BACKING TWO HORSES:
INTERACTION OF AGRICULTURAL
AND
NON-AGRICULTURAL HOUSEHOLD
ACTIVITIES IN A ZIMBABWEAN
COMMUNAL AREA

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Backing Two Horses:
Interaction of Agricultural and Non-agricultural Household Activities in a Zimbabwean Communal Area

Ronald J.A. Berkvens*

1 Background

Economic diversification is generally regarded as an important component of rural development. Economic growth theories suggest that linkages between different economic sectors in an area and between different areas can increase productivity. Moreover, dependence on only one sector is risky. Rural development has to be distinguished from agricultural development (counter to the portrayal of some models, e.g. Hymer and Resnick 1969). When dealing with issues of rural development, it should be clear that other non-agricultural sectors are involved (Bryceson 1993 and 1996).

Low (1986) contributed to the growing awareness of the restrictions of a narrow, agriculturally biased perception of rural development in southern Africa from the perspective of household economics. He argued that ecological, institutional and macroeconomic obstacles dampened the success of using modern agricultural technology and he stresses the comparative advantage of wage labour over either subsistence or cash cropping, encouraging farm households to allocate labour to non-farm employment. Because the comparative advantage of household members is variable, Low argued that some household members would continue market and/or non-market production in the rural areas while others migrated to centres of the modern sector.1 Modern agricultural technologies were used by farm households in southern Africa to increase farm productivity per labour unit, thus accommodating labour migration. Three factors further stimulated this: low farm-producer prices, mechanisms to fill up food deficits in traditional farming areas with imports from modern farm areas or from abroad, and traditional institutions structuring resource distribution and social relations.

Low provided valuable insight but his consideration of non-agricultural activities was largely restricted to labour migration2 and he ignored the diversity of non-agricultural employment carried out by farm households in southern Africa. The welfare of most farm households is not dependent on farming alone. In Sub-Saharan Africa more generally, the extent and relevance of non-agricultural rural employment (NARE) is growing.3 Bryceson (1993) named this process deagrarianisation.4 The relevance of NARE in rural economies and in household livelihood strategies has received increasing attention.5 However, the interaction of NARE with agriculture at a household level, goals and ambitions of farm households in different kinds of employment and factors determining allocation of labour

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over different employment opportunities in relation to cultural and social factors have not been given in-depth attention.

The interaction of agricultural and non-agricultural activities in southern Africa is related to two actual processes which have received considerable attention, namely environmental degradation and African economic performance. The degradation of natural resources in traditional farming areas associated with growing land pressure has deeply affected traditional agriculture in many areas. Meanwhile, economic stagnation in the modern sector, structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and unemployment have left their mark on the non-agricultural sector (ILO 1993, Davies and Rattso 1996). There is an important interaction between population pressure, sustained demand for land under communal tenure, and increased standards of education.

This paper looks at three particular issues arising from the interaction of farming households' agricultural and non-agricultural activities. First, how do farm households value different kinds of activities and what dilemmas do they face when choosing occupations? This important issue is related to policies of educational and development planning. Second, how do historical and cultural institutions and values affect the economic behaviour of farm households in communal areas (CAs)? Households in these areas are only partially incorporated into the market economy and their behaviour is highly influenced by non-economic factors. Third, how does household income diversification influence productivity? This paper looks especially at aspects of agricultural productivity. By relating present household food insecurity and poverty in CAs to the national goal of increasing agricultural exports, the answers to these questions may offer insights into microlevel and macrolevel costs and the benefits of household income diversification.

More specifically the paper delves into the interaction of agricultural and non-agricultural activities in Mutoko communal area. The first section provides a brief background to the history and national policies of Zimbabwe, followed by two sections which examine agricultural and non-agricultural economic activities in the study area. Section four focuses on the cultural aspects of diversification. Subsequently the persisting role of farming is discussed. Section six traces the rebound effect of household income diversification on agriculture. The concluding section addresses future developments in the interaction of agricultural and non-agricultural activities in rural Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwean Rural Context and Policy Environment
Over 75 per cent of the Zimbabwean population live on former labour reserves, now called communal areas (CAs). These areas were formed under colonialism. According to colonial rule, 48.6 per cent of arable land was for small-scale farming in African reserves and 46.9 per cent for large-scale commercial farms run by settlers (Harkema 1983). This division has not changed dramatically in the post-colonial era. In CAs, a system of traditional tenure
based on usufructuary rights exists, with chiefs and headmen allocating land to farmers (Barrows and Roth 1990). Rights to land can only be withdrawn when distributed land is not used for a prolonged period. Together with the rights to a piece of arable land go rights to use communal pastures and other natural resources. Land rights are regarded as traditional rights facilitating men who were born in a certain area to provide a living for their household. Young men who establish their own household receive either a piece of their father's holding or apply for land to the village headman. Women get access to land through their husbands. Though the post-colonial government secured some control over communal land distribution through regional and village administrative bodies, in practice, traditional procedures still guide land distribution in CAs.

Subsistence farming is the dominant mode of production in CAs, though government efforts after independence have spurred commercialisation. The government has aimed to decrease nationwide socio-economic inequality, prevent environmental breakdown in CAs, achieve food security and raise agricultural exports. These objectives have been embedded in the launching of two agricultural policies, namely land redistribution through resettlement and modernisation of small-scale agriculture in traditional farming areas. The first policy was designed to resettle communal farmers on former large-scale commercial farms. However, despite the ferocity of the independence war which focused on the unequal division of land between white settlers and African peasants, the new government has so far not redistributed land on a large scale and the few resettlement schemes that have been implemented have not been considered successful due to political and economic factors.8

The modernisation and commercialisation of communal agriculture has also met with limited success (Cliffe 1988; ILO 1993). Marketing facilities, agricultural extensions, and agricultural credit facilities were extended to all parts of the country. Zimbabwe was praised for its efforts and the high responsiveness of small-scale peasants in CAs to incentives was internationally recognised. Marketed agricultural output from CAs rose. Later it became apparent that modernisation and market commoditisation was not increasing output per capita (Davies and Rattso 1996) and socio-economic differentiation grew within CAs.9

Agricultural policies since 1980 have so far not transformed CAs into small-scale commercial farm areas. Poverty and food insecurity have remained, and subsistence farming still predominates. Labour migration from CAs to towns is widespread in Zimbabwe (e.g. Couderé and Marijsse 1988, Hofland and Rosaria 1991) though its relative importance has lessened because of the growth of agriculture and NARE (Pedersen 1994). In structuralist and orthodox development thinking, labour migration (leading to semi-proletarianisation) is often perceived of as 'forced' or 'induced' by land shortage, imposed commoditisation or legal restrictions. Low (1986) nuanced this by pointing to the comparative advantage of non-agricultural employment over agricultural employment in southern Africa's vast semi-arid areas. He backs this finding with data showing underutilisation of land. Effects of labour
migration on agricultural development and the wealth of rural dwellers are widely discussed. Some authors state that investment in agriculture can grow through labour remittances, while others stress the impact of the labour drain. Low (1986) found increased use of modern inputs in households with labour migrants. These modern inputs were mainly related to the staple food crop maize which has lower labour demands than traditional crops. Though gains in household welfare are apparent, Low argued that labour migration did not lead to gains in aggregate agricultural production. He found that labour-exporting households are selective in their use of modern technology. They do not aim to increase land productivity but to increase labour productivity. As such, modern technology is used to provide subsistence food needs while freeing labour to be allocated to the more profitable non-agricultural sector.\(^\text{10}\)

Rural non-agricultural employment should also be included in the analysis. A diverse set of NARE exists in Zimbabwean CAs.\(^\text{11}\) Under colonial rule, African peasants were not allowed to start non-agricultural activities in CAs but the government has tried to increase rural diversification in Zimbabwe since 1980. Efforts to diversify the rural economy have not been very successful and formal rural employment has not grown dramatically, although service centres have emerged in CAs.\(^\text{12}\) NARE may have similar effects on agricultural production as labour migration: increased investment and labour drain. But the extent is likely to differ. The interaction is dependent on the kind of non-agricultural employment carried out and on resource availability in agriculture.

Reardon, Delgado and Matlon (1992) defined the allocation of farming household labour to employment other than agriculture and earned income therefrom as 'household income diversification' (HID). They saw HID as a way of adding to or substituting for falling agricultural income. In Zimbabwean CAs, most farm households allocate labour to more than one kind of employment, often in more than one sector, in order to cope with poverty and risk. Some households are more successful than others at this (Cousins et al. 1992, Berkvens forthcoming). As for the possibility of a return circuit, Reardon, Crawford and Kelly (1994) listed four factors conditioning the investment of non-agricultural income in agriculture in rural Africa. These are: the physical environment, the economic and institutional environment, the characteristics of agricultural and non-agricultural employment, and intra-household labour and income division.

In CAs, food insecurity is widespread and persistent, and socio-economic differentiation excludes some household categories from certain socially desirable services. Because of environmental degradation, land pressure and population growth, the quantity and quality of land increasingly inhibits professional farming and even threatens the subsistence base of households.\(^\text{13}\) The quantity and quality of land distributed to households varies regionally and locally (Cousins et al. 1992). This holds, speaking in Low's terms, that the comparative advantage of farming declines \textit{ceteris paribus}. 

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The Zimbabwean government has targeted both growth of agricultural export and increasing household food security for development. The national economy faced severe problems during the 1980s even though agricultural exports grew. Balance of payment problems and massive unemployment plagued Zimbabwe (Davies and Ratto 1996). This prompted the government to implement several SAPs. These have not yet led to noticeable growth in employment though positive effects are still anticipated. In the meantime, however, problems for poor rural dwellers have increased. The SAPs led to a massive retrenchment (especially of unskilled labourers), rising prices of basic food stuffs, and a declining availability of social services. In Low's terms, the comparative advantage of non-agricultural work is declining.

Farm households in Zimbabwean CAs have had to manoeuvre in this changing environment. Historically and culturally, they have access to agricultural resources and some agricultural aspects still have a high cultural value. People need cash earnings to reach modern, socially accepted living standards and good jobs are scarce. Households and individuals are combing different activities (Berkvens forthcoming). Because the productive potential and the consumptive needs of households change during a household's life cycle, they also need to adjust strategies to internal changes (Low 1986, Berkvens forthcoming).

2 Mutoko Communal Area: High-risk Farming and Socio-economic Differentiation

The Study Area
This case study took place in the central and eastern part of Mutoko Communal Area, about 150 km north-east of Zimbabwe's capital Harare in Mashonaland East province. Mutoko has a semi-arid climate with an average annual precipitation of 650 mm. Droughts and dry spells occur frequently. Most soils in the area are sandy and semi-extensive farming is the limit of land use potential. The area is densely populated, with thirty persons per square km in 1992 (Central Statistical Office 1993). Agricultural production in Mutoko CA is mainly rainfed and the farming system mixed. The cropping season starts around November and lasts until about April. Cropping, gardening, livestock and forestry are integrated on communal farms. Mechanisation is low and family labour is the main labour source.

Environmental degradation is an acute threat in Mutoko (Govaerts 1987, Carter 1993). The main problem is erosion caused by the degradation of natural vegetation, the degradation of pastures through overstocking, the use of bad lands for cropping and inappropriate farming techniques. Growing pressure on the environment is clear when data from the 1994 survey are compared with data from a 1985 survey by Govaerts (1987) in Mutoko CA. Average holding size decreased in ten years from 6.4 acres to 4.6 acres. Average household size decreased relatively less, from 6.3 to 5.7 persons (including absent
employment. If the husband is successful, the woman's need to farm decreases and she may become 'manager of domestic and agricultural affairs'. By contrast, if the husband is unemployed, a wife may be required to work with her husband to earn as much as possible from the land. Specific motives (e.g. to increase independence or buy more food) may induce women to increase their efforts in farming.

Various authors have already considered the analytical drawbacks of categorising agricultural producers in an occupation. Galeski (1971) discusses the 'indistinctness' of the occupation 'farmer', which may prevent it from being an occupational aspiration. Barnett (1988) cites various ways of incorporating agricultural producers in the market economy leading to diverse forms of production, stressing that not all rural people in developing areas should be identified as peasants, farmers or proletarians. Following a Marxist tradition, he recognises transitional, intermediate and mixed forms.

Low (1986) documented how a flourishing modern sector drew labour from the traditional agricultural sector. This is what Barnett (1988) describes as different kinds of market incorporation: agricultural producers become semi-proletarians or mixed-producers instead of specialists. Cousins et al. (1992), based on research material from Zimbabwe, refer to worker-peasants in this context. Labour migrants or self-employed persons derive their identity mainly from non-agricultural activities. Men function as breadwinners on the basis of some form of non-agricultural employment. Women may regard themselves as housewives with control over the household's assets and responsibility for subsistence tasks and the education of children.

Agriculture cannot be regarded as a full-time occupation since it does not offer sufficient opportunities for earning a living. Weiner (1988) linked land scarcity to unemployment, arguing that unemployment was only likely to be alleviated through land redistribution. The farming that does take place faces other barriers. Extension messages geared towards cash cropping do not match the food security needs of farm households (Bussink 1993). Farmers implemented extension advice selectively. Several extensionists in Mutoko CA pointed to the discrepancy between government aims and farm household aims. Many people in CAs do not regard themselves capable of improved agriculture as advised by AGRITEX extensionists since they lack crucial farm resources. The government saw cash cropping as the way forward whereas farmers lacking suitable resources turned to non-agricultural activities to fulfil household needs.

Subsistence food production is a cultural way of life. A household's need for food and an autonomous form of livelihood induces it to continue agricultural production which is not meant for pure economic profitability. Many people in Mutoko CA regarded communal farming as a way of life practised through time and not as an occupation even though they earn significant amounts of money from it. (Subsistence) food production may be seen as a domestic task more than a professional occupation. Other cultural factors tying people to
the land are the wish to be buried near ancestors and an affinity to rural life (see also Potts and Mutambirwa 1990).

Gender patterns reveal other cultural dimensions. In general, patriarchal cultures in southern Africa leave little room for women to choose an occupation freely. Traditionally, they are responsible for most domestic tasks and their economic activities are concentrated in traditional female domains like small-scale food trade. There are a number of possible ramifications. Men, traditionally responsible for cattle rather than crops, may feel reluctant to become farmers given that farming is considered a female activity. Meanwhile women's farming may have nothing to do with the ambition to produce or to earn a lot but rather with gender-specific roles in the community. Care for elderly parents is also a factor keeping women in agricultural production since married women often live with and care for their parents-in-law.

Generational differences are also apparent. In rural Zimbabwe today a majority of the youth attend school, at least for a number of years. The academic character of primary and secondary education in Zimbabwe does not stimulate ideas of farming as a professional and popular occupation. Many school-leavers annually enter the labour market with limited prospects in formal employment. Serious diploma inflation is observed in Zimbabwe (Bussink 1993, ILO 1993). Ambitions cannot be fulfilled, and young people 'fail' and have to rely on communal agriculture against their will.

A farm household's perspective on farming is influenced by its social, economic and cultural identity. Multi-occupationalism and HID are linked to people's efforts and ambitions as was confirmed by development workers in Mutoko CA. The perspective of government may differ radically from the individual's perspective. Farm households in CAs appear to be reluctant to regard farming as an occupation or as a target for investment. In narrow economic terms, this will affect agricultural efficiency, albeit in unexpected ways.

The author's survey revealed that most farm households in Mutoko CA wanted to increase farm production in the next season. But wishes must be distinguished from priorities and opportunities. Increased farm production is generally intended for food security. The problem is food security and when there is an opportunity to increase it by diversifying into wage labour, the opportunity is seized and may paradoxically lead to decreased farm production.

Non-agricultural Employment and Issues of Identity

Jobs may be formal, permanent and highly profitable or informal and low paid. In either case they offer households the chance to gain status by virtue of having a job as well as increasing consumption and investment.\textsuperscript{27} With the earnings, cattle, radios and bikes may be bought and a modern house built. Children can be sent to school and an irrigation pump may be bought. But not all formal or permanent jobs make this possible since earnings are relatively
low compared to basic household needs. Men who do not find a good job may become frustrated. They may lose face by failing to care properly for their household. Men who are dismissed from their jobs experience the same. Ambitions, goals and spending have to be adjusted and children may have to withdraw from school. On the other hand retrenchment may spark opportunities in a new career. For example, a household whose head used to work as a carpenter in Harare only started high-input cropping after his dismissal.

The transmission of practical marketable skills is lacking in formal primary and secondary education. Formal education perpetuates the attitude that manual work is inferior to white-collar employment. Few people from Mutoko CA (only two persons out of 708 in the author's survey) had attended college or university. There is a surplus of school-leavers who lack skills to start a trade. Another form of education is provided by NGOs which organise courses for people in CAs. These range from leadership to sewing and from small-enterprise development to carpentry. A problem is that facilities are mainly located in the capital Harare and few courses are provided within the rural areas. These vocational training courses enable some people to get a job or start a business. Unfortunately, many others lack the cash and implements to do anything with the skills they have learned.

Choosing an occupation is difficult. Some kinds of work are hard to find and success in a certain occupation is difficult to predict. Insecurity or disappointment about prospects in a particular job may lead to sudden changes in labour allocation. For example, two households used to live in Harare where the heads had formal jobs. Both households decided to return to Mutoko to claim land and start farming. Soon both heads found that they needed NARE to supplement their meagre farm returns. Later, both spoke of their desire to return to Harare to find a new job. Their cultural and social need to claim land and set up a rural homestead had been fulfilled but at a heavy economic cost. But they were possibly unusual. Several respondents compared earnings alongside social and cultural factors. Some people stated that they did not want to leave the household to work in town. They preferred to stay with their family. Others said that Harare was not safe and that cultural values of cooperation and mutual support were lacking there.

Most women whose husbands had jobs in town were happy with this. Household income is usually enhanced by a husband's remittances. Their status also improves as they may live in a modern house, use modern utensils and employ other people (instead of being employed as is the case of women in poorer households). However, men's and women's interests can compete. In one household visited, the wife tried to convince the husband that he should work in town. But the husband was one of the few who wished to farm and live with his family. Although many women would like their migrated men to send more money, most know that expensive urban life makes this unlikely. Some men visit their rural household regularly, others do not. Some women know exactly what their husband does, others do not. Migration may lead to spouses drifting apart; men may have other girlfriends
and even wives in town without their 'rural' wife knowing about it, some may just abandon their family. Women were also said to have other men without their husband's approval. Thus, labour migration can have a negative effect on marriage and family life.

Rural employment is less likely to have such drastic consequences. Married couples may cease cooperating very closely in productive activities when one of them gives up farming, but on the whole migration and involvement in permanent NARE are considered good for family life since they increase household welfare. Cheater (1986) noted that men with good jobs were likely to find a wife more easily because firstly, women are attracted to men in certain occupations associated with higher status and secondly, richer men are better able to pay lobola (bride price). One elderly woman stated that her son had problems finding a wife because he had hardly any income besides subsistence production. Marriages are still concluded by agreement on payment of cows and additional goods and services by the family of the groom to the bride's family. But payment in cows is frequently transmitted to payment in cash.

People who have a formal job or who are successful in a certain trade gain in status through the possessions they have, their expenditure and the inherent qualities and characteristics of their occupation. Respondents several times referred to other people in the community who had obviously gained in status, saying that they would like to be like them or that in order to develop, Mutoko needed more people like them. Agriculture can also increase status and successful farmers were praised and admired. But jealousy is also aroused and conflicts develop out of perceived inequalities.

The limited opportunities in non-agricultural employment make it hard to leave one's rural livelihood. As has been argued in this section, it is doubtful whether many people have the ambition to turn away from rural life completely due to non-economic considerations, quite apart from economic considerations which will be covered in the next section. Social factors entail group needs, notably those of the nuclear and extended family. Some people feel responsible for the care of relatives, especially when their family has invested in their education. A young man who was working in Harare as a hotel boy stated that he felt responsible for caring for his family because he was the only one who had been given a chance to finish secondary school. This responsibility, often involving large amounts of money, is also seen as a burden. Though support is appreciated by receivers, it was also said to hinder the development of the people who provide the support.

From the above it is clear that finding one's identity is complex. People tend to have more than one job at a time, shifting from job to job through time. Ambitions are difficult to realise. Most people who lack a formal job or a viable trade see themselves as unemployed. The little farming they carry out or the informal activities they engage in are not regarded as occupations as such. By contrast, Scott (1995) concluded that rural people saw small-scale, informal, home-based industries like beer brewing or brick moulding as a formal job.
Evidence from this research does not support this view. People regard these activities as necessary and appreciate them for the income they supply, but they are not occupations that satisfy ambitions and needs throughout the whole household life cycle. They are satisfactory for people in certain stages in the household life cycle, like the elderly.

For many, self-employment is the only way to escape poverty. But as was shown earlier, very few people manage to start up an informal business that resembles a formal job in profitability and status.

5 Why Stick to Farming? On Institutions and Rationality

A considerable part of household income in Mutoko CA comes from non-agricultural sources. Agricultural stagnation and modernisation stimulate the process of diversification. In relation to growing diversification, two observations can be made: 1) access to relatively high non-agricultural income does not often lead to abandoning the communal farm; and 2) groups of poor households tend not to succeed in diversifying and remain highly dependent on farming.

Though farming is not the main economic activity for households in Mutoko CA, especially those with several members of productive age, few households specialise in only one kind of employment or in one economic sector. Few people regard themselves as farmers by profession, although most residents of the CA perform farm activities. Farming plays a central role in their lives. As children, they help their parents to water plants, sow crops or herd cattle. Later they become involved in small-scale trade of farm products. When people marry, the husband gets rights to land. He may get a piece of land from his father or otherwise applies to the village headman for land. Unfortunately, the land is of increasingly bad quality and sometimes there is no land at all. Although the husband is generally involved in non-agricultural work, the married couple will work in the fields. If they have not yet requested or received land, the married couple, or at least the wife, will work the land of the husband’s father. In itself farming encompasses a diverse array of tasks which may require almost continuous attention, performed mainly by wives. Most rural homesteads are built near the farm land. Later in the household life cycle when the husband is dismissed or retires from his job and when grown-up children have left the parental home, the household increasingly depends on farming.

Why do people continue to farm? There are economic, social and cultural reasons. The economic factors include a lack of (permanent) non-agricultural employment (both urban and rural), unemployment and low levels of profitability from non-agricultural employment. These factors keep the cost of labour low and combine with the uncosted use of land and other natural resources under communal tenure. Perrings (1989) stated that widespread subsidisation of farming takes place in Sub-Saharan Africa by providing free land under
communal tenure. Though agricultural output is not very high in communal areas, it constitutes a substantial part of household income in terms of subsistence and cash.

Price levels play an important role in household labour allocation. First, food prices in Zimbabwe are high and increasing. In 1994 the retail maize price was 160 per cent of the maize producer price (MacGarry 1994). Low (1986) saw high food prices as an important motive for southern African households to continue subsistence farming. Households value subsistence production for its ability to substitute for expensive purchased food. Low argued that farm households mainly use modern technology to secure subsistence production, not to increase marketed output. Second, most people in Mutoko stated that urban life is expensive, notably the costs of housing and schooling. Urban price levels inhibit the movement of migrants' dependants to town. Potts and Mutambirwa (1990) stress that the gap between the urban and rural price level is partly the result of the tenure system in CAs, while access to water, firewood, and building materials are free.

Free access to land and other resources attracts labour migrants' households and households engaged in NARE to farming, providing a kind of production subsidy. Furthermore agriculture facilitates capital accumulation for NARE activities. Households invest in cattle and other livestock, often using non-agricultural income. Keeping livestock is cheap and the offspring serve as interest. By selling livestock, cash can be obtained quickly. Livestocking in CAs may thus be an alternative banking system though disease, climatological variability and market fluctuation are important risk factors threatening its viability.

Communal law states that a household is not allowed to lease or lend land and the land can be lost if left unused. If a non-agricultural job suddenly offers good opportunities to a household it is still necessary to retain the household's land rights since future retrenchment or retirement can result in renewed dependency on farming. Absence of a land market in CAs and a general scarcity (and high price) of commercial farm land prohibit flexibility in resource use. Mounting land pressure and growing land shortage urge households to apply for land even though they do not need it yet, since it may be hard to obtain in the future. These rigidities have resulted in some illegal leasing and selling of land.

Nonetheless once households have communal land, it may be regarded as a secure asset for the family. A communal farmer cannot be fired and does not face forced retirement. In this respect, retaining access to land offsets the risks of non-agricultural jobs which include retrenchment, bankruptcy, declining markets, problems of input provision, and illness. Johnston and Kilby (1975) speak of agriculture as a residual employer in this context. Under SAPs, job insecurity in the non-agricultural sector has risen and some unemployed and retrenched people in Mutoko CA have blamed SAPs for this.

A special role of communal farming is caring for the elderly. This is related to circular migration patterns (Cheater 1986, Potts and Mutambirwa 1990). Even though the circular
migration system is no longer so pronounced, pensions are scarce, and completely absent for people in the informal sector. People in government services, like teachers, fear post-retirement household welfare since pensions are low and inflation is high. They may thus take up farming, often in CAs. This may even lead to a form of absenteeism. Many older, often retired, people see communal farming as a kind of pension.

The inflexible nature of communal land rights are pivotal to understanding why so many households continue to pursue agricultural activities despite their lack of profitability. Farming is a way of life providing ties to the land of one's ancestors. It often involves working on the family farm built up by one's father and grandfather. Potts and Mutambirwa (1990) point to kinship ties and the wish to be buried 'at home'. Older people have an interest in living near their sons and daughters-in-law. In Shona culture adults are expected to care for their elderly parents.

Other traditional Shona cultural features play a role. Large cattle holdings and food stores give status. These can only be obtained if one has a farm. Showing status also matters. A homestead in the rural areas offers the opportunity to show one's success in 'modern life', for example by building a modern rectangular house, with modern furniture and a television. A labourer in town can become a respected citizen in the rural areas by being a generous benefactor to his rural kin.

Finally, gender issues surface. First, wives are expected to support their parents-in-law, mainly by carrying out household and farm tasks. They thus settle at or near the homestead of the husband's parents. This makes it easy for them or for their household to start farming. Second, women have few if any chances of getting a good job in the non-agricultural sector. Their labour is thus available for farming (note that cropping and keeping small livestock are traditionally female-dominated activities). Moreover, women have individual intentions like securing income for themselves. Intra-household income division may thus influence the number and kind of household activities. Some typical female non-agricultural activities like beer brewing and small-scale food trade demand farm products.

The continuing role agriculture plays in household livelihood strategies is thus related to both economic and socio-cultural factors. However as Potts and Mutambirwa (1990) argue and the data for this study suggest, economic factors predominate. Communal land tenure facilitates easy access to agricultural production for millions of people in Zimbabwe. For some households it adds to other income, for some it is the only income source. Some only need agricultural production for subsistence needs, other households need it for cash income. Farming is thus a part of the life and the economic strategy of a Zimbabwean CA. It is more than a job.
6 Paradoxical Relations Between Non-agricultural Activities and Farming: Trade-offs and Investment

Zimbabwe aims for agricultural export growth, food self-sufficiency and food security. In this light it is interesting to look at the effects of diversification and multi-occupationalism on communal farming. Former debates about the effect of the migrant labour system’s impact on farming are relevant. Palmer (1985) distinguished two lines of argument. The first, the theory of pure gain, maintains that increased income from migrant labour leads to investments that maintain and even increase agricultural productivity (i.e. credit constraints are overcome) while extended family relations and labour exchange systems prevent a fall in productivity. The second theory is that of private gain and social loss. It is sceptical about labour migration, which is thought to lead to decreased farm productivity, socio-economic differentiation, an increased burden for women, and increased wealth for the migrant in relation to his rural kin.28

The effect of non-farm income on farm investment in African small-scale farm households is diverse and highly debatable. The essential issue is how much value is transferred back to agriculture from non-agricultural activities. Low (1986) argued that the use of modern agricultural technology in southern African traditional sectors was high among households with labour migrants, though this did not increase production or land productivity. According to Low, non-agricultural employment opportunities decrease dependence on farming and result in lower household farm efforts and land use efficiency. Bratton (1987) found extended agricultural investment resulting from migrants’ remittances among Zimbabwean small-scale farmers. Collier and Lal (1980) argued that labour migration could be an instrument in increasing agricultural production for Kenya. De Janvry (1994) also recognises the role non-farm income can play in stimulating agricultural improvement. He wonders whether it is not a second-best option to stimulate non-agricultural work for the purpose of increasing farm investment. When there is an opportunity cost in agriculture, eliminating the credit market failure may be the first best option. Reardon et al. (1994) worked out a theoretical framework to analyse farm investment using non-farm income in Africa.

What are the effects of non-agricultural employment on communal farming in Mutoko CA? This question should be placed in the context described in previous paragraphs: a context of agricultural stagnation, environmental degradation, widespread food insecurity and poverty, unemployment, socio-economic inequality and structural adjustment. Many communal farm households are not economically viable because of size and ecological factors. Two major agro-economic effects of the allocation of household labour to non-agricultural employment are distinguished: 1) a withdrawal of labour from the farm and loss of effort;29 and 2) an increased household income that is used for farm investment.
Table 2: Agro-economic data for different household categories in Mutoko CA for the 1993-94 season

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household category</th>
<th>Kgs maize per acre</th>
<th>No. hh farm workers</th>
<th>Kgs inorg.</th>
<th>% using</th>
<th>% applying nat.manure/compost</th>
<th>% with fallow land</th>
<th>% growing</th>
<th>% eating with AGRITEX group</th>
<th>% marketing food grain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Explanation of household categories distinguished:
A (n=36) Male-headed households with a head younger than 55 years of age and without a rural formal job
B (n=6) Male-headed households with a head younger than 55 years of age and with a rural formal job
C (n=15) Labour-migrant (de facto female-headed) households with a head younger than 55 years of age (male head has migrated)
D (n=34) Male-headed households with a head older than 54 years of age
E (n=8) De jure female-headed households with a head older than 54 years of age
F (n=9) De jure female-headed households with a head younger than 55 years of age
G (n=108) All households

** Able to plough means that a household owns a plough and enough oxen to plough its fields

Source: Author's survey
Based on the author’s 1993–94 survey, Table 2 categorises and distinguishes households according to life-cycle and sectoral labour allocation showing the productivity and use of labour-intensive and capital-intensive technology. No detailed and quantified data on household labour use are available other than the number of household farm labourers. If only households with a male head of productive age (under 55 years of age and in categories A, B and C in Table 2) are included, the table shows that labour-migrant households use relatively more modern inputs and are well equipped (see ploughing ability). However, their farm productivity measured in kgs of maize per acre is quite low. This may be caused by a labour shortage and/or a lower dependence on farming. Households with income from rural formal employment have good access to crucial productive resources. Their productivity is only average. Surprisingly, households without a migrant would-be head and without rural formal employment have relatively low modern-input use but have the highest productivity and are the most market-oriented for food grains.

A surprising observation is that older de jure female-headed households (all widows in this survey) have the highest productivity (see Table 2). This leads to the conclusion that households that depend heavily on farming have the highest farm productivity with the exception of young widows and divorced women (category F in Table 2). Moreover, households with an older head (category D) also have quite high productivity. This may be explained by the labour availability of grown-up children, by the availability of cash for inputs from working adult children and by past investments in cattle, plough and knowledge.

Households with a migrated male would-be head clearly have fewer household farm labourers than other households. Migrant husbands are only available to perform farm work irregularly and for short periods of time. Some return briefly to plough, others plan their holiday during weeding time. Labour shortages are particularly marked in these households for they are often composed of young couples with small children. Labour-migrants’ households have less contact with AGRITEX. This may lead to different farming techniques. For example, these households do more intercropping which is said to reduce weeding efforts and is advised against by AGRITEX. They also mainly grow maize, avoiding millet which has to be transplanted and is hard to process, and use organic fertiliser which is laborious to collect less frequently. Labour-migrant households are less involved in farming groups (a major determinant of farm productivity according to Couderé and Marijssse 1991). Many people stated that migration led to a labour shortage and decreased yields. Some households with a labour migrant do not farm at all during some seasons because wives sometimes reside temporarily with their husbands in the urban centre.

Similar effects occur in households where people other than the male head migrate. Households of older couples forego the labour of migrating children and married daughters. Some migrant sons' labour is replaced by the labour of wives who reside at the homestead of
the parents-in-law. Though labour is lost, parents stimulate children to look for jobs in town since they themselves then benefit from increased earnings through remittances and their age sometimes makes it difficult to care for children. Thus, outmigration causes a labour drain and a fall in households' consumption. Older couples with few or no children at the homestead are physically less able to maintain farm productivity and in any case have lower consumption needs.

Like labour migration, allocation of labour to NARE causes a labour drain. Different kinds of NARE have different effects. Permanent NARE may cause nearly the same loss as labour migration, while irregular informal work, especially if carried out in slack seasons, leads to less of an agricultural labour drain. In some households, soil management suffered from NARE carried out by household members. In other households, NARE was carefully planned in order to avoid any negative effects on farming. Self-employed people residing at the homestead are flexible in their labour allocation. They can choose when to work on the farm and when to perform informal work. Some people carry out informal activities in the evenings. But when people need cash badly, they are forced to hire out their labour during busy periods on the farm. Some NARE is covariant with farm labour peaks by nature: builders need water which is only widely available during the rainy season which is the peak time for agricultural labour. Other effects of considerable importance are the loss of knowledge and management skills. The women left behind are less educated and have little individual contact with AGRITEX extensionists. Some women stated that the absent husband was still deciding about farm matters like cropping patterns, the timing of planting and when to hire labour. Logistical difficulties may also affect agricultural performance.

Labour that is lost may be substituted by hired labour or the use of modern inputs (factor substitution). In Mutoko CA, households with a migrated male head use the most inorganic fertiliser, are quite well equipped (with ploughs and oxen) and hire more labour than other households (see Table 2). The same accounts for households with high earnings from rural non-agricultural labour. Informal activities with low earnings serve farming too. Some women brewed beer just before weeding time so that they would have money to hire people to weed the fields later.

Few durable investments are made in farming in Mutoko CA, except for equipment like ploughs and ox-carts. Low farm profitability and insecurity because of climatological variation make farming unattractive for investment. Another problem is lack of money to invest. Credit is hardly ever available and communal land cannot be used as collateral. Only one out of 108 households received a loan. Households with a relatively high income may be reluctant to invest in farming because of the high costs of urban living (education, food) and their own urban-based risk-minimisation strategies. Households with migrated heads rarely plan to invest in agriculture except for cattle, ploughs, casual labour, seeds and fertiliser. They do not plan to invest in irrigation pumps, fencing and education, or in agricultural
diversification (e.g. piggery and poultry). By contrast, there is evidence from the survey that households with high incomes from NARE are more apt to plan this kind of investment. The presence of a male head seems to increase ambitions in farming relative to labour-migrant households.

Data from the 1994 survey suggest that, through HID, labour is lost and ambitions in farming are lower, but use of capital-intensive modern inputs grows and access to inputs and implements rises. This study confirms findings by Low (1986) that involvement in formal and/or urban non-agricultural labour is prioritised by most people, especially by male household heads of productive ages. It was found that households that succeed in finding such employment tend to substitute modern agricultural inputs for household farm labour while farm productivity and land use efficiency do not increase. Instead, they tend to decrease.

Use of modern agricultural technology in Zimbabwean CAs has not led to widespread agricultural growth nor to equal growth of welfare. Inhabitants of CAs complain about low farm producer prices and high prices for inputs especially since the implementation of SAPs. Failure to develop communal agriculture successfully can be explained by three factors: a growth of labour opportunities in the modern sector; the insufficient and inefficient distribution of extension messages, agricultural inputs and marketing services; (Bratton 1987, Couderé and Marijsse 1991); and the unsuitability of modern external inputs for the communal farming system and for average agro-ecological conditions in CAs (Carter 1993, Scott 1995). In a response to this, government and NGO policies have been altered to stimulate agricultural development based on traditional knowledge and techniques and on local and locally renewable resources. Many of these techniques, like the use of organic fertilisers, growing small grains and ridge-manuring are labour intensive. They conflict with communal farmers' labour involvement in non-agricultural employment. Table 2 shows that labour-migrant households (category C) do not often use these techniques. Moreover, access to local resources and to knowledge about sustainable techniques may not be equal, causing the same biases as earlier policies did.

Land pressure and environmental degradation are increasing in Zimbabwean CAs. In addition to the three factors mentioned above, inappropriate land policy by the post-colonial government is seen by many as an important factor in the failure of agricultural development in CAs (e.g. Weiner, Moyo, Munslow and O'Keefe 1991, Bussink 1993). While a lot of land in the large-scale commercial sector is used extensively (sometimes even transformed into game parks for tourists), most Zimbabweans have to cope with unviable small farms on poor land. Much emphasis is put on national food self-sufficiency and on agricultural exports in the government's policies. The data from the 1994 survey and data from other surveys (e.g. Jackson and Collier 1991) indicate that household-level food deficiencies are still prevalent in Zimbabwean CAs even in years of average harvest. Households with a migrant

25
male would-be head frequently experience a food deficit. These households buy food using non-agricultural income at the market, which detracts from the country's agricultural exports.

7 Future Interaction between Agriculture and Non-agricultural Employment

A diverse and mixed economy is hidden behind the rural outlook and the agricultural settlements in Mutoko CA. This paper has described the process of increasing household income diversification in a Zimbabwean communal area. In Mutoko CA, the share of rural non-agricultural employment and income in total employment has risen. Three factors have contributed to this trend. The first is the lack of formal jobs in the urban and rural formal sector. Though rural-to-urban migration is still popular with most young men, competition for jobs has resulted in many men and their households remaining dependent on rural employment. Structural adjustment programmes intensify this, leading to increased unemployment and to household budgetary stress affecting rural education levels. The second is the failure of agricultural modernisation and increased pressure on natural resources. Increasing populations are living on degraded communal farm land. Food deficits and low and variable agricultural earnings affect household welfare seriously. Few households manage with farming alone. Thirdly, farming is not seen as a satisfactory vocation by most inhabitants of CAs. Induced by modern and theoretical education and by the unviability of communal farms, people have their main ambitions in the non-agricultural sector. An additional process is that of increased monetisation. Traditional and culturally determined institutions and production are being commoditised.

Non-agricultural cash income in total cash income was estimated at 55 per cent in 1993-94. Eighty-five per cent of the households in the survey had at least one kind of non-agricultural income and the average number of kinds of income per household was 2.81. Especially households with a head of productive age (between 18 and 55 years old) and households with children were highly dependent on non-agricultural income. Activities in the rural informal sector are very diverse. Some are permanent and profitable, others are ad hoc with low returns. The level of technical development and skills is often low, as is the productivity (Berkvens forthcoming). Some NARE activities are new (like work in preschools and motor repair), others are a monetised form of traditional practices (such as beer brewing and thatching huts).

Most men of productive age in Mutoko CA look for a formal job, in town or in rural areas. This kind of work is relatively well paid and is the most rewarding. Some kinds of informal employment are valued at a comparable level to formal jobs, but most informal work is not seen as full employment or as a serious vocation. Some is even degrading but is highly appreciated because it increases cash availability. By contrast, communal farming is not regarded as a job. It is valued as a residual kind of work by most people. It is hard work,
with low and insecure returns. Casual farm labour is considered to be the most degrading kind of work. Most inhabitants, especially men in CAs do not regard themselves as being farmers, and most households do more than farming. Non-agricultural employment plays a very important role for people, especially at certain stages of the household's life cycle.

Because agricultural and non-agricultural incomes tend to be low and because both are risky, they complement each other at a household level (Jackson and Collier 1994). Highly diversified household production contrasts with classical theories of economic development and associated specialisation (e.g. Johnston and Kilby 1975). A lot of small-scale activities in the agricultural and non-agricultural sector, with low levels of technical development, are mixed with households in Mutoko CA. In Section 6 it was shown that land use efficiency was likely to be affected by household diversification. When discussing the efficiency of resource use, it is appropriate to divide households into three groups, according to diversification, socio-economic differentiation and household life cycle.

The first group consists of households with few farm resources and few opportunities in non-agricultural employment. This group is heavily reliant on farming and is eager to invest in it. However, means are lacking. The second group consists of relatively wealthy households with good farm resources and a diversified income. This group may be eager to improve farming and has some of the means to do so. However, commercialising communal farms is not that viable because of land shortage, environmental degradation and climatological variability. The impossibility of increasing communal land holdings necessitates a further retreat from farming. Moreover, appropriate agricultural technologies may be lacking and price levels unpromising (especially compared with non-agricultural returns). Finally, the third group consists of households not really interested in increasing farm production, because they are only interested in subsistence production or in future fruits of the land.

Household diversification and multi-occupationalism may be characteristic of these transitional periods moving towards a modernised, market-oriented and diversified rural economy. In Zimbabwean CAs, integration into input, output and consumer goods markets grows. Infrastructural development is still low and certain non-market mechanisms, notably the communal land tenure system, are persistent. Whether multi-occupationalism and household income diversification remain for longer periods, has to be seen. At the moment they are a very important feature of households' livelihood strategies. The future (and relative) role of agriculture and non-agricultural employment depends on future policies in three fields: 1) land tenure and land distribution, 2) agricultural policies, and 3) policies of rural diversification and non-agricultural development.

The present land tenure system stimulates intersectoral diversification at household level. In order to increase agricultural production and surplus, a change of land tenure rules has to be anticipated. It is hard to find an appropriate solution. If land in CAs is marketed,
poor households are likely to lose their land while richer (often diversified) households may increase holdings. Exclusion of certain groups of households, especially those with high non-agricultural incomes or absent male heads, from usufructuary land rights is also problematic. Many households are dependent on farming for certain periods in their life cycle or as a way of supplementing meagre wages (Potts and Mutambirwa 1990). A number of non-economic reasons explaining the appeal of farming were described in Section 5. Scoones et al (1996) ask for local level management of resources based on negotiation. The data in this survey emphasise the need to find more flexible ways of land allocation in CAs in order to increase efficiency of land use.

Agricultural policy is important for it determines the relative role of agriculture. If farmers are not offered good technology and good prices, they may abandon commercial farming and stick to subsistence production or explore opportunities in other sectors. Implementation of SAPs has led to deteriorating price structures for small-scale farmers. Investment in agriculture remains low and communal land tenure does not stimulate commercialisation. If new technology and market opportunities revitalised farming into a serious vocation in the eyes of inhabitants of CAs, efforts in farming (and specialisation) would no doubt increase. In the meantime, land pressure and environmental degradation remain as problems, making farming less and less attractive. Even large-scale resettlement through the redenition of commercial farm land cannot prevent this (Davies and Rattsø 1996), though it might be a political gesture towards the poorest groups in society. Because of pressure on the environment and failure to spread benefits of agricultural development, policies in the non-agricultural sector are expected to be of great importance.

Rural policies in Zimbabwe have received a lot of criticism for overlooking small-scale activities in isolated areas. In Mutoko CA, hardly any support has been given to non-agricultural activities outside rural service centres. Providing appropriate education, advice, infrastructure and credit to stimulate such initiatives is very much needed (ILO 1993, Berkvens forthcoming). Such activities, if spread evenly across the population, would have a levelling effect on income division. Regarding rural unemployment and urban problems, rural industrial development should be promoted as well. Some efforts in district service centres have been quite successful. However, concentration in towns where facilities and skills are present is likely under SAPs. Moreover, social services are likely to decline. This strengthens agriculture’s role as a last resort.

‘Backing two horses’ is a rational strategy for households in Mutoko CA although it may be hard to keep both running. A lot of households in CAs in Zimbabwe combine two or more activities and they continually adjust strategies to external and internal household changes. In microeconomic terms, a lack of specialisation may have negative consequences. But to provide or sustain a certain degree of household welfare, it may be the only solution available and to overcome mounting problems in Zimbabwean CAs, a well-coordinated set of
policies is needed. Policies concerning social services, land tenure, agricultural incentives and stimulation of rural diversification need to be geared to one another, and they need to be geared to individual households' ambitions and potential. Otherwise, funds may be spoiled, socio-economic disparities are likely to increase, and natural degradation, food insecurity and unemployment may fall to an increasing number of people who lack reins.
Notes
* The author’s 1994 study was carried out under the supervision of the Third World Centre at the Department of Development Studies of the Nijmegen Catholic University. Special thanks are extended to Mrs Francien van Driel at the Third World Centre and to Dr Deborah Bryceson of the African Studies Centre in Leiden for their help and advice.

1 This partly explains gender-based labour division. Men have higher comparative advantages in non-agricultural market production than women. Women consequently focus on non-market production and possibly on agricultural market production.


4 Deagrarianisation is defined by Bryceson (1993:5) as ‘...a process of economic activity reorientation, occupational adjustment and spatial realignment of human settlement away from agrarian patterns’.

5 For Zimbabwe: Jackson and Collier 1991; Pedersen 1994; Scott, 1995; Scoones, Chibudu, Chikura, Jeranyama, Machaka, Machanja, Mavedzenge, Mombeshora, Mudhara, Mudziwo, Murimbarimba and Zirereza 1996.


7 The data used in this study were collected between October 1994 and February 1995 in a field exercise by the author in Mutoko Communal Area. It was carried out in cooperation with Silveira House Development Education Centre, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) operating a multi-sectoral development programme aimed at empowering the poor in northern Zimbabwe. In total 108 households were included through informal sampling in a semi-structured survey gathering data on farm management, occupation, household characteristics, wealth, productivity and income. Households were drawn from eight wards. All households had access to arable land in Mutoko CA. Informal talks and discussion added valuable information.

8 Weiner 1988; Alexander 1994; Davies and Rattsø 1996.


10 In southern Africa, returns to certain kinds of non-agricultural labour (especially skilled and/or male labour) are higher than returns to labour used in subsistence or commercial crop production. In certain situations, food deficit production may thus be rational for returns to non-agricultural employment are higher than the retail price of food. Household members without high opportunities in non-agricultural employment may specialise in agriculture. An important aspect of Low’s (1986) argument is that farmers value subsistence production for the food retail price (which is in general higher than its producer price).
14 ILO 1993; Davies and Rattsø 1996; Berkvens (forthcoming).
15 The survey by Govaerts had a population of 200 households, and took respondents from a wider area within Mutoko CA than the 1994 survey.
16 Subsistence production would add approximately Z$ 350. In kind transfers are not included. Z$ 8 roughly equalled 1 US$ in 1994.
17 Carter 1993; for CAs in general, see Bratton 1987; Zinyama 1991; Scoones et al. 1996.
18 Only 14 per cent stated that they were deficit producing in a season with normal climatological circumstances. Such perceptions may be questioned since extensionists said that the 1993-94 season was a better-than-average season.
19 Compare with ILO 1993; MacGarry 1994; Davies and Rattsø 1996.
20 Fifty-nine per cent of cattle-owning households reported loss of cattle during the excessive drought of 1991-92. Many poor families lacking cattle were also affected through loss of goats.
21 Some people stated that only friends of the village development committee were given inputs. Because in general the amount of inputs was not enough for everybody, some people were not given anything in 1994. Some people were given more than others. The late distribution delayed planting and application of fertilisers. According to local extensionists this increased risks of crop-failure.
24 Another frequent answer that is not directly related to household concern was 'to earn my own living'. Young labour migrants often gave this answer connected to their concern with gaining independence from their parents and establishing their own households.
25 He discussed issues as: farming is a family activity, farmers are owners and workers, farmers are highly autonomic, farmers need to carry out more tasks than proper farming only, and farms also serve as homesteads.
26 Note that in many developed countries, domestic work is still not regarded as an occupation. Men especially do not want to derive their identity from it. That agricultural production is closely linked to domestic food supply was clear from the use of the word sadza (meaning maize porridge in Shona language). Asked what was important in agricultural production, the most frequent answers were: 'to have sadza' or 'to produce maize for sadza'.
27 People are endeavouring to gain status. For example, a migrant who was doing a cleaning job in town asked the author not to talk about this in his home area. Respondents in the rural
area were sometimes unfamiliar with the kind of job close relatives were doing (or maybe unwilling to speak about it).


29 Household economics distinguishes two effects that explain labour drain and loss of effort in farming because of diversification. The first is the substitution effect, which induces households to reallocate farm labour to non-agricultural labour because the last one is more profitable. The second is the income effect, which makes households reduce total labour time because income rises. If agriculture is less profitable than non-agricultural work, it is likely that labour time and effort in farming will be reduced (see also Ellis 1988: 102-119).

30 Productivity is measured through maize production per acre maize planted. This was done because maize is the main crop in Mutoko CA, both staple and cash crop, covering 55 per cent of the cropped area and making up 94 per cent of total grain production. All households in the survey grew maize in the 1993-94 season.

31 Note that variability of some mean values in the table is high. The categorisation of households is rather rough. Especially category A and D are very diverse regarding intersectoral labour allocation (think of the diversity of the rural informal sector), income and household structure.

32 Note that markets become more and more important. Interhousehold labour exchange, traditionally a widespread feature in CAs, becomes less and less popular though especially groups of women still work the fields together.

33 These policies stimulated agricultural practices that are generally regarded to fall under sustainable farming, organic farming or permaculture. In Mutoko CA, a number of NGOs (e.g. Silveira House, ENDA-Zimbabwe, Natural Farming Network), sometimes cooperating with AGRITEX, promote these practices. For an introduction to sustainable farming in southern Africa, see Vukasin, Roos, Spicer and Davies 1995.

34 The author's survey revealed that poor households have bad access to extension and that women face difficulties in finishing courses on sustainable farming. Moreover, sustainable farming also demands certain investments, think of ox-carts to carry manure and drums to make compost.

35 Recently, the Land Tenure Commission investigated possibilities to adjust the tenure system in CAs.
References


