000 the degree of migration intensified [49, 50]. There was evidence of some household members leaving the rural areas to towns and cities and even to other countries like South Africa, Botswana and the United Kingdom. The Tafara case is a classic example to illustrate this point. At the completion of his ordinary levels in 2004, he left his own mother, who was advanced in years at the time of field-work in 2018, in Bushu and started living in Bindura, a small town located to the North East of Harare, the country's capital. Whilst some of these migrations had been localised, others had been international. We turn to the case of Destiny, the son of Jameson Chakanyuka, who left the G.M.B job in 2003 and went to South Africa where he worked upto 2020 and then left for the United Kingdom in 2021.³

Illegal Gold Mining:

Among an intricate mixture of non-farm activities that rural households had been engaged in after 2000, illegal gold panning was another means of survival that was popular. What was clear was that this livelihood activity was practiced by many households, but in the majority of cases, the miners were aged 40 and below. To provide some qualitative substance, I present the Royai (35) case. A greater part of Royai's time was spent away from home, doing gold panning. He says 'I have become addicted in doing the *chigweja* (illegal mining) and I started this when I left school in 2001'. Other strategies of survival in which rural households' members were engaged

² Broilers are fast-growing chickens which mature after 8 weeks. At this stage, the owner can sell them.

³ The cases of Tafara and Destiny mirror the higher degree of outward migration that Zimbabwe in general experienced after the year 2000.

in included vending, shoe mending, brick making and cross-border trading. In the next section, I present the reasons that set-in motion these livelihood trajectories.

Determinants of Livelihood Pathways

The above section demonstrated that livelihood occupations have become mixed-up collections and that sources of livelihood within rural set-ups have rapidly expanded into an assortment of non-agricultural activities. The location of work for a greater majority of household members had spatially become scattered while mutual relationships of labour exchange amongst rural households had faced a sliding style. Similarly, I turn to the reasons that lie behind these changes in livelihood patterns at the millennium turn using the concept of the vulnerability context, policies and institutions and the way people survive on available assets from my framework of analysis.

Employment Scarcity:

One of the most important reason why rural households' members engaged themselves in a complicated mixture of livelihood portfolios at the millennium turn relates to the drying of employment opportunities. Evidence demonstrated that since the 1990s, it has since been difficult for new job entrants to get at least a job on the market whilst the industry itself was downscaling, either partly in response to the implantation of Economic Structural Adjustment Programme of the early 1990s or possibly from the failure of the economy to absorb its own after-school graduates. Households with members that were ready for the job market were thus affected as it became extremely difficult to get a job. In rural areas, children of a certain age leave the rural area to seek job opportunities in the cities. They were often assisted by people already in the system, who would recommend them to their employers. But this system had abruptly came to an end such that the younger population had no option except to succumb to self-employment activities. I was, thus, informed by one of the research participants:

Why should I look for something that I know cannot be found? It is better to do your own thing in countries like Zimbabwe. The retrenchment of my late father from the Grain Marketing Board job in 1996 warned me that there are no more employment opportunities in the cities. This is the reason why I decided to go to makomba (gold mining pits) (Tererai 16.09.2018)

Similarly, another respondent revealed:

If the economy cannot absorb its own people, then you cannot wait to become employed. You need to be innovative and create your own survival means. The drying of economic opportunities which I witnessed after the death of my father in Gweru City taught me to become an entrepreneur (Tonderai 14.08.2018)

The Fast-Track Land Reform and Redistribution Programme (FTLRRP):

Among the major determinants of livelihood trajectories after the year 2000 relates to the FTLRRP. The FTLRRP was a post-2000 land reform policy that led to the compulsory confiscation of white commercial farm properties, which were redistributed to 145 775 peasant farmers on A1 farms and 22 896 mainly black medium and large-scale commercial farmers under the A2 model [50]. Bushu and other surrounding communal areas like Madziwa were obviously affected by the implementation of the FTLRRP. This post-2000 land reform programme affected households in a number of ways that were both negative and positive. On the negative side, the FTLRRP led to losses in farm labour and social networks and this has led

households to change their livelihood trajectories to other activities. On this note, I was informed:

The departure of my uncle to Mupfurudzi disturbed our previous social arrangements. Before his departure, we used to combine his cattle with ours to form a strong ox-span that would work tirelessly in working our fields. The disturbance of these social arrangements meant we had to switch to other livelihood activities. In this case, I am now involved in buying and selling of wares that I take from Bindura and Harare (James Muronga 09.09.2018)

From another perspective, especially by the Mupfurudzi research participants, I was told: The FTLRRP was really a blessing. When we moved to this place, we realised that the area is richly endowed with natural minerals, especially gold. In our former communal areas, there was nothing like this and resultantly, we are now engaged in a variety of livelihood portfolios including gold mining (Mombeyaonda 12.06.2018)

Ecological Change:

Another determinant that is forcing households to engage themselves into a considerable number of livelihood strategies has to do with the devastating effects of climate change. In the midst of ecological destabilisation, rural households in Zimbabwe are currently experiencing changes in climate. This means that relying on rainfed agriculture for one's livelihoods poses serious economic challenges. Households' life histories, thus, demonstrated that rural households are slowly withdrawing their energies from total reliance on crop production to undertake other livelihood activities due to climate change [16].

The Emergence of Nuclear Families Headed by Younger Parents:

Another peculiarly striking reason that lie behind the diversification of livelihoods at the millennium turn is related to the emergence of nuclear households headed by the younger generation. This crop of household heads, it emerged, wanted to make money quickly. Terry, from Bushu, is an example. He was a 35 old de jure male household head at the time of field-work and had established his household in the fields of his late father who passed on in 1995. At the time of field-work, his household consisted of Terry himself, together with his wife and two children who had not yet reached the age of school-going. This meant that the household was made up of four people in which two were adults (Terry and wife) while the other two were children. At the time of field-work, Terry indicated that he was into artisanal gold mining in his late father's field. I learnt:

My father died poor because of his background; he was a farmer. We need to learn from the mistakes of the past and this is the reason why at my age, I decided to practice part-time farming though I live in the rural area. For more than half of my time, I will be panning for gold (Terry 14.08.2018).

From Mupfurudzi, another young male household head informed me: Though my father was a beneficiary of the FTLRRP, I am now of the opinion that farming is a business of the elite, not poor people. Even those guys who are successful farmers did not start as farmers. For me, I think I need to come back into full-time farming when I am old enough, especially towards retiring age so that I can accumulate enough assets that are needed to do full-time farming (Choga, 2019).

Livelihood Pathways and Well-Being

This section interrogates the extent to which the after 2000 livelihood pathways have been able to comfortably enhance rural households' livelihoods. The section does this by employing the sustainability of livelihoods concept since a livelihood is said to be sustainable if it can exploit its capabilities, activities and available assets in withstanding shocks and stresses (see our framework of analysis). To measure this degree of well-being, an important yardstick was to use the assets that rural households commanded after the year 2000. A household that was deemed to be enjoying well-being had to qualify a certain criterion that included its ability to possess at least half of the following: city house(s), more than five herds of cattle, scotch cart and plough, vehicle(s) and capacitated to take breakfast comprising tea with either home-cooked bread (chimodho), rice, or sweet potatoes or other related foods, lunch and supper. On the other hand, those households that possessed less than half of these stated attributes were automatically ranked as poor. I, thus, discuss the well-being of households identified during field-work.⁴

The Poor Households:

Evidence demonstrated that a greater majority of household members who were engaged in a complicated archaeology of livelihood activities did not enjoy a relatively higher degree of well-being. Such households lacked valuable assets and subsequently commanded possessions that were less than our previously set criteria. To substantiate my argument, I present the Tonderai case who was involved in haircut at the Magetsi Shopping Centre in Mupfurudzi-Dombojena. He indicated that his monthly revenues emanating from his business could not allow him to buy assets of value and in most cases survived from hand to mouth and the main challenge that his business was facing in this rural neighbourhood was the lack of lucrative markets.

Another example was that of Tangai Chirimo (52) from Bushu. He had never been engaged in wage employment but was self-employed in the making of furniture (joinery) at Chakonda Business Centre at the time of field-work. He also has a son, Onai, who recently took up wage employment at TM-PnP supermarket in Harare. Tangai's household consisted of six (6) young children who were all of school going age. If the two parents are added, total household members add up to eight (8). According to household sources, the money that Onai is earning is not enough for him to send home to invest in cattle and other related wealth forms. Resultantly, the household cannot afford to have morning tea with either rice, home-cooked bread or other related food on a daily basis. Tangai does not receive life pension, does not have a city house, cattle or even a scotch cart or a plough. The household can thus be categorised as poor.

Though other households that experienced a higher degree of ill-being had their members migrated to other countries like South Africa in search of better livelihoods, they were finding it difficult to send remittances, let alone coming back home. Such households were thus poor. These findings are consistent with the observation that:

The fragmentation of the classes of labour signals the effects of how classes of labour in global capitalism and especially in the south, pursue their reproduction, through insecure ... and often

⁴ Though I identified three types of households during our field-work (those with a history of farming, migrant labour and those that had never engaged in wage employment), I decided to rank these into two because currently in Zimbabwe, one is either rich or poor. The middle class has been destroyed after the 2000s due to the ongoing economic crisis.

... precarious small-scale farming and insecure informal sector activity, subject to its own forms of differentiation and oppression along intersection lines of class, gender, generation, caste and ethnicity [2, p.8].

The Relatively Better-Off Households

Though a greater majority of households suffered from a higher degree of ill-being, there were other fewer households that enjoyed a relative degree of well-being notwithstanding the socio-economic changes that they had experienced. These were households which were either former master farmers or former migrant labourers who had invested either in the education of their children or bought assets of value. Though constituting a minority (7 households from the sample- 4 from Bushu and 3 from Mupfurudzi), richer households commanded a significant number of assets including having children or grandchildren in wage employment. They also received life pensions as social security cover on a monthly basis, city houses, and more than five herds of cattle, scotch carts, ploughs and vehicles. They could manage to have three decent meals daily. They also reported having a member engaged in wage employment. They were on the list of receiving pensions as social security cover, had members who worked as civil servants or in other countries, especially South Africa and the United Kingdom.

For example, Mudziri, a former teacher had a son, Taurai, who was also employed as a teacher in the Chiweshe Communal lands. Taurai usually send remittances back home. Apart from remittances, Mudziri also receives a monthly pension stipend. He had a car, 10 herds of cattle, a scotch cart and a plough. I was also advised that he had a city house in Bindura where he also collected rentals at the end of each month.

Another example is that of Gerald Kajese from Mupfurudzi who is also a seasonal worker in the Democratic Republic of Congo. This household was established in 1990. Gerald commanded the following assets at the time of field-work: two (2) ex-Japanese Lorries (each 2 tonne), a scotch cart and a plough, eight (8) herds of cattle, a city house in Epworth (a high-density suburb located to the east of Harare). As such, his household could afford to have morning tea that could be taken together with either rice, home-cooked bread or any other related food stuffs.

Thus, it was evident that richer households enjoyed a relatively higher degree of well-being and food security after the year 2000. They were well-resourced. They had better financial credit lines and had members in wage employment who were used to send them remittances. This group of households were engaged in a variety of livelihood activities including the rearing of chicken and outward migration.

The section has shown that richer households were very few; comprising only 7 out of the 30 households. These households had some of their members engaged in wage employment even outside the country, especially South Africa. The houses that this group possessed became colloquially referred to as Wenera/Wenela/Majonijoni. This is demonstrated by Xavier Chimutengure, who left for South Africa in 2001. Xavier sends remittances home on a regular basis and so at his fathers' household, they do possess the following assets: a city house in Harare, seven herds of cattle, scotch carts and ploughs, and household's consumption patterns follows a balanced diet. He has built a very nice house in Bushu Village.

DISCUSSION

Evidence demonstrates that in Zimbabwe's rural areas, agriculture is running in tandem with other livelihood pathways [51, 52]. This is a suggestion of an altered rural landscape in terms of livelihood configurations. An ever-increasing population is either slowly moving out of agriculture or is significantly combining both agrarian and non-agrarian livelihood portfolios. While all the rural households from both research sites valued agriculture in high esteem, a greater majority had diversified into other livelihood portfolios. These included fresh forms of migration, vending, gold panning among other activities [12].

These livelihood trajectories after the year 2000 had been determined by a combination of factors which included employment scarcity [53], the implementation of the FTLRRP of 2000 [49; 55], the emergence of nuclear households [35] and climate change.

It has been demonstrated that the issue of employment scarcity after the year 2000 was one reason for the diversification of rural livelihoods. The problem of unemployment has been dealt with by other scholars like Mhazo and Thebe [53]. Pluriactivity developed partly because rural households could not meet their well-being needs using a single basket of livelihood strategy. There was, therefore, a need to harness survival strategies within the context of increasing livelihood requirements.

The study has also argued that the FTLRRP was one of the major determinants of livelihood trajectories after the year 2000. These findings are consistent with earlier scholarship, for example James who argued that "the new farmers now have access to wild fruit trees, woodlands, mountainsides, rivers and pastures previously enclosed within the boundaries of the former commercial farms" [49, p.56]. Such sentiments have also been shared by Mkodzongi [54, p.104] who argued that:

Access to new land brought with it new opportunities beyond the farm which were not available where they came from. The new land provided a lot of natural resources, for example water, minerals, pasture, hunting grounds and fishing.

Cultural inclinations shifted, particularly among the new generation of adults, to an extent that agrarian activities became habitually dodged as a low status kind of economic activity. While this observation was particularly true and common for the younger generation, the older generation, on the other hand, also echoed similar sentiments. A general tendency by parents to support their children towards livelihoods that redirect labour away from agriculture was observed. Generally, livelihoods have been globalized and tilted outside the villages.

The study has also shown that a greater majority of rural households' well-being was poor. Richer households were very few; comprising only 7 out of the 30 households. The study indicated that though rural livelihoods have been diversified into a complicated archaeology of livelihoods occupational experimentation, the majority only survived in the margin with little or no surplus income to invest in assets of tangible value.

CONCLUSION

A number of patterns and processes are now evident in Zimbabwe's rural landscape and the Shamva Case has demonstrated this. While rural households' livelihoods had come to entirely rely on either agriculture or wage employment or both before the 2000s, evidence has demonstrated that after the year 2000, the means of survival have been diversified into a number of a complicated archaeology of occupational testing through the streamlining of land and labour away from agriculture, and the consequent following of such occupations like hair-cutting, vending, migration among others. These livelihood patterns have been due to an ongoing unemployment crisis, Climate change, Fast-Track Land Reform and Redistribution Programme, current social and economic changes. However, evidence has shown that these livelihood portfolios are not sustainable and in the event of sickness, death or ageing of household members, problems of old age social protection currently pose serious challenges, as evidenced in our Livelihoods framework. Policy interventions, thus, need to acknowledge rural livelihoods diversification and help citizens by incorporating and helping these rural households into rural development projects and programmes to better their livelihoods.

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