Zambezia (1977), **5** (i).

LABOUR MIGRANTS FROM KOREKORE COUNTRY*

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THE RESEARCH on which this paper is based is focused on the rural community rather than on labour migration as such. During a period of just under two years (1969-1971) spent in field research in the social anthropology of the Eastern Korekore in the north-east corner of Rhodesia, I observed that, in common with many other Central African peasant communities, nearly half of the adult male population (those over the age of sixteen from occupied homesteads) were away from home in or seeking wage employment.[1] These absentees form an essential part of the rural community and all male rural peasants are expected to spend some time away from home. The scope of the present study is determined by the intention to complement my earlier research;[2] consequently I am dealing with a small sample of migrants from a community which is educationally and economically backward when compared with peoples nearer the centre of Rhodesia.

Working from the family genealogies of the home community, I was able to draw up a list of men at work away from home. Between September 1972 and January 1973, 58 of these absentees were interviewed following a prepared questionnaire, and supplemented in a number of cases by further informal interviews. The sample was not random: it had a bias away from younger people with short labour histories (though they were not ignored: the average age of the sample was 36,6 as opposed to 33,1 for all absentees) and was also biased by a preference for interviewing people well known to the research assistant and their contacts in order to avoid suspicion and obtain maximum co-operation. Nevertheless, as Table I shows, it corresponded roughly with the employment pattern of the community as a whole:

* An earlier draft of this paper was presented to the Congress of the Association for Sociology in Southern Africa at Roma, Lesotho, in July 1973. The research was financed by a grant from the Research Board of the University of Rhodesia.

[1] See G. L. Chavunduka, 'Rural and urban life', *Zambezia* (1975-6), **4**, ii, 69, n.1.

[2] M. F. C. Bourdillon, 'Some Aspects of the Religion of the Eastern Korekore' (Oxford Univ., unpubl. D.Phil. thesis, 1972).

Table I

DISTRIBUTION OF KOREKORE LABOUR MIGRANTS BY TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT

	Sample		*Total Community*
	N=58	%	%
Locally Employed in Road and Tsetse Control Teams	—	—	4
Employed or Seeking Employment on Farms[3]	10	17	22
Employed or Seeking Employment in Domestic Service	29	50	52
Otherwise Engaged in Towns	19	33	22
(Living in Greater Salisbury)	(37)	(64)	(64)

Comparing this distribution of the eastern Korekore labour migrants in different forms of employment (Table I) with African employment in Rhodesia as a whole (Table II), we see that the Korekore community stands roughly in the middle income group, above those engaged largely in agriculture and forestry (including a large number of immigrants from outside the country) and below those communities earning more income particularly from commercial and industrial employment.

The 58 informants had in their careers occupied a total of 233 positions of employment. Eliminating those positions not yet occupied for five years and not yet terminated, the informants occupied any particular position for an average of 3,7 years (see Table VI, below) which makes it clear that we are dealing primarily with casual migrant labour.

[3] The majority of the farm workers were in the areas nearest home which have been involved in the military troubles in the north-east of Rhodesia. Research in this area became impracticable after the middle of December and the numbers interviewed had to be curtailed.

Table II

AFRICAN EMPLOYMENT IN RHODESIA FOR 1972[4]

	Number Employed		*Annual Income*	
	Thousands	*%*	*Total $ Million*	*Average $*
Agriculture	338,2	43,9	45,6	135
Domestic Service	120,1	15,6	33,3	276
Other	389,9	50,6	203,1	521
TOTAL	848,0	100,0	282,0	333

The principal reason for leaving the rural home and seeking wage employment is economic. Informants were asked their reasons for seeking wage employment with respect to each position they had occupied and on all but three occasions gave as their reason a need for money, the exceptions being three cases in each of which a person sought wage employment away from home in order to escape pending trouble at home.[5] Few informants gave specific reasons for wanting money, and some when pressed said that they wanted it for the general needs of their families,[6] which suggests that time spent earning cash wages has become a customary part of the economy of the rural area, whether or not particular needs should arise.

In a few cases specific reasons for needing money were given. One was that money was needed to buy food in time of famine. Because of the isolation of this area (100 km from Mount Darwin and over 250 km by road from Salisbury), transport costs reduce considerably the incentive to grow surplus grain for sale except in the case of those in the vicinity of the mission boarding school.[7] Besides, the low rainfall and poor soils in this area makes

[4] This Table is calculated from the provisional figures in Rhodesia, *Monthly Digest of Statistics: April 1973* (Salisbury, Central Statistical Office), Tables 14, 16. Information on migrants' income proved to be incomplete or unreliable; they are assumed to correspond roughly with the averages given in this table.

[5] See J. van Velsen, *The Politics of Kinship* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press, 1964), 67f, where it is pointed out that among the Lakeside Tonga migration to the labour centres is recognized as the only escape from an impossible situation at home.

[6] Since informants were not regularly pressed for more specific reasons, numbers are not significant.

[7] Even this meagre market is now threatened by the withdrawal of the missionaries from education which under government pressure is being put into the hands of rural councils.

it difficult to produce a sizeable surplus even in a good year.[8] Thus the only means open to most household heads to compensate for a bad harvest is to buy meal with money earned in wage employment.

Marriage payments are cited as another reason for needing money. In pre-colonial times, only a token bride-price payment was customary in this area[9] and marriage normally involved instead a number of years spent by the husband in the service of his father-in-law. Now, partly as a result of the association of these people with the Korekore in Rhodesia rather than the Tavara in Moçambique[10] marriage procedures have moved towards the more common Shona custom of substantial bride-price payments: a young man wishing to get married must pay the girl's father a sum of money rarely less than Rh$60 and usually considerably more, depending on the length of service he renders, the payments in kind (principally a number of head of cattle usually, but not always, from the family herd of the groom) and the circumstances of the negotiations (not infrequently a family in dire need marries off a young girl for a relatively small sum in cash in order to meet immediate necessity). Whatever the exact payment, a man must earn an appreciable sum in wage employment in order to fulfil his marriage obligations. Marriage custom in the rural area has altered to the extent that a period spent away from home in wage employment is expected of every young man.

Another expense in the rural area is education. Although in this backward area little over half the boys and fewer girls receive any schooling, it is the desire of most family heads to educate at least some of their children to improve the job opportunities of their sons and to increase potential bride-price payments for their daughters. When the oldest sons have been through school, particularly if they have acquired some secondary education, they are expected to contribute towards the education of the younger siblings.[11]

Other expenses which demand cash earnings are clothes for all the family, taxation, agricultural equipment, cattle and various 'luxury' goods such as bicycles, radios and furniture, all of which make it necessary for a man to earn a cash income for some period in his life. Rural life has changed

[8] The soils are mostly very shallow sandy loams and the average rainfall is between 500 and 650 mms, below the minimum required for the applicability of the Henderson Research Station project showing the feasibility of economic farming in Tribal Trust Lands; see M. G. W. Rodel, 'An important role seen for cultivated pastures in tribal agriculture', *Modern Farming* (1969), **6**, i. 9-29.

[9] The accounts of old men are confirmed by early reports that bride-price payments in this area amounted to a fowl or a piece of cloth as a token to the father-in-law; see National Archives of Rhodesia, N/9/4/11 (Chief Native Commissioner : Reports : Monthly : Jan.-Mar. 1902), Monthly Report, North Mazoe, Feb. 1902.

[10] M. F. C. Bourdillon, 'The peoples of Darwin : An ethnographic survey of the Mount Darwin District', *NADA* (1969-73), **10**, iii, 113.

[11] Note the case cited in the Appendix I, C1. Sister Mary Aquina, 'The social background of agriculture in Chilimanzi Reserve', *Human Problems in British Central Africa : The Rhodes-Livingstone Journal* (1946), **36**, 27 cites a case among the southern Shona in which two close relatives alternated working in town. One was paying for the training of his younger brother and was able to stop when the latter became a school teacher and was able to support the family.

to the extent that a husband cannot fulfil what is expected of him unless he has a cash income.[12] A few families are deliberately organized so that there are always some members away earning cash incomes and there is also someone looking after the rural home (see, for example, Appendix I), but most family heads appear to work on an *ad hoc* basis, going to seek work simply when the need arises.[13]

It should be noticed that the economic pressures from the rural areas force men to seek wage employment even when such employment is scarce: this is partly because wage employment is seen as a necessity which must override possible difficulties. But it is also true that people tend to judge their chances of finding employment on their own past experience and that of their close relatives rather than on rumours that employment is hard to find; I frequently came across men who when warned that employment was hard to find in Salisbury replied that they would have no difficulty because they were prepared to do any work however menial.[14] A man who fails to find employment is presumed to have been lazy or idle in his search for work or too proud to perform the menial tasks available, all traits commonly held to be peculiar to the younger generation. A man who leaves home at some expense to his family must be desperate before he will return without having earned a penny. The pressures to find wage employment work independently of conditions in the employment centres.

A few individuals, such as professional diviners or blacksmiths or musicians, can earn an adequate cash income within the rural community, and there are very limited possibilities of wage employment locally. But the vast majority of men have to seek wage employment outside the rural area, and even the rural specialists usually make one or more wage-earning journeys before they are able to establish a regular home income. Families in the rural areas can also make money by helping to plough and weed the fields of absentees and by the sale of millet beer and foods of various kinds especially to those who were away during the previous cultivating season. Nevertheless,

[12] Compare this with the Chilimanzi people who through labour migration have raised their standard of living above the subsistence level but still consider themselves poor in the light of their knowledge of European standards, ibid., 34.

[13] W. Watson, *Tribal Cohesion in a Money Economy* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press, 1958), 226f, where it is suggested that the Mambwe kinship system of patrilocal residence and virilocal marriage allows for co-operation between labour migrants and their relatives in the home villages and for trips to be organized so that men are always at home. He contrasts this with the Bemba whose uxorilocal marriage system separates kinsmen, resulting in a more individual approach to labour migration and the occasional debilitating lack of men for agricultural work; see also A. I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia* (London, Oxford Univ. Press, 1939), 404f., and M. Read, 'Migrant labour in Africa and its effects on tribal life', *International Labour Review* (1942), **45**, 624 where the patrilineal Ngoni are contrasted with the matrilineal Cewa. Van Velsen, *The Politics of Kinship*, 71, remarks that the matrilineal Lakeside Tonga of Malawi try to organize their trips abroad so that there is always one man left to mind the affairs of the hamlet, showing that the degree of organization is not simply a function of the kinship type.

[14] In spite of this, some have been forced to return home in recent years after months of looking for employment in Salisbury.

family arrangements and the economy of the community as a whole are structured around the acknowledged necessity of a proportion of male absentees away earning cash to bring into the rural area.

The 58 migrants were asked about cash and goods sent to the rural home and their replies were checked against lists given by members of the home community of what they had received from absentees, but the lack of correspondence between information from these two sources together with a widespread inability to estimate a plausible budget of expenditure renders this material largely unreliable.[15] Nevertheless in the case of fifteen migrants (28 per cent), there was agreement between the migrant and the rural community that nothing had been sent home in the previous twelve months although all had been away for over a year and three had wives at their rural homes; furthermore in 14 cases there was sufficient agreement between rural informants and the migrants to suggest that their information was reliable:

Table III

GOODS SENT TO RURAL HOME

		Goods Sent Home in Previous 12 Months	
	No. of Persons	*Cash, $*	*Goods to Value, $*
For Wives and Children (including School Fees)	12 *	240	183
For Parents and Siblings	2	8	13
For Marriage Payments	3	116	
To Increase Own Herd of Cattle	3	81	

* Two of the fourteen had their wives with them.

Table III illustrates the degree of help those in the rural area may receive from labour absentees apart from the savings that a migrant may bring home when he terminates his employment. The twelve reliable informants with wives in the rural areas sent home the equivalent of $605, or 22,4 per cent of their total annual cash earnings, of which $423, 15,7 per cent of cash earnings, was destined for their wives and families.

Table IV emphasizes the prevalence of economic considerations in the minds of the labour migrants notwithstanding certain other attractions of working in the urban areas. The fact that 88 per cent of informants living

[15] It appears that the absentees tended to distort information to make themselves appear generous to those at home, while the latter preferred to show how poor was their plight at home.

in the towns say that they prefer to be in town does not necessarily mean that they enjoy town life: most give as their reason that they want to work for their families while they are still young enough to be able to earn money.

Table IV

RESIDENCE

A. PREFER TO LIVE WHILE STILL YOUNG

	Those Living in Towns		*Those Living on Farms*	
	N	%	*N*	%
At Rural Home	6	12	7	70
Elsewhere	42	88	3	30
TOTAL	48	100	10	100

B. REASONS FOR PREFERENCE

	Towns		*Farms*	
	N	%	*N*	%
Economic	36 *	75	10	100
Other Reasons	13 *	27	—	—
No Reason Given	3	6	—	—
TOTAL	48	100	10	100

* Four informants gave both economic and other reasons.

The importance of economic needs in the rural areas is further emphasized in the marked preference for improving the rural home rather than adopting a higher urban standard of living (Table V).

In spite of the emphasis on economic reasons for seeking wage employment, the migrants are aware of comforts provided in their place of work which are absent from the spartan life of their rural home. It is a common belief that at home people age much more quickly on account of the intense heat of the low-lying country, the inadequate diet especially in the months

just prior to the first rains, and the poor and sometimes limited water supply. The superior living conditions are to be found only in the urban areas: people are noticeably less happy about working on the farms (see Table IV above).

Table V

PREFERRED AREA OF EXPENDITURE

	Towns		*Farms*	
	N	%	*N*	%
Money Would Be Spent at the Rural Home	35 *	73	10 *	100
Money Would Be Spent Elsewhere	19 *	40	1 *	10
No Response	1	2	—	—
TOTAL	48	100	10	100

* Seven in towns and one on a farm said they would spend both on their rural homes and at their place of work.

Housing conditions on the farms are similar to those in the rural areas, and most farm workers complain that the rations of food supplied by their employers are inadequate to meet their needs. The salaries of farm employees are considerably lower than elsewhere (see Table II) and farm labourers regularly complained about how little they were able to save from their earnings: one man asserted that he wanted to return home to work his own fields but was not earning enough to save for the necessary fares. The farms do have the advantage that employment on them is easy to find but this does not compensate for the unattractive conditions of service that they offer.[16] A further attraction of the farms is that accommodation for wives and children is readily available: nine of the ten farm employees had their families with them as opposed to 36 per cent of married men employed elsewhere. Yet this adds to the cost of living since the fields at home get neglected, and men with families on the farms complain of the lack of educational facilities for their children. The low proportion of positions occupied on the farms (Table VI) indicates the preference for employment elsewhere:

[16] M. P. Todaro, 'Income expectations, rural-urban migration and employment in Africa', *International Labour Review* (1971), **104**, 387-413, argues convincingly the long term economic rationality of seeking employment in the cities where wages are relatively high even though in the short term the wage-seeker may spend a considerable period out of work.

Table VI

EMPLOYMENT OF INFORMANTS

A. POSITIONS

	Farms	*Domestic Service*	*Other*	*Total*
Positions Occupied	44	132	57	233
Percentage of Total	19	57	24	100
Total Time Spent (Years)	241,8	358,3	186,4	786.5
Percentage of Total	31	46	24	101

B. TERMINATION*

In Under 2 Years	13	59	22	94
In 2 to 5 Years	14	37	13	64
In 5 to 10 Years	8	6	5	19
In 10 to 20 Years	5	4	—	9
In Over 20 Years	2	2	3	7
Average Length of Employment (Years)	5,6	2,9	3,8	3,7

* Excludes those positions which have neither been occupied for five years nor been terminated.

Table VI also examines length of employment in different fields. The greater average length of service on farms can be accounted for by two factors: firstly, the lower earnings mean that it takes longer to save a given sum of cash and, secondly, it is easier to live a normal family life on the farms making possible long continuous periods of employment.

Only 21 (36 per cent) of the informants have at some time in their careers occupied positions on farms and only 10 (17 per cent) have occupied positions in small towns (outside the two big cities of Salisbury and Bulawayo). A few of these (8, i.e. 14 per cent) started their careers with relatives on farms or in small towns and later moved into the big cities never again to seek employment in the country districts.

It is clear that the big cities offer attractions not found in the country districts. Yet even when a person does leave a farm or a small town to move

ultimately to employment in the cities, there is often an intermediate period spent at home which further suggests that but for the economic factors home ties are strongest:

Table VII

VACATION OF POSITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE THE BIG TOWNS

	N	%
Total Number of Positions Outside Salisbury and Bulawayo Occupied in the Past by Informants	46	
Positions Vacated in order to Return Home	17	37
Positions Vacated for Other Reasons and Resulting in a Return to Reside at Home	8	17
Positions Vacated in order to Transfer from Country to Town or from Small Town to Salisbury*	11	24
Other Positions Vacated	10	22

* All informants who transferred their employment directly from a small to a large employment centre stated the transfer as their reason for vacating their original positions.

To speak of the attractions of the cities is not to support the 'bright lights' theory that people move into them simply to enjoy the amenities they offer. In fact only a minority of informants enjoy the facilities of entertainment peculiar to the towns (see Table VIII). To some extent this can be explained by the fact that those in domestic service have little time to enjoy organized recreations since they rarely have a full day off at weekends and most of them work in the evenings. Whatever the reason, the majority of migrants rely for their entertainment on weekend drinking with their relatives and friends from home, bringing their rural recreation into the urban environment.

Table VIII

USE OF ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES IN TOWNS

	Domestic Servants		*Other*	
	N	%	*N*	%
Number Resident in Towns	28		20	
Number Making Use of Non-Traditional Entertainment Facilities*	6	21	10	50
Number Enjoying no Non-Traditional Entertainment	22	79	10	50

* The most common of these is watching football.

The argument so far has been that Eastern Korekore men leave their homes to seek wage employment primarily for economic reasons, and that rural life has changed to accommodate the necessity for absentee wage employment. I shall now show that the rural society networks are extended to the places of employment and that the society into which the migrant enters at his place of work derives largely from his rural home.[17] Although the new environment incorporates wider society including Europeans and Africans from other areas and backgrounds, the initial social network which received the migrant comes from his rural home and most migrants continue to find their principal social contacts within this network as long as they are away from home.

Table IX

INITIAL RESIDENCE

A. AFTER FIRST LEAVING HOME

	Farms		*Towns*	
	N	%	*N*	%
With Close Kin †	9	60	20	51
With Other Relative or Affine	5	33	16	41
With Friend from Home	1	7	2	5
Other	—	—	1	3
TOTAL*	15	100	39	100

† Includes father, father's brother, brother, father's brother's son, brother's son, son: i.e. of the traditionally ideal residential extended family.

* Four of the 58 informants were brought up with their parents in Salisbury.

[17] Although some of the migrants have some of the characteristics of 'incapsulation' (see U. P. Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen* (Cape Town, Oxford Univ. Press, 1961)), I do not apply this term to the Eastern Korekore migrants since I have found no evidence of any ideal of keeping aloof from other townsmen.

B. AFTER LEAVING HOME FOR PRESENT EMPLOYMENT

	Farms		*Towns*	
	N	%	*N*	%
With Close Kin	2	33	21	50
With Other Relative or Affine	3	50	11	26
With Friend from Home	—	—	3	7
Other	1	17	7	17
TOTAL*	6	100	42	100

* A further four informants have made only one wage-seeking journey and two gave no response.

A young man on his first trip away from home is introduced into the ways of the wider world by relatives who initially house him and support him: on subsequent journeys, the migrant may have other contacts and may have arranged a position for himself prior to leaving home, but there is still a preference for relying on the support of relatives if there is to be any delay in finding employment (see Table IX).

The informants were also asked to list the people they most frequently visit and their regular drinking companions (to a maximum of five names), the results of which are shown in Table X. It is clear that the migrants rely largely on the kinship structure they know to provide them with a social place in the strange mass society which they enter when they seek wage employment.

Table X

SOCIAL CONTACTS

A. PEOPLE VISITED

	Towns			*Farms*		
	Total No. of Persons Visited	*Positive Responses*		*Total No. of Persons Visited*	*Positive Responses*	
		N	*%*		*N*	*%*
Relatives	153	45	91	18	8	80
Friends from Home	20	15	31	4	4	40
Others	25	14	29	4	4	40
TOTAL		48	100		10	100

B. DRINKING COMPANIONS

	Towns			*Farms*		
	Total No. Drinking Companions	*Positive Responses*		*Total No. Drinking Companions*	*Positive Responses*	
		N	*%*		*N*	*%*
Relatives	92	29	76	15	7	78
Friends from Home	20	14	27	5	5	56
Others	37	16	24	6	5	56
TOTAL*		38	100		9	100

* Ten in town and one on a farm do not drink.

This social network of relatives and friends provides channels of communication through which news from home spreads to all members of the absentee community: it is rare to find in the rainy season a migrant in Salisbury who has not heard of the rain and crop situation in his rural area within the previous fortnight and news of important events, such as the death of a chief, reaches most in the towns within a fortnight. The networks of relatives and friends in the places of work also provide relatives at home with news of their absent men. Postal services to the rural areas are slow and sometimes unreliable, literacy is by no means universal among the Eastern Korekore, and often the postal addresses of absentees are not known to those at

home: addresses were given for 53 per cent of absentees, but the difficulty experienced in contacting these suggests that at least 10 per cent of the addresses are inadequate or wrong, and some were directions for finding the place of work rather than the postal addresses. Persons in town can be contacted through a messenger, a verbal message or a letter delivered by hand, all of which may have to pass through a chain of relatives and friends before the wanted man can be reached: thirty-two of my fifty-eight informants were reached in this way.

Table XI emphasized the importance of some kind of network if migrants are to keep in touch with their home community. Visits between the rural home and the place of work are so rare that a migrant living away from any other member of the home community could expect personal contact with the home community on an average of just over once a year.

Table XI

CONTACTS WITH THE RURAL HOME

Mean Residence at Place of Work in Last 3 Years*	2,5 years
Visits to Rural Home in Last 3 Years	73 = 0,50 per person per year
Visits from Rural Home in Last 3 Years	90 = 0,62 per person per year

* Total months spent residing at rural home prior to employment or between two periods of employment within the last three years is 346=6,0 per person.

Thus the rural social networks spread to the places of employment and become an important factor in the social lives of migrants while they are away. A consequence of this is that although the reason for seeking wage employment is economic necessity, the choice of places of employment is determined by social rather than economic factors.

As Tables XII and XIII indicate, this applies particularly to farm work and to a lesser extent to domestic service, where the social security of relatives and friends to some extent compensates for low incomes. As people move into better paid employment, they move away from dependence on the rural social network.

Table XII

REASON FOR CHOICE OF PLACE OF WORK

	Farm N=44	%	*Domestic Service* N=132	%	*Other* N=57	%
Followed Relative	26	59	47	36	9	16
Replaced Relative	—	—	9	7	3	5
Followed Friend from Home	5	11	9	7	—	—
Replaced Friend from Home	—	—	2	2	—	—
Followed Friend from Town or Other Place of Work	—	—	3	2	6	11
Good Wages	1	2	30	23	24	42
In Desperation	1	2	12	9	4	7
Other Reasons	7	16	7	5	15	26
No Reason Given	5	11	15	11	2	4
TOTAL*	45		134		63	

* Total of all positions of employment held by the 58 informants. In 9 cases, more than one reason was given.

Table XIII

METHOD OF OBTAINING EMPLOYMENT

	Farm N	%	*Domestic Service* N	%	*Other* N	%
Own Efforts	15	34	36	27	23	40
Through a Relative	26	59	64	48	13	23
Through a Friend from Home	3	7	18	14	—	—
Other	—	—	14	11	21	37
TOTAL	44	100	132	100	57	100

In the lower-paid occupations those who do not choose their place of work in order to be sure of the company of relatives from home often obtain their positions of employment through relatives or friends: a common practice is to replace a relative in domestic service when the relative wishes to terminate his employment and return to his rural home. In 15 of the 22 cases in which no reason for the choice of place of work is given, the person had obtained his position through relatives or friends from home or at least had contacts from home living in the vicinity, suggesting that these persons took for granted the necessity of the rural network even in the place of work. In fact over two thirds of informants have relatives in the vicinity of their work residence and many others have friends from their home community near them.

To summarize, the extension of the rural social networks to the places of wage employment thus provides a structure giving each migrant his social position within the new environment. The structure can also provide the migrant with the contacts necessary for finding wage employment. When the social network operates in a large city such as Salisbury where a large number of migrants are present, it enables the migrants to keep in close contact with their home communities; and the larger the number of migrants present, the closer the contact. Since it is so important to reside where there are family contacts, the precedents of previous migrations by members of the community are likely to influence the choice of locality of employment more strongly than any attractions town planners may create for new areas. Home contacts appear to attract some people into fields where income is particularly low, or at least to offer some compensation for low income.

Notice that the reliance on kin in places of work goes beyond the immediate extended family to the extent that a man can claim hospitality from distant relatives and thus acquires a certain independence in his choice of which kinship ties he wishes to make effective (Table IX). This is not necessarily something new: strict adherence to the ideal of the residential extended family has probably never been universal among the Eastern Korekore, and there has probably always been some freedom over which kinship ties are to be maintained. Nevertheless when migrants gather far from their home the divisions within the home communities are likely to be obscured.[1a]. There

[1a] Thus the division between 'school' and 'red' Xhosa, which is maintained in East London (Mayer, *Townsmen or Tribesmen)* breaks down in Cape Town far from the Xhosa homelands, (M. Wilson, 'The coherence of groups', in J. F. Holleman *et al.* (eds), *Problems of Transition* (Pietermaritzburg, Univ. of Natal Press, 1964). Notice also that the 'home-boy' ties on the Copperbelt stretch beyond those who are important in the rural area thus differing from the social relations of Xhosa migrants in East London which is so near to the Xhosa homeland, P. Harries-Jones, '"Home-boy" ties and political organization in a Copperbelt township', in J. C. Mitchell (ed.), *Social Networks in Urban Situations* (Manchester, Manchester Univ. Press, 1969), 340. Of course, distance is not the only determinant of the looseness of the home networks in an urban situation; note for example the freedom of choice of kin in Kampala among local Ganda as contrasted with the rigid adherence to the principles of agnatic kinship among the immigrant Luo, D. Parkin, *Neighbours and Nationals in an African City Ward* (Berkeley, Univ. of California Press, 1969).

is some evidence from the rural community to suggest that circulatory labour migration is affecting the kinship structure of the home community.

In the rural area, old men sometimes complain of the break-up of their extended families. They blame widespread travel for this: they point out that after a woman has been away with her husband at work she is no longer willing to live in her husband's family home where she is subject to her in-laws. A survey in the rural area revealed that only 48 out of 236 household heads (20 per cent) lived in a homestead with a senior agnate, and another 35 (15 per cent) lived in a close proximity to a senior agnate. The break-down by age of this survey (Table XIV) is interesting:

Table XIV

RURAL RESIDENT HOUSEHOLD HEADS*

Age	*Total No.*	*Sharing Homestead with Senior Agnate*		*Living in Close Proximity to Senior Agnate*		*Total Sharing or Close*	
		N	*%*	*N*	*%*	*N*	*%*
20 – 35	23	6	26	9	39	15	65
36 – 50	70	19	27	11	14	30	43
Over 50	90	4	4	8	9	12	14
All Ages	183	29	16	28	15	57	31

* Absentee heads of rural households are not included in this Table since in the majority of cases their ages are hard to assess.

Even in ancient times a man with married children was expected to found his own homestead on the death of his father, and so it is not surprising to find that most men over the age of fifty live away from senior agnates. One would expect this independence to correlate with age: as men grow older, the generation above them die off and more and more set up independent homesteads. In fact we find that the proportion of middle-aged men sharing a homestead with a senior agnate is as high as the proportion of young men, a fact which supports the view of the old men that the situation is changing.

My suggestion is that the networks from the rural areas are extended to the places of work and modified to meet the new requirements that exist there. In particular, the sparcity of kinsmen as opposed to outsiders requires a reinforcing of kinship in general and a blurring of the internal structure of the groups of kinsmen. This modification is brought back to the rural home: the returning migrant has become more independent of his immediate extended family and has more freedom with regard to his associations within the home community.

This growing independence is reinforced by the entrance of labour migrants into the cash economy. In the past, a young man relied on his father for fields, and as payments of bride-price cattle came in a man depended on the family herd for his marriage payments. Corporate activity for heavy work in the fields and homestead depended on the co-operation of the kinship group. Now a man old enough to earn money in wage employment is responsible for his own expenses, and when he does earn money he acquires a certain economic independence from his kinsmen. Indeed those intent on improving their living standards through earning and saving find the hard-earned wealth quickly dissipated by the demands of kinsmen and some young men state they prefer to live away from kinsmen for this reason.

So although the rural social networks are extended to places of wage employment, labour migration weakens the kinship structure of the home community.

Informants were also asked where they would like to live in old age, and a breakdown of their replies is shown in Table XV. The vast majority wish to return to the tribal area where they can subsist on the produce of the land and where they will have little need of a cash income once their children have grown up and they have become exempt from tax. Where a man has land he has a security which the system of casual labour cannot supply. Migrants also gave as reasons for preferring their rural homes in old age the presence of relatives and friends in the rural area to help in times of need and the fact that there they need work for no-one but themselves. The majority of migrants clearly see the rural area they have left as the home they can safely return to in old age.

Table XV

RESIDENCE IN OLD AGE

A. PREFFERENCE

	Towns		*Farms*	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
At Rural Home	43	90	10	100
Elsewhere	5	10	—	—

B. REASONS OF THOSE PREFERRING RURAL HOME

	Towns		*Farms*	
	N	*%*	*N*	*%*
Economic	42	98	9	90
No Reason Given	1	2	1	10
Other Reasons in Addition to Economic Ones	(9)	(21)	(4)	(40)

Apart from returning in old age, migrants frequently return home for periods of various lengths between spells of work, well illustrated by the case histories given in the Appendix. These periods at home are often occasioned by contingent factors:

Table XVI

REASONS FOR LEAVING PAST POSITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

	No.	*% of Total*	*Occasions Which Resulted in at least 3 Months at Home*	
			N	*% of Value*
Wanted to go Home	7	4	7	100
Tired of Work	15	8	13	87
Wanted to Get Married	9	5	9	100
Other Business at Home	6	3	5	83
SUB TOTAL	37	21	34	92
Wages Insufficient	34	19	18	53
Unsatisfactory Condition of Employment	10	6	5	50
Complaints against or Quarrel with Employer	10	6	5	50
Redundant	19	11	6	32
Wanted Change of Work or Place	27	15	14	52
Other	16	9	9	56
SUB TOTAL	116	65	57	49
No Reason Given	24	14	12	50
TOTAL	177	100	103	58

The first group of reasons arise from the fact that these are casual migrant labourers with a rural home far from the place of work where they can lead in the communities they know a relaxed life based on a subsistence economy. Even when employees leave their employment for other reasons, as likely as not they return home for a prolonged period. In more than half

the cases in which a person spent more than three months at home, the return was occasioned by contingent reasons.

Table XVII is based on multiple responses to the question: 'If you were in the government, what would you change?' All but one of the informants wanted African wages to be raised, and the answers generally show the dissatisfaction of migrants with their new life in their places of work:

Table XVII

FIELDS OF DISSATISFACTION

	Farm Workers		*Domestic Servants*		*Other*	
	N=10	%	*N=28*	%	*N=20*	%
Raise African Wages	10	100	28	100	19	95
Answers to Effect a Reduced Cost of Living	—	—	1	4	7	35
Increase Rations of Food	6	60	—	—	—	—
Allow Wives to Live with Their Husbands in European Suburbs	—	—	19	68	1	5
Reduce Working Hours for Africans	1	10	9	32	2	10
Allow Domestic Servants the Weekends off	—	—	21	75	1	5
Other Answers concerning Conditions of Employment	7	70	2	7	2	10
Improve or Increase African Accommodation	—	—	6	21	13	65
Provide more Educational Facilities for Africans	4	40	1	4	5	25
Concern for Unemployment and Unemployed	—	—	3	11	9	45
Other	—	—	10	36	5	25

Those providing entirely for themselves in the townships noticed how much they have to spend on bus fares and the rising costs of food, while those on the farms noticed only that they had to spend to supplement rations of food provided by employers. Domestic servants in the European suburbs complained of the lack of family life and the long hours they have to work. Farm workers wanted paid leave and objected to receiving their salary only

after every five weeks. Some who had their families with them complained of the lack of educational facilities for their children. Only two persons expressed concern for the development of their rural area and the replies show a surprising[19] lack of interest in the broader community (only eight said they would abolish the colour bar) or even in the plight of fellow unskilled workers in different situations. Clearly the responses expressed primarily the complaints of the informants about their own immediate circumstances.

Equally clearly, dissatisfaction with their wages is prominent in the minds of migrants, and it is in this light that we should see low wages as the most common reason given for terminating a position of employment (Table XVI). A person who claimed to have terminated his employment because of the low salary he received did not necessarily move into a more highly paid position: more often than not, such persons returned to their rural home.

The situation is illustrated by the case of one man who had been working for the same employer for over three years when he was joined by his elder brother. During this time he had been promoted from being a 'garden boy' earning Rh$8,00 to the position of cook at Rh$12,00 per month, in both cases with a limited allowance for subsistence. From his employer's account he appeared satisfied with his position until his brother was employed as a gardener. The elder brother was very dissatisfied with his salary, the hours of work and the treatment given by the employer to the domestic servants. Some months later, both decided to leave saying that they were no longer prepared to work for such low wages: they picked a quarrel in order to be dismissed with a month's salary in lieu of notice and returned home in time to plough their fields as the first rains began to fall. The elder brother had been away from home only since reaping the previous harvest, and both intended to return to seek wage employment after the following harvest. Clearly the low salaries and the conditions of service predisposed the younger brother to leave, but his situation when he left was better than it had been earlier in his time of employment. It was not until the elder brother expressed his dissatisfaction and the time arrived when he could profitably be employed at home that he decided to terminate his employment and return to the rural area. So the reason given for terminating employment is not necessarily the immediate cause.

Nevertheless, Tables XVI and XVII again emphasize the prominence of economic factors in the minds of migrant labourers. Domestic servants especially are very conscious of the long hours which prohibit formal recreation and of the absence of wives and normal family life; these hardships

[19] This is surprising only in the light of an apparent awareness of political issues in the home community. This material is reminiscent of 'amoral familism' according to which members of an economically under-privileged community maximize the material, short-term advantage of the nuclear family; see E. C. Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (New York, The Free Press, 1958).

are rarely given as reason for terminating employment although the brevity of the average term of employment in domestic service suggests that these are relevant factors in determining how quickly a migrant returns home (see Table XI), a suggestion which is reinforced by the correlation between longer terms of employment and the presence of a wife. The longer terms of service on the farms suggest that low salaries are not as relevant to a

Table XVIII

LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT AND THE PRESENCE OF A WIFE

	Positions Held for at least 3 Years		*Positions Vacated in less than 3 Years*	
	N	%	*N*	%
Employee not Married	9	13	55	42
Wife Resident at Rural Home	17	25	60	46
Wife Resident at Place of Work	43	62	15	12
TOTAL	69	100	130	100

person's decision to terminate his employment as the replies of the migrants would indicate. We can conclude only that the economic situation both in the rural home and at the place of work is prominent in the minds of circulatory migrants and a reason for the insecurity which necessitates circulatory migration.

The labour histories of persons even within a single family show such marked differences (see, for example cases cited in the Appendix) that it is difficult to fit them into any general pattern. One can explain the rapid labour turnover and the high rate of return to the rural areas in terms of the poor social and economic conditions of the labourers, but since wage labour is necessary to the rural Africans in spite of these conditions the time when any individual leaves his employment is likely to depend on personal and incidental factors.[20]

So far we have been considering circulatory labour migration in which the migrants are essentially rural peasants who must spend some time in wage employment to supplement their meagre agricultural economy. There are also some migrants who live in the cities and intend never to return to

[20] This is not to deny the validity of producing an ideal model of a labour career as in J. C. Mitchell, 'Structural plurality, urbanization and labour circulation in Rhodesia' in J. A. Jackson, (ed.), *Migration* (Cambridge, University Press, 1969), 179. I simply point out that deviations from it are exceedingly frequent.

the rural areas: such persons can be said to have been urbanized.[21] We have seen that most of the informants wish to return in old age to the security and ease of their rural homes. Of the 58 informants, however, there were five who expressed no desire to return to their rural homes.

One of these was an old man who had been away from home continually for over 50 years before he retired. He had a house in a township in Bulawayo and said that even if he wanted to, it would be difficult to move all his accumulated goods to his rural home. He manages to raise a small income by various means in the township, enough, he claims, to live on. He says he will never go back to the rural area he came from where the rain is often scarce, the crops are often poor and the food and environment are conducive to poor health and rapid aging. Although his relatives in the rural area disapprove of his attitude and regard him as something of a renegade, he maintains social contact with relatives temporarily living in his vicinity and and he is aware of what is happening at their home: for a number of years, however, he has received no visits from his rural relatives nor has he visited them in the country.

A second person committed to town life is a man who was in the army for over 20 years and has retired on a pension. He now has a house in a township in Salisbury. He maintains that he and his family have become accustomed to a high standard of living and hygiene and would find it difficult to live in the rural area from which he came. He has twice visited his rural home in the last three years (once to visit his parents after being away for many years and once for his father's funeral); he receives regular visits from relatives from home and maintains his place in the urban social network of relatives and friends; he contributes to the support of his close relatives in the rural area; but he insists that he wants to remain in town until he dies.

The remaining informants who had no desire to return to their rural homeland were three of the four who were born and brought up away from the rural homes of their parents. One of these wished to settle in old age in a more developed Tribal Trust Land near Salisbury, and the other two wanted to remain permanently in the city. All of these maintain some contact with their relatives and all have visited the rural homes of their parents. Nevertheless the majority of their social contacts are friends, neighbours and co-workers rather than relatives or others from the rural areas. They also make more use of city entertainments and social amenities than do the circulatory migrants from Korekore country.

These people are urban Africans committed to life away from the rural area which was the home of their ancestors. Their outlook and way of life is essentially urban even though they maintain ties of kinship with rural relations (just as European immigrants to Rhodesia, or even second and

[21] I use the word 'urbanized' in the sense that an urbanized African is one who is no longer impelled by the pulls of the rural home, U. P. Mayer, 'Labour migrancy and the social network', in Holleman, J. F. *et al.* (eds), *Problems of Transition*, 25.

third generation Rhodesians, can be Rhodesian with the committments and rights that this involves while they maintain ties with relatives in Europe). Urban stabilization does not necessarily result in severing all ties with the rural areas.

There are also marginal cases. One example is found in the case of Hanga, the head of an extended family consisting of his own household and those of his four married sons (see Appendix II. Hanga is an old man aged about seventy who since starting work just over 50 years ago has spent a total of 42 years away from home mostly as a farm worker. In 1955 he took his family away from home and has remained away for the last eighteen years. He says he would like to live at home but has no means of raising money there and wants to retire only when he is too old to work: then, he would like to live at home where there is little work to do and one does not have to pay for food. In 1970 and 1971 he purchased four cattle through his son's wife at home to start a herd there.

Yet there are indications of an antipathy towards the home community. He has been away for a long time and for over 20 years has chosen places of work away from all his kinsmen (though he still associates with two friends from his home area). He has paid brief visits to his rural home in recent years: he said that he went home in order to visit his children, but in fact the visits followed the deaths of a number of grandchildren. Some say that the deaths were caused by an avenging spirit, the appeasement of which is Hanga's responsibility; other members of the family deny this explanation.

In the four months prior to the interview, Hanga had received two visits from a daughter (the mother of one of the deceased grandchildren) and two from a son (who had not yet lost any children): Hanga said they came simply to see him, but it is likely that the avenging spirit was the real reason for the visits and the principal subject of conversation. He has, however, done nothing to appease the spirit, which is the cause of some bitterness. The fact that an avenging spirit is said to be involved suggests tensions within the family and also demands of the payment of heavy compensation in order to appease the spirit. In the year prior to the interview the family had no adult male resident in the area although two of Hanga's sons maintained rural homesteads under the care of their wives. After the death of her three children one of these women joined her husband at his place of work; he is planning to move with two brother's and a brother's son to another chiefdom, ostensibly to be nearer to a hospital, stores and buses, but further suggesting tensions in the family. It seems that in spite of Hanga's express desire to return home there are factors which make him extremely reluctant to do so.

Plotnicov analyses the cases of certain residents of Jos, a Nigerian town, who in their own minds were committed to retiring in old age to positions of prestige in their rural homes and yet in some cases were unlikely ever to do so. Reasons for this include a failure to achieve the economic successes expected of them and difficulties in fitting back into the home community.[22]

[22] L. Plotnicov, *Strangers to the City : Urban Man in Jos, Nigeria* (Pittsburgh, Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1967).

It appears that Hanga is in a similar situation: although he lauds the easy life of the rural area, he is likely to stay on the European farm where he is now working as long as he is allowed to live there.

Another atypical case is that of Makenzi (see Appendix I, Diagram 1, B3). After two short posts early in his career he took up a position in domestic service which he has held for thirty-three years. During this period he was promoted from being a domestic gardener earning 75 cents a month to the position of cook earning Rh$20,00 a month, though he still complains that his salary is low compared with what he would receive in industry and comments that it was easier to meet his requirements when his salary was only Rh$3,00 in the 1940s when the cost of living was lower. He has a rented house in Harare township which he obtained through his employers after he was married. His last visit home was for his mother's funeral in 1969; he receives occasional visits from his rural relatives though they prefer when seeking work to stay in the suburbs.

He married in 1945 a girl he met in town (only 10 others of the 58 informants married girls from outside their rural area) and paid a little more in bride-price than he would have done at home. His children were all born and brought up away from his rural home, though his eldest son spent a couple of years there as a child and his third son spent six years at home attending school. In old age he wants to return to his rural home rather than remain in town, but he would prefer if he had enough money to build himself a house on a purchase area farm rather than return to the backward and undeveloped area of his birth. As in the case of Hanga, but for different reasons, his commitment to his rural home appears not to be whole-hearted.

CONCLUSION

There is an indefinite number of possible variations on labour migrant's career. At one end of the continuum are those who find casual work when the need arises (see, for example, Appendix I, Diagram 1, B2) and who never venture out of the society of their home community. There are those who spend longer and more regular periods in employment, and who break out into the heterogeneous communities at their places of work while maintaining their positions in the home social network. At the other end of the continuum are those who break their commitment to the rural home and settle permanently elsewhere.

Garbett argues that a person with a high social position in the home community is more likely to reside there,[23] and I did come across the son of an aged chief who left profitable semi-skilled employment in order to help his father run the chiefdom. Nevertheless in my material (unlike Garbett's)

[23] G. K. Garbett, 'Prestige, status and power in a modern Valley Korekore chiefdom, Rhodesia', *Africa* (1967), **37**, 307-26.

there is no significant difference between the proportion of male absentees among members of the chiefly lineage and that among commoners. Even village headmanship was often insufficient to draw a man back from his absentee wage employment: the labour careers of the two senior sons of the family of Mowedza (Appendix I) illustrate the fact that seniority at home does not necessarily result in less time spent away. It is true that persons with high education in higher-paid and more permanent types of employment stay away from home continuously. But apart from this my material as yet provides no clear patterns and no obvious social determinants of the type of career any particular migrant may follow. The career an individual follows depends largely on personal and contingent factors: a man's desire for travel, his aptitude for wage employment, his agricultural successes, his current relations with his kin or with his employer, his luck in coming across suitable employment.

The majority of the informants for the present study fall well into the rurally orientated end of the continuum: the periods away from home in wage employment are seen simply as part of the expected life cycle of a rural male. The Eastern Korekore contrast markedly with the majority living in the African urban townships who are breaking away from the extended family kinship system and who become less reliant on the kinsmen for help.[24] For social purposes, the networks of these rurally-orientated circulatory migrants are those of the rural communities adjusted for the purpose of the migrants, resulting in a consequent adjustment to the structure of the rural community. The rural and urban aspects of the lives of circulatory migrants can thus be seen as a structured continuum.[25]

Appendix I

THE MOWEDZA FAMILY[26]

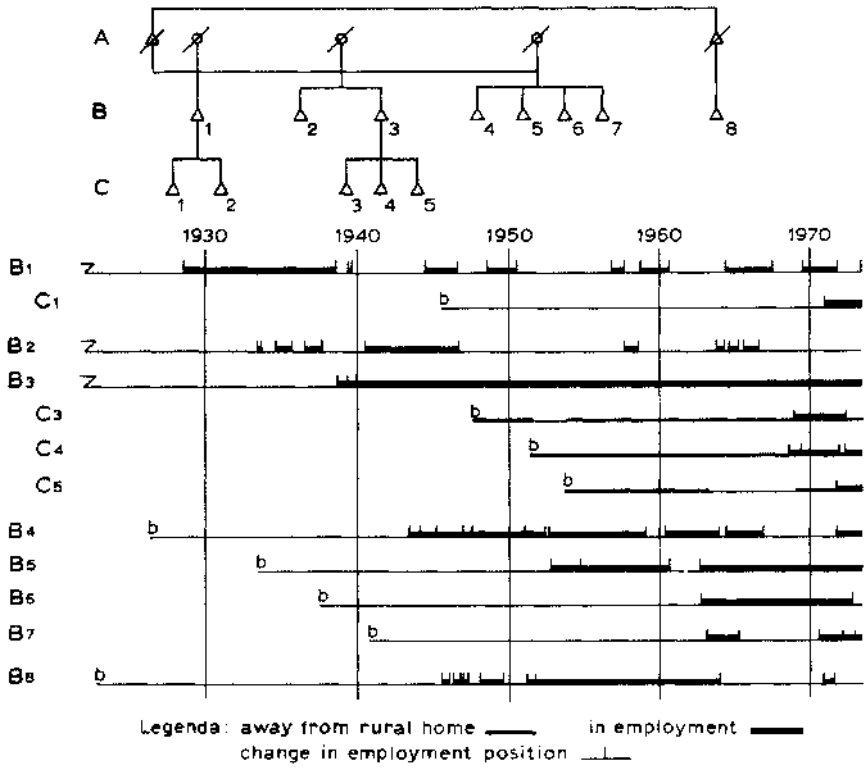
Seven homesteads are clustered together in the rural home, namely those of the brothers B1, B2, B4, B5, B6 and B7, and of B8, the only male agnatic cousin from the same house of the grandfather. B3 does not keep a rural homestead.

B1. Peter was born around 1910 and first went to work at the age of about 18 with a matrilateral relative, and was employed in Salisbury as a domestic

[24] P. Stopforth, *Two Aspects of Social Change, Highfield African Township, Salisbury* (Salisbury, Univ. of Rhodesia, Dep. of Sociology Occasional Paper No. 7, 1972), 23f., 64f. I applied the same questionnaire on reliance as did Stopforth: the result was a 98 per cent reliance on kin among the Korekore migrants as contrasted with 45,5 per cent in Stopforth's urban survey.

[25] See discussion on Mayer, 'Labour migrancy and the social network'.

[26] All names are fictitious.



servant for about ten years. He returned home to get married, but returned to town to work for a few months during the following dry season. After that he worked intermittently for up to three years at a time, always as a domestic servant in Salisbury. On all occasions he worked in the vicinity of relatives and friends from home and on four occasions obtained his employment through a relative or close affine. He educated his eldest son Paul (C1) as a school teacher now employed in another rural area: the second son (C2) is now living with Paul who is providing for his education. Shortly after Paul obtained his first teaching post in 1971, Peter (the father) retired from employment but returned to town in January of 1973 in order to try to raise money to buy food to compensate for the failure of the crops during the 1972-3 drought. He now has three wives, all local to his rural home: he has never had a wife with him at work.

B2. Biasi was born about 1935 and entered domestic service for three short periods and one longer period before he was married in his early thirties. He has since worked occasionally for shorter periods always in domestic service. Twice he obtained employment through a relative and at no other time was he working in the vicinity of relatives, though only twice were there no friends from home in the vicinity of his work. He has two local wives who

have always remained in the rural home. Biasi has a small irregular income as a blacksmith in the rural area.

B3. Makenzi's history is given in the text.

B4. Goso started work when he was a boy, following a close agnate to a small town where he worked as a child's male nurse for a year and on a nearby farm for another year. After this he occupied a number of domestic posts in Salisbury, changing employers because of low wages, because the employer was harsh, because he wanted to become a cook, because wages were low (when he returned home briefly to marry his first wife) and finally left Salisbury for a longer period because he had been away from home for so long. He has since married two more local wives and all three live at the rural home when he goes for further stints in domestic service. On only one occasion has he worked where there were no contacts from home in the vicinity: he obtained seven of his ten posts through the influence of relatives and two through the influence of contacts made in Salisbury.

B5 and 6. These two brothers have had longer and continuous spells of employment in domestic service in Salisbury (though the elder moved with his employer to a small town for some years). Both maintain rural homesteads where their wives and children are resident.

B7. Michael differs from his brothers in that he received six years of schooling soon after a mission school was established in his home area and also in that he has earned the higher salaries provided by the commercial sector while lodging with his brothers in the European suburbs. His first spell of work was specifically to save for bride-price payments, and after this he returned home for over five years. He returned to town to raise money to bring up his children and acquired one post through the influence of a distant relative, and a second better paid position by his own initiative. Recently he has become a self-employed painter which is more lucrative but less reliable than regular wage employment.

B8. In spite of his relatively junior position Tiki is the current kraal head who keeps the tax register entrusted to him by his senior cousins; these maintain that the duties of the kraal head are too cumbersome for the small income they provide. Tiki started work on a farm with his father's younger brother, and then after a short break moved to domestic service with the help of a matrilateral relative. After two further brief spells of work he returned home to marry a local girl and then worked continuously for thirteen years, presumably to pay off his bride-price; during this period his wife lived at the rural home. He has in the last ten years spent only one brief spell of nine months in wage employment.

C1. See B1.

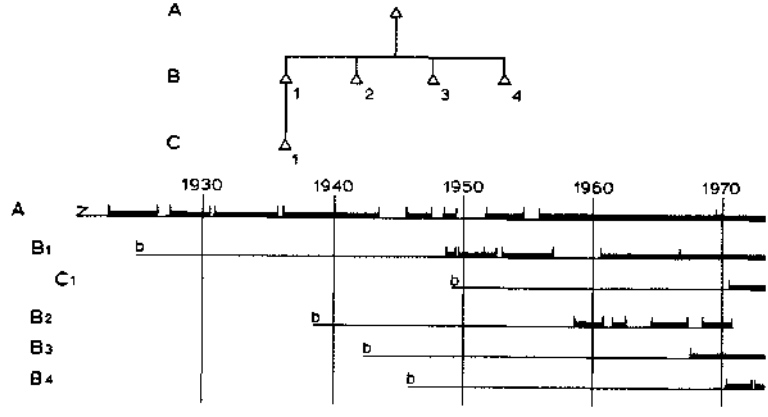
C3, 4 and 5. See text. These three have been employed only in the commercial sector. They all lived with their father in Harare township until the eldest (C3) moved out into one of the hostels.

The six brothers who live together in the rural home (B1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7) maintain close ties with one another. When I visited the rural home in 1970, I was informed that they took turns to work in town: there were always three

at home to look after the homestead and three away earning money for the school fees of all the children and for clothes for their own wives and children. In practice, Diagram 1 shows that the duties are not shared equally. Furthermore, in the latter half of 1964 all six were away at work and from 1967 to 1969 all but two were at home. The brothers do help each other financially, but this appears to be informal and to depend on the needs of the moment; Biasi (B2) often requires and receives financial help.

Appendix II

THE HANGA FAMILY



A. Hanga was born soon after the turn of the century and started working on a farm with his elder brother at the age of eighteen. After working for a few years he returned home to get married. He left his wife at home when he next travelled to work as a domestic servant in Salisbury but had her with him on two subsequent periods on farms. His wife died and he married another in the 1940s but travelled alone on his next two wage journeys to places away from all associates from the rural home. In 1944 when he was 50 years old he left home with his family to work continuously on farms ever since. For further details, see text.

There is nothing unusual in the broken work careers of his sons and grandson, all of whom started to work in their early twenties. It is noticeable that the eldest son has been away continuously for the past twelve years, though since he married a second wife in the middle 1960s he has kept both wives at home. He has always worked for firms in the towns and now has two younger brothers (B3 and 4) with him in a small town 90 km from Salisbury.