



“Basics are now a luxury”: perceptions of structural adjustment’s impact on rural and urban areas in Zimbabwe⁽¹⁾

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SUMMARY: *This paper describes differences in the impact of the Economic Structural Adjustment Policy (ESAP) on Zimbabwe’s rural and urban areas through the views of recent migrants to Harare. Although the outcomes of ESAP have been more acutely felt in the city than in the countryside, rural populations have also suffered from increases in the prices of basic commodities and in public services fees. Retrenchment and increasing poverty in the city affect rural households, as remittances decline and migrants return to their rural homes, increasing the burden there. Due to the strength of rural-urban interactions and the economic interdependence between city and countryside, the impact of structural adjustment is not clearly geographically defined.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

THROUGHOUT AFRICA, PEOPLE’S lifestyles and livelihoods have been fundamentally altered by the impact of structural adjustment policies (SAPs). Ostensibly designed to rectify a host of economic distortions which, international financial institutions argue, had been caused by government mismanagement, there is so far little evidence that these policies are strengthening African economies in the ways which their promoters have promised. Instead, there is an ever-accumulating literature on the devastatingly negative, and sometimes tragic, impact of such policies on people in terms of employment, incomes, health and education.⁽²⁾

Zimbabwe introduced its Economic Structural Adjustment Policy (ESAP) in January 1991. It is important, in terms of the population’s subsequent perceptions of the impact of ESAP,

and Dr Potts have been collaborating on a longitudinal project on the changing nature of rural-urban migration in Zimbabwe since the mid-1980s.

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1. The research for this paper was made possible by a grant from the Nuffield Foundation. Computer analysis was aided by funds from the School of Oriental and African Studies' Research Committee. The quotation in the title is taken from a comment made by one of our respondents.

2. For example, Cornia, G., R. Jolly and F. Stewart (editors) (1987), *Adjustment with a Human Face*, Clarendon Press, Oxford; also Simon, D., W. van Spengen, C. Dixon and A. Nârman (editors) (1995), *Structurally Adjusted Africa: Poverty, debt and basic needs*, Pluto, London; Onimode, B. (editor) (1989), *The IMF, the World Bank and African Debt*, Zed Press, London; Loxley, J. (1990), "Structural adjustment in Africa: reflections on Ghana and Zambia" in *Review of African Political Economy* 47, pages 8-27; Adepoju, A. (editor) (1993), *The Impact of Structural Adjustment on the Population of Africa: Implications for education, health and employment*, James Currey in association with United Nations Population Fund, London; and Sparr, P. (1993), *Mortgaging Women's Lives*, Zed Press, London.

3. In some of the literature, including much of that produced by the international financial institutions, lower estimates of Zimbabwean economic growth for the

which is a key aspect of this paper, to note that it is questionable whether Zimbabwe needed to adjust in this particular way (i.e. adopting the usual SAP package). It was certainly not in the desperate economic straits typical of many other sub-Saharan African countries during the 1980s. Over the decade, economic growth rates had, on average (and despite some severe drought episodes), kept just ahead of population growth (3.5 per cent per year) at around 4 per cent per year.⁽³⁾ The government had also adopted its own economic austerity measures in March 1984, after an economic crisis. These succeeded in, for example, reducing the debt-service ratio from almost 40 per cent to 20 per cent between 1985 and 1989.⁽⁴⁾ In non-drought years the performance of the agricultural sector, including the peasant farming areas, had been good.⁽⁵⁾ The population had experienced some really significant improvements in health and education.⁽⁶⁾ Furthermore, whilst the performance of the manufacturing sector was variable, with the important iron and steel parastatal ZISCO sorely mismanaged, the sector also displayed many strengths and the end of the 1980s saw significant increases in the export of "non-traditional" manufactured exports.⁽⁷⁾ This latter growth owed much to an export revolving fund. Neither was the currency hugely overvalued as was so typical in many other African countries - the World Bank estimated the overvaluation to be in the range 10 to 20 per cent.⁽⁸⁾

Yet the portrayal of the Zimbabwean economy and government policies in World Bank documents tends to typify the country as one in specific need of structural adjustment.⁽⁹⁾ Whilst there were undoubtedly economic problems, such as the size of the budget deficit and lack of flexibility in import control programmes so that key productive sectors were sometimes held up by lack of necessary imports, it is arguable that these could have been managed without recourse to a full-blown SAP. However, in a continent of structurally adjusting countries, after a decade of propaganda on the need to "liberalize" economies and the collapse of "socialist" economies worldwide, with a finance minister with strong neo-classical economic tendencies and the lure of easier borrowing (for a while), it is perhaps not surprising that Zimbabwe eventually decided to join the crowd. Another, more sinister, factor may have been a degree of "sabotage" by the World Bank to divert Zimbabwe from its autonomous policy path.⁽¹⁰⁾ The Bank certainly needs an adjuster to succeed economically, and judges that Zimbabwe, adjusting from a position of relative economic strength, may provide the necessary example.⁽¹¹⁾

There have now been several surveys of the impact of ESAP, including specific work on trade unions, the informal sector, health and women.⁽¹²⁾ Most of these have focused on urban based impacts; all of them record the severely negative effects of ESAP for the ordinary people (the *povo*) of Zimbabwe. These will not be discussed further here, although relevant details will be picked up in the sections below. Suffice it to say that the Zimbabwean people have experienced massive income and welfare shocks which mirror what has happened elsewhere throughout "adjusting" sub-Saharan Africa.

1980s are cited. These, however, ignore the first year of independence (i.e. cover 1981-90 rather than 1980-90). The 4 per cent growth rate cited here is taken from the Economist Intelligence Unit, *Zimbabwe Country Reports*(various), London. The trend rate was also about 4 per cent per year for both halves of the decade (Colin Stoneman, personal communication, July 1996).

4. Stoneman, Colin (1996), "Prospects for the development of regional economic and political relations in post-apartheid Southern Africa: can the new South Africa dynamise the new SADC?" in *Ritsumeikan Studies in Language and Culture* 7:5/6, pages 297-319.

5. The productivity of the communal areas was very geographically variable - with some areas relying on drought relief and food programmes in most years and contributing little or nothing to marketed production. However, these macro-patterns are to be expected given the pattern of rainfall in the country and other environmental factors. For further details on geographically differentiated production in Zimbabwe's communal areas in the 1980s, see Zinyama, Lovemore (1988), "Commercialisation of small-scale agriculture in Zimbabwe: some emerging patterns of spatial differentiation" in *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 9:2, pages 151-62.

6. As just one example, infant mortality rates were roughly halved during the 1980s.

7. See reference 4; non-traditional manufactured exports (e.g. textiles, clothing, rolling stock, light metal manufactures) grew 10 per cent in 1988 and 10 per cent plus in 1989. The strengths and potential of Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector in the 1980s are thoroughly reviewed in Riddell, Roger (1990); "Zimbabwe" in Riddell, Roger (editor) (1990), *Manufacturing Africa*,

The first phase of ESAP has now ended and the second phase of adjustment (ZIMPREST - the Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation) was meant to start in 1996. However, there have been difficulties with the IMF, mainly over the budget deficit, with two suspensions of funding in 1995. The second phase of funding had still not begun in 1997. At one point, the World Bank appeared to be prepared to restore funds (although the IMF was still opposed) but budget changes in response to claims from war veterans led to a further suspension in September of that year. One final point about ESAP is that, almost immediately after its introduction, Zimbabwe suffered two very serious years of drought which had devastating economic effects. This has obviously made evaluation of the macro-economic effects of ESAP rather difficult although it is much easier to establish the micro-level effects on specific types of jobs, health, education, food prices etc.

The impact of SAPs is not geographically uniform within a country. The usual policy package includes significant devaluation, cutbacks in public expenditure, the liberalization of trade and abolition of public subsidies, and reform of parastatals. These measures may have a different impact on urban areas compared to the countryside. For example, the widespread loss of jobs in the formal private and public sectors, and the ending of food subsidies are two common outcomes of structural adjustment and both are felt most acutely in urban areas. On the other hand, the adjustment policies of crop price increases and liberalized agricultural marketing should, theoretically, improve farmers' incomes.

This paper is the result of research in 1994 amongst a large sample of migrant households who had recently come to Harare. The research focused on how these people perceived ESAP and its effects. It was expected that, in line with other surveys in Harare and Zimbabwe, these perceptions would be generally negative. Beyond this, however, we wanted to find out to what extent people felt that ESAP's impacts varied between urban and rural areas, and whether there was a clear trend in these perceptions. These aspects of the survey are the main focus of this paper. As will be seen, whilst there are some clear differences in the way structural adjustment has affected Harare compared to the rural areas, there are also many common themes. Furthermore, the strength of the linkages between rural and urban areas in Zimbabwe has ensured that the effects of ESAP are not necessarily clearly geographically defined.

The researchers specifically adopted a qualitative approach to this topic. The questions about ESAP and its effects were usually open-ended (i.e. there was no attempt to pre-judge the answers or categorize them during the interview). There was a questionnaire, which included many pre-coded questions on general socio-economic status but the responses to the questions about ESAP were written down more or less verbatim and prompting for information was kept to a minimum.

It is hoped that this study will contribute to the literature on Zimbabwe and SAPs in sub-Saharan Africa in a number of ways. Allowing those affected by the policies to determine which par-

James Currey, London, pages 337-411.

8. See reference 4.

9. For example, Zimbabwe was typified as an African country with a medium level of policy and institutional distortions, along with countries such as Togo, Burundi and Mali, by the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank. See Gulhati, Ravi (1988), "The political economy of reform in sub-Saharan Africa", EDI Policy Seminar Report No.8, World Bank, Washington DC.

10. The World Bank appears to have deliberately misrepresented Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector in assessments it made in the 1980s: see reference 7, Riddell (1990); also Stoneman, Colin (1989), "The World Bank and the IMF in Zimbabwe" in Campbell, B. and J. Loxley (editors) (1989), *Structural Adjustment in Africa*, James Currey, London, pages 37-66. It also refused to extend its loan for the crucial export revolving fund in 1987 unless Zimbabwe liberalized trade: see reference 4.

11. See reference 4.

12. See, for example, Gibbon, P. (1995), "Structural adjustment and the working poor in Zimbabwe"; Sachikonye, L. (1995), "Industrial relations and labour relations under ESAP in Zimbabwe"; Brand, V., R. Mupedziswa and P. Gumbo (1995), "Structural adjustment, women and informal sector trade in Harare" all in Gibbon, P. (editor) (1995), *Structural Adjustment and the Poor in Zimbabwe*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala; also Bijlmakers, L., M. Bassett and D. Sanders (1996), *Health and Structural Adjustment in Rural and Urban Zimbabwe*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala; Kanji, N. (1993), "Gender and structural adjustment policies: a case study of Harare, Zimbabwe", unpublished PhD thesis, University of London; Kanji, N. and N. Jazdowska (1993), "Structural adjustment

ticular aspects of SAPs are considered to be most important provides some counterbalance to the numerous studies focusing on macro-level indicators or issues judged to be of significance by the researchers. The emphasis is therefore on how people themselves rank the various impacts of SAPs. Also, by focusing mainly on *rural-urban* migrants who have recently left rural areas, and who can therefore reasonably be assumed to have a sensible view of both rural priorities and livelihoods, and urban life, it provides meaningful insights into the differential impact of SAPs on rural compared to urban areas.

II. THE SURVEYS

OUR RESEARCH WAS conducted in April and May 1994 by questionnaire mainly amongst migrants who were resident in Kuwadzana, one of Harare's high-density residential areas (HDAs). Kuwadzana is one of the largest housing areas to be developed since independence in Zimbabwe - it has been funded by USAID and most of the houses have been developed on a site-and-service basis.

The research reported here is part of a long-term collaborative project on migrants and migration to Harare which was initiated in 1985. The current survey covered 157 respondents resident in three different units of Kuwadzana in April 1994 and a sub-sample of 46 respondents from three older townships dating from the colonial era for comparative purposes. We maintained similar sample criteria for respondents as in our previous migrant surveys.⁽¹³⁾ A respondent had to be a recent migrant (in this survey this was designated as anyone who had moved to live in Harare since the beginning of 1990). He or she had to live on the plot where they were interviewed and had to be over 18 years of age. Respondents were identified by three interviewers going from one plot to another from a common starting point in each unit and asking if anyone there had moved to live in Harare (but not necessarily to that specific residence) since 1990. Once sufficient respondents had been interviewed in one area, the interviewers moved to the next unit. Apart from the minimum age criterion, there were no further restrictions on the nature of migrant respondents. In particular, we did not wish to restrict ourselves only to household heads, as this makes it impossible to get a rounded view of migrant households and of the views of different types of migrants. For example, since migrants often live with relatives (whose household head may or may not be a migrant) when they first move, the common practice of only interviewing household heads would completely exclude such people from such a survey. By interviewing throughout the day, and particularly at week-ends, we ensured we obtained a varied sample of migrant household heads, migrant spouses of household heads and various other migrant household members. Apart from the questions specific to the respondent, the interview schedule included some questions about household heads (e.g. sex, age, employment, income, migrant status) which the respondent, were s/he not the head,

and the implications for low-income urban women in Zimbabwe" in *Review of African Political Economy* 56, pages 11-26; Rakodi, C. ((1994), "Urban poverty in Zimbabwe: post-independence efforts, household strategies and the short-term impact of structural adjustment" in *Journal of International Development* 6:5, pages 663-665; and MacGarry, B. (1993), *Growth? Without Equity? The Zimbabwean Economy and the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme*, Mambo Press, Gweru.

13. Potts, D. and C.C. Mutambirwa (1990), "Rural-urban linkages in contemporary Harare: why migrants need their land" in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16:4, pages 676-98; also Potts, D. with C.C. Mutambirwa (1991), "Low-income housing in Harare: over-crowding and commodification" in *Third World Planning Review* 13:1, pages 1-26.

was also asked. Whilst not all such respondents could fill in all the details about their respective household heads, this methodology allows much data to be gathered on both migrants and the households of which they are part.

III. PROFILES OF MIGRANT RESPONDENTS

a. Social Profile

THE 203 MIGRANTS interviewed were very roughly evenly divided between men and women (55 per cent and 45 per cent), household heads (HHHs) and other household members (56 per cent and 44 per cent), and married and non-married people (56 per cent and 44 per cent) (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: Household Status and Gender of Migrant Respondent (%)

Relation to HHH	All respondents %	Male %	Female %
HHH	56 (114)	79	21
Spouse	21 (43)	5	95
Son/daughter	12 (25)	48	52
Brother/sister	7 (14)	64	36
Other relative	2 (4)	0	100
Others ⁽¹⁾	1 (3)	0	100
All respondents (%)	100 (203)	55	45

Notes: ⁽¹⁾ "Others" were two employees (domestics) and one unspecified. In all tables: number of cases in brackets. Total number of cases may vary due to some missing values for certain categories of data. Percentages may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding. HHH refers to household head.

Table 2: Marital Status of Migrant Respondents

Marital status	All respondents %	Respondent HHH %
Never married	33	27
Married	56	56
Divorced	5	7
Separated	2	3
Widowed	4	6
All respondents	100 (199)	56 (114)

One-third of the migrants had never been married and the age profile of respondents was generally young (see Tables 2 and 3). Of the respondents who were also HHHs about a quarter had never been married - that is they were generally young people who were living in town on their own. Sixty per cent of this group were aged between 18 and 24 (and 75 per cent were male). However, as would be expected, the age profile of respondent HHHs tended to be older than that of the sample as a whole.

Table 3: Age Profile of Migrant Respondents

Age band	All respondents %	Respondent HHHs %
18-24	34	18
25-29	24	25
30-34	17	21
35-39	9	13
40-49	9	16
50-59	9	4
60+	0	0
DK	3	4
All respondents %	100	56

b. Employment Status of Migrant Households

Nearly all (96 per cent) of the migrant HHHs interviewed were working, the vast majority of them (92 per cent) in the formal sector. The same very high level of employment held true for the HHHs of all our other migrant respondents⁽¹⁴⁾ (i.e. dependent respondents) - 94 per cent were working, all of them in the formal sector. This was also true for **all** HHHs.

The sample then was almost entirely of people who had formal jobs or who lived in households headed by someone with a formal job. However, as is very often the case in urban Africa, female HHHs were much more likely to be working informally: 56 per cent of HHHs in the informal sector were women whilst, as a whole, women accounted for only 21 per cent of sampled household heads.

c. Household Incomes

The survey gathered data on the level of the respondent's income and that of the HHH's (if they were not the same person). In both cases, efforts were made to include both primary and secondary sources of income. The average primary income of all heads (i.e. both respondent heads and those reported by "dependents") was Z\$ 907. The modal earning was Z\$ 400 - 15 per cent of all household heads were earning exactly this amount. Only 4 per cent had no primary earnings (which corresponds well with the proportion reported as unemployed).

Thus, the income profile of our sample was of generally poor urban households - as would be expected in a sample of recent migrant households living in Harare's high-density areas.

IV. MIGRANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ESAP

OUR PRIMARY INTEREST was not so much what impact ESAP had on the migrant households in a quantitative sense but much more how they **perceived** the policies as a whole and whether they had strong opinions about the differential impact on rural

14. Since the survey gathered information from "dependent" migrant respondents on their respective HHHs, the HHH data set includes information on some HHHs who were **not** respondents in the survey. Since eligibility for the survey rested on the year of the **respondent's** migration, non-respondent HHHs need not be **recent** migrants as classified by our survey or even migrants at all.

versus urban areas. Much of the information gathered is qualitative and in the form of comments from each respondent. The interviewers began this section of the interview by saying that the government had introduced economic policies since 1990 known as ESAP and they wanted to find out what the respondent felt about how these policies had affected people in different parts of Zimbabwe. The interviewers were careful to make this statement in as neutral a way as possible - in other words they were careful not to "direct" any possible response by indicating whether ESAP was a "good" or a "bad" economic policy. Obviously, this neutrality was a vital aspect of the survey; had there been any implications from the interviewers at this stage that ESAP was causing either positive or negative effects, the nature of any ensuing discussion would have been irreparably biased. It is worth noting that virtually every single respondent knew what ESAP was and the sorts of policies associated with it.

15. On the impact on individual respondents and comparisons with the impact of ESAP on urban poverty elsewhere in Africa, see Potts, D. (forthcoming), "The impact of structural adjustment on welfare and livelihoods: an assessment by people in Harare, Zimbabwe" in Nelson, N. and S. Jones (editors) (forthcoming), *African Urban Poverty* Intermediate Technology Publications, London.

16. Very few respondents were born in other areas (e.g. Mozambique or a commercial farming area) and so their rankings are not disaggregated in Table 4.

Respondents were then asked to rank how they thought ESAP had affected the communal areas - the African smallholder rural areas of Zimbabwe (see Table 4). They were then encouraged to explain their ranking but no further prompting was given for the types of issues they brought up at this point. This process was then repeated for three further areas: the impact of ESAP on Harare (as a whole); whether there was any difference in the nature of the impact of ESAP on the communal areas compared to Harare; and finally, how the respondents felt they had been personally affected. This paper focuses in particular on responses relating to the differences between the rural and urban areas, and the impact on rural-urban linkages.⁽¹⁵⁾ The rankings shown in Table 4 have also been disaggregated by respondents' birthplace in order to test whether the degree of familiarity with life in town or the communal areas⁽¹⁶⁾ would affect their perceptions.

Table 4: Rankings of Impact of ESAP by Birthplace of Respondent (%)

Birthplace	On Communal Areas (CAs)				On Harare			
	Better	Worse & worse	Better	Same	Better	Worse & worse	Better	Same
All	6	87	1	1	2	95	1.5	0
CAs	6	91	1	0.5	1	96	1.5	0
Towns	5	62	0	0	10	90	0	0

Birthplace	On Communal Areas (CAs) versus Harare				
	Better CAs	Better Harare	Worse CAs	Worse Harare	Same CAs & Harare
All	0.5	1	4	84	6
CAs	0.5	1	4	84	6
Towns	0	0	5	76	5

Notes: Percentages do not add up to 100 per cent mainly because of the small number of respondents who could not rank the impact of ESAP. Urban-born respondents in particular were uncertain about the impact on the CAs.

As described above, respondents were asked to explain and elaborate on their perceptions. It is these comments, recorded by the interviewers on the interview schedules, which give the true flavour of their attitudes and which indicate the factors and events which have helped them form their opinions. As will be seen below, many comments fell into very specific categories and are easily summarized. There were also other, perhaps less frequently mentioned, issues which are of great significance for constructing an understanding of how Zimbabwean migrants perceive ESAP to have affected rural and urban livelihoods.

V. IMPACT OF ESAP ON COMMUNAL AREAS

A LARGE MAJORITY (87 per cent) of the migrants felt that ESAP had made things worse for the communal areas (CAs). Only 6 per cent felt that it had improved the situation. The remaining few were divided between those who felt that it had made little difference, or had made some things better and others worse, or could not tell (see Table 4). There was some evidence that where a migrant had been brought up made some difference to their perceptions - but this was more because town-born people were, understandably, uncertain about how ESAP had affected the CAs rather than that they were less negative about its impact there. In fact, 33 per cent of this group felt unable to rank the impact of ESAP on the CAs.

The explanations for their rankings made it very clear that the most important issue feeding the migrants' perceptions was the very significant increases in prices which had occurred and which they attributed (correctly) to ESAP (see Table 5).

Table 5: Explanations of Perceptions: the Impact of ESAP on the Communal Areas

Type of comment	Number of resps.	% of resps.
General increases in prices (excluding farming inputs) of which:	94	57
ending price controls	10	6
rural shops have monopoly/no competition so charge exorbitant prices	14	8
food now very expensive	31	19
Fertilizers become too expensive	30	18
Education problems:		
cannot send all children to school	15	9
uniforms	2	1
Hospital fees too high	8	5
Rural-urban linkages:		
Return migration "overburdening" CAs	7	4
Retrenchment in towns leading to loss of remittances	8	5
Little effect on CAs as people do not have to buy anything/live on farming	7	4
Helped CA farmers who can sell maize in town for high prices	6	3

Notes: 166 respondents made specific comments about the effect of ESAP on the communal areas. Percentages are a proportion of these 166.

By far the most frequently mentioned issue was the rise in prices in the rural areas for things other than farm inputs - this problem was identified by 57 per cent of those who made a detailed response to this question. They were particularly worried about increasing **food** prices but the ending of price controls generally was also mentioned. It was in relation to the rural areas of Zimbabwe that the comment, from which the title of this paper is taken, was made: "Basic commodities (bread, sugar, cooking oil) are now very expensive - a luxury." Several migrants also made very specific complaints about rural dealers exploiting their monopoly position and charging "exorbitant" prices now that price controls had gone - clearly this problem is one which would affect rural areas rather than urban areas where competition would tend to discourage such over-pricing. The migrants' new familiarity with urban prices may have focused their minds on the differentials between urban and rural prices - and higher rural prices would, to some extent, be due to "fair" factors such as transport costs and small turnover - but, on the other hand, the ending of price controls definitely gives rural traders the potential to be exploitative and the respondents may well have noticed that rural prices had increased proportionately more than those in urban areas. One migrant commented that rural "...prices are too high - now there are no controls and the dealers have a monopoly." The fact that prices for **non-farm** inputs were perceived as being the **main** problem for the communal areas is regarded as highly significant - we return to this point in the conclusion.

The second most important category of responses related again to price rises but this time to the perception that fertilizer had become very expensive. In some cases, the respondents made this comment in association with a complaint about the generally increasing expense of farm inputs including, for example, seeds and farm equipment. Again, such concerns indicate that any advantages accruing from higher selling prices for agricultural produce can be easily offset by the impact of liberalization on necessary inputs. In relation to many other sub-Saharan African countries, African farmers in Zimbabwe use relatively high levels of fertilizer and hybrid seeds, so these are an important item in rural budgets. On the other hand, a few respondents (six) also pointed out that one advantage rural people had was that they were getting free fertilizer and seed packages - however, this policy has nothing to do with ESAP but was originally a response by the government to help people overcome the appalling impact of the droughts of the early 1990s. The impact of this policy would vary between rural localities depending on the severity of the drought and on the nature of local politics.⁽¹⁷⁾

One of the major policy changes introduced under ESAP has been the introduction of user fees for previously free welfare or huge rises in the prices charged. Even primary schools now charge fees in urban areas (but not in the CAs) and high increases in the cost of secondary school fees, uniforms, books, paper and exam fees etc. have placed a heavy burden on parents. It was evident that this was a serious concern for some of our respondents when thinking about the CAs; presumably many

17. It is now frequently suggested that this policy has been used as a "vote-catcher" for ZANU. Such accusations have been made in the past in the Zimbabwean Financial Gazette and, more recently, in Economist Intelligence Unit reports. Politicians have also been reported as threatening not to give such help in areas where support for the party was perceived to be poor. As a subsidy for rural people, however, it will certainly have helped to improve the rural:urban income gap and enhanced rural incomes to some degree which at least is a positive use of government resources in national welfare terms. Furthermore, there is clearly a point that political parties **should** be trying to enhance their vote by allocating government resources in a way which the majority approve of - that is what politics is about. However, this is a debate which this paper cannot pursue.

of them would have younger relatives at school and some would be being asked to help with their education. The thrust of their responses was that it was no longer possible always to send *all* the children in a family to school: a situation which suggests that some very hard choices are being made. Some specific comments are reproduced below:

- “Some parents prefer to buy food than send their children to school.”
- “Children cannot afford to continue education beyond O-level.”
- “School fees are high so parents can only send half of their children to school.”
- “Parents cannot afford to send their children to secondary school.”

Similar concerns were expressed about the expense of hospital and clinic fees since ESAP had been implemented. One migrant felt that, in the communal areas, education and health were now only for the “privileged”.⁽¹⁸⁾

Of particular interest to this survey were the responses which related to rural-urban linkages. Two very specific types of impact were identified spontaneously by 9 per cent of the migrant respondents. One of these was that worsening economic conditions in town were increasing urban-rural “return” migration and that these migrants were causing significant problems for CA households who were finding it difficult to support them. The other issue was how ESAP was causing rural families to lose remittances from their urban kin. With one exception, in every case where this was mentioned the respondents referred specifically to the problems of retrenchment which were occurring in urban areas - the type of unemployment which is most specifically ESAP induced. Illustrative comments can be found below:

- “Retrenched workers are causing over-population in the communal areas.”
- “People are flooding into the communal areas from town after retrenchment - which is leading to land struggles.”
- “People made redundant in town go to the communal areas but are not absorbed into communal area activities.”
- “Economic hardship in town means less money is sent to people in the communal areas.”
- “Rural people depend on wages from urban workers but they are being retrenched.”
- “Retrenched workers are overburdening rural folk so that there is not enough land or food to go round.”

The final two categories of comments about the CAs came from respondents who either felt that ESAP had had little impact on the CAs or that the impact had been positive (see Table 4). In the first case, there was a small group who felt that CA farmers were able to avoid the burden of higher prices because they grew **all** their own food and/or did not need to buy things; in the second case, the respondents remarked that farmers could

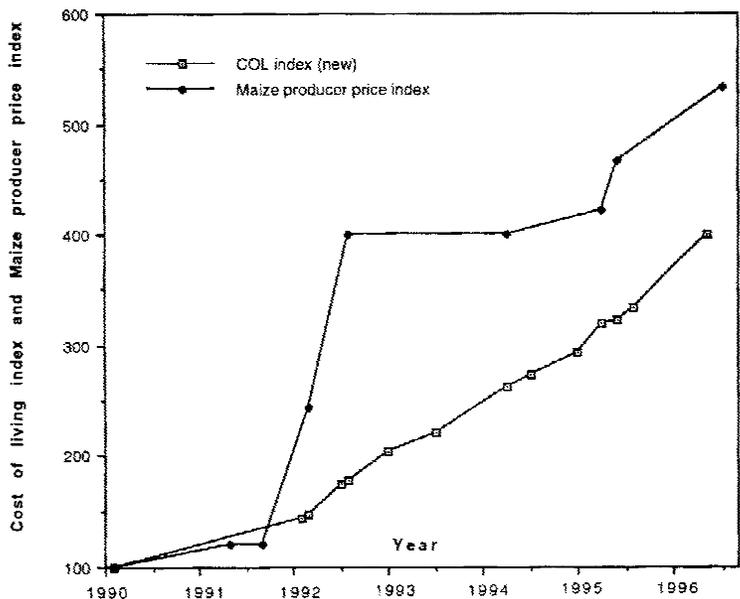
18. Health fees at rural health centres and most rural hospitals were fortunately again abolished in March 1995.

now get high prices for their maize in town - presumably implying that this would more than compensate for general increases in the cost of living. The feeling that farmers were making a lot of money from high urban maize prices is easy to understand given the enormous jumps in the price of roller meal which have occurred since ESAP was introduced. For example, mealie-meal prices rose by 30-35 per cent in April 1991, by 20 per cent at the beginning of 1992 (when super-refined maize rose by 83 per cent), by 50 per cent in June 1993 and by about a further 30 per cent in July 1995 when the price stood at Z\$ 28.80 for a 20 kilogramme bag. However, this has been caused in part by the removal of price subsidies and not only by crop price increases. Super-refined maize lost its subsidy in 1992 and, in June 1993, normal roller meal lost its subsidy of Z\$ 562.42 per tonne.⁽¹⁹⁾ Thus, peasant farmers have not always seen their own (even nominal) incomes rise in line with the **retail** price of maize - for example, the guaranteed Grain Marketing Board price rose by only 20 per cent in April 1991. On the other hand, there have been some major jumps in maize producer prices: for example, from Z\$ 550 to Z\$ 900 in July 1992 (a response to the drought crisis) where they remained until March 1995 when they rose again to Z\$ 950; a further increase to Z\$ 1,200 per tonne was announced in May 1996.⁽²⁰⁾ Thus, as shown in Figure 1, maize producer prices have risen faster than the cost of living index for most of the 1990s. The (minority) perception that maize sellers were compensated for ESAP price rises by higher maize prices is thus generally correct - however, the majority of our respondents evidently did not feel that this had

19. Economist Intelligence Unit (1991-1996), *Zimbabwe Reports* (various).

20. See reference 19.

Figure 1: Zimbabwe Cost of Living Index and Maize Producer Price Index 1990-95



Source: Data from EIU, Zimbabwe Reports, various. Maize prices have been transformed to an index, with price in January 1990 = 100, equivalent to the new COL index introduced in 1993.

translated into greater peasant purchasing power on the whole, perhaps because of the numbers of peasants who are net purchasers or sell only very small amounts, combined with falling support from urban kin.

VI. IMPACT OF ESAP ON HARARE

PERCEPTIONS OF THE impact of ESAP on the city of Harare were even more clear-cut - nearly all the migrants felt that the situation in Harare had become worse since the policies had been introduced. Only 2 per cent felt that there had been a general improvement. Evidently, the migrants felt that life for urban residents in general had been made much more difficult - and, as can be seen from Table 4, this was true no matter where the migrants had been born. It is interesting that the proportion of positive responses from urban-born respondents (whilst still low) was much higher than that from migrants born in the communal areas (10 per cent compared to 1 per cent) - although, since this figure represents only two individuals, it may be a spurious result.

The comments respondents made to qualify their rankings generally fell into distinctive categories, as with those on the impact of ESAP on the CAs. These are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Explanations of Perceptions: the Impact of ESAP on Harare

Type of comment	Number of resps.	% of resps.
General increases in prices of which:	116 ⁽¹⁾	64
ending price controls	10	6
devaluation has caused prices to increase	8	4
food related	37	20
rent/housing become very expensive	36	20
transport related	24	13
hospital fees too high	16	9
education: school fees too high	9	5
Employment related:		
retrenchments	66	36
unemployment	18	10
overworked/underpaid	16	9
Other:		
rural-urban linkages	6	3
crime	5	3
positive impact	3	2

Notes: 181 respondents made specific comments about the effect of ESAP on Harare.

⁽¹⁾ The answers detailed for this category add up to more than 116 because respondents' answers often included more than one type of comment.

Again, by far the most pressing concern was the problems caused by price rises in general. Almost two-thirds of respondents mentioned some sort of price rise in their comments. Usually, they would recite a list of things which had become too expensive, for example saying "bread, sugar and mealie-meal

are now very expensive"; "hospital fees, electricity and rents are too high"; "hospital, school fees, transport, water and food are all very expensive". These general answers have also been disaggregated to indicate the frequency with which specific categories of price increase were mentioned (e.g. rent, transport, education). Some respondents however made only very general answers, saying things like "the price of every commodity has gone up too high".

As can be seen from Table 6, food costs were felt particularly to be a worry in town - one-third of "price" comments specified food as one of the problems. For low-income families, food may already have been the major component of monthly expenditure before ESAP and must now be even larger in response to the dual pressures of falling real incomes and rising food prices. Such increases can only be managed at the expense of other budget items and are likely to cause real stress for poor families, as already detailed in Harare by other studies.⁽²¹⁾ Three specific comments about food prices indicate how severe the problem appeared to some of our respondents:

21. See reference 12, Kanji (1993); Brand *et al.* (1995); and Bijlmakers *et al.* (1996).

- "People are no longer able to eat lunch in order to cut expenses."
- "The higher prices of food means starvation."
- "Food prices are alarming."

As will be seen below, the food issue also loomed large in people's minds when comparing the impact of ESAP on Harare and on the CAs.

The next most frequently mentioned type of price problem related to housing costs, specified in 31 per cent of "price" comments. The majority of the migrant households in the survey were lodgers (53 per cent) although a significant proportion (38 per cent) were owner-occupiers. Housing issues thus fell into two main groups. First, rising rents were mentioned by 30 respondents. In the context of ESAP, rents are a double-edged sword because, for the landlords/ladies, most of whom will probably be living on the premises with their lodgers, they can be increased in line with ESAP induced inflation (unlike wages) and are therefore a hedge against falling living standards. For the lodgers, however, rent rises are just part of the litany of extra costs which have to be covered. For owners, many of whom in Kuwadzana would still be in the process of completing their houses, the problems were related to increases in building materials' prices preventing house development or to the inability to maintain loan payments. These problems are exemplified by comments such as:

- "People are being forced to sell property."
- "[People are] living in semi-squatter houses."
- "People's houses are being auctioned because they fail to develop them due to financial strain."
- "So many people lose jobs they can't finish their houses."

Transport costs were the next most frequently mentioned

22. This accords with results from other surveys in Harare which have all found a low drop-out rate amongst poor urban households. See also reference 12, Gibbon (1995), page 31.

“price” problem for Harare, this being something which was not mentioned in the context of the CAs. However, as for the CAs, health and education fees were viewed as part of the problems caused by ESAP in town. Three respondents stated that rising health fees were making people seek alternative, cheaper, forms of health care: in one case *n’angas* (traditional healers) and in the other two: “...people [are forced] to join churches for spiritual healing.” Comments about education costs, however, were confined to complaints about rising fees: no-one actually said that urban residents were removing their children from school⁽²²⁾ although a number of people had specifically mentioned this in relation to the CAs.

A separate and major group of urban-based problems mentioned in response to this question related to unemployment and work conditions and, very specifically, retrenchments. Forty-two per cent of the comments about the impact of ESAP on Harare mentioned job losses and the majority of these specified retrenchment (rather than just unemployment) - with large numbers of workers being laid off by certain employers, often suddenly and, as bitterly recounted by some of our respondents, often without any redundancy payments. Fifteen per cent of those who mentioned retrenchments went on to make this point. It is evident that increased vulnerability in the urban job market is one of the most significant perceptions our respondents had of the impact and nature of ESAP.

A small sub-set of comments related to the way in which rural-urban linkages had been affected in Harare. To some extent, of course, these reflect the opposite side of the coin to the perceptions, already discussed above, of how the rural end of these links have been influenced. Thus, there were comments to the effect that urban people could no longer afford to support dependents or the elderly in the CAs, that retrenchments meant that people had no money for rent or food and, therefore, were “...forced to migrate [back to the CAs].” Two responses specified that parents were having to send their children away to the CAs to cut urban expenditure (one of these identified the cause as high rents).

Only three people gave any reasons why ESAP had made things better for Harare. In two cases, the respondents were traders in the informal sector and praised “the free market” which let them sell their things “...wherever we want as long as we have a licence.” The third respondent remarked that ESAP had given “...young people a chance at work - as older workers were retrenched.”

VII. IMPACT OF ESAP ON COMMUNAL AREAS COMPARED TO HARARE

WHEN IT CAME to comparing the differential impact of ESAP on the rural areas versus town, there was a very definite feeling that Harare had suffered the most. This was the opinion of 84 per cent of the migrants (see Table 4). There was, of course, a wide range of answers to this question but most could be cat-

egorized by the interviewers quite easily into the five rankings shown in Table 4. The interviewers had to be careful not to “push” respondents into certain directions in their answers and so the responses were recorded as given. To some extent this did leave some opportunity for confusion since the response that the impact of ESAP had been better for the CAs could also be construed to mean that it had been worse for Harare (and probably usually did) - although in a very few cases respondents might have meant that things had improved in both places but that the CAs had seen the most improvement. However, not only is it very evident that the major perception was that ESAP had been worse for people in Harare but also that the explanations given for the rankings generally made it very obvious what factors were influencing the respondents’ judgement.

Table 7 indicates the nature of some of the specific comments made in response to this particular question. Some responses reiterated the general problems related to ESAP (e.g. price rises) but made no comparison between the two areas and these have been excluded from the analysis.

Table 7: Explanations of Perceptions: the Impact of ESAP on Communal Areas Compared to Harare

Type of comment	Number of resps.	% of resps.
Impact worse in Harare of which:	122 ⁽¹⁾	72
-urban people must buy/pay for everything	79	47
-urban people must survive on their salaries only	10	6
-town people losing jobs	8	5
-urban people cannot supplement incomes (e.g. by growing food)	6	4
-CA residents can grow food/live on what they grow/need less money	40	24
Impact the same for Harare and the CAs of which:	12	7
-urban and rural people must buy basics which have increased in price	7	4
-rural people depend on those in town	4	2
Impact worse in CAs of which:	10	6
-exorbitant prices	3	2
-agricultural inputs now too expensive	2	1
-no jobs available in CAs	3	2

Notes: 170 respondents made specific comments about the effect of ESAP on the communal areas in comparison to Harare.

⁽¹⁾ The answers detailed for this category add up to more than 122 because respondents’ answers often included more than one type of comment.

As can be seen, the reasons why most people thought Harare residents were suffering **more** than those in the communal areas were related to their dependence on cash income from employment to purchase everything necessary for day-to-day survival. Since prices had risen for most essentials, incomes had not kept pace and job losses were increasing, urban residents were being squeezed. Whilst urban people had to buy everything, communal area residents, on the other hand, could grow their own food, thereby avoiding at least one major urban ex-

pense. The ability to grow food was by far the most commonly identified advantage that rural people had in terms of needing less money although free accommodation and firewood were also mentioned on occasion. The comparisons made were not as simple as “urban people need money and rural people do not” - for, although some respondents did say things such as “...the communal areas live on farming”, in many cases rural cash needs were recognized but judged, not surprisingly, to be less pressing than for urban residents. Illustrative comments included:

- “The communal areas can **supplement** with farming.”
- “Communal areas survive by farming, especially in **good years**” (the point that rural people’s cash needs varied from year to year depending on the weather was made by several respondents).
- “In the communal areas they grow **some** food.”
- “In communal areas people can avoid grocery bills.”
- “Communal areas people, **especially those with land**, can live on farming alone.”

Essentially therefore, the migrants perceived very strongly that the communal areas were less vulnerable to the exigencies of ESAP because food costs there were significantly reduced, rural people were not directly affected by the urban-based job losses associated with ESAP, and some of their other needs, such as housing, did not require regular cash payments.

A second group of responses, also shown in Table 7, explained why some respondents felt that there was little difference in the impact of ESAP on Harare compared to the CAs. This was a minority viewpoint. Their usual reasoning was that rural people also had to buy many things and price rises affected everyone. These respondents clearly had a rather different perception of the key economic aspects of people’s lives in the CAs. A possible reason could be that they came from areas where agriculture was particularly problematic (e.g. because of low rainfall or especially acute pressure on land) and/or that their families had very little in the way of rural productive resources. In these circumstances, peasant households may be purchasing most of their food or relying on drought relief. People from such areas would understandably not feel that growing food was a particular advantage of rural living.

A secondary set of reasons why people felt ESAP’s impact was not geographically differentiated related to the perception that **the rural areas were so economically dependent on urban areas, that anything which affected urban incomes adversely was bound to damage rural households**. The four comments reproduced below are clearly related to the earlier set of comments about rural-urban linkages with respect to the impact of ESAP on the CAs alone:

- “Retrenched people went to CAs and increased the burden there.”
- “Rural people depend on those working in town.”

- “Retrenchments in town equal retrenchments in CAs.”
- “Urban workers support the rural poor.”

A final small sub-set of respondents thought the CAs had suffered the most from ESAP. In their explanations, the problem of rural retailers exploiting their monopoly position emerged again - one respondent stated that “...in town, prices are low whereas in rural areas they are double or thrice.” Rising agricultural input prices were deemed by two respondents to outweigh the disadvantages of urban price rises, as did the lack of jobs to earn any income at all in the CAs. Another respondent pointed out that “...during drought, farmers are not able to raise an income.” On the face of it, this appears to be a generic problem rather than one specific to the impact of ESAP - however, the coincidence of the commencement of ESAP and the drought would have exacerbated the problems of cash-poor rural households faced with rising food prices. On the other hand, another respondent said “...people in the CAs are helped by social welfare - this does not take place in Harare.” It seems reasonable to assume that this refers to drought relief programmes - which are separate of course from ESAP but which would nevertheless have helped rural people avoid the impact of the food price rises in the areas where they had been implemented. The marked difference in the perceptions of how the CAs have fared, evident in these two comments, is again probably very contingent on the respondents’ specific rural experiences.

VIII. DISCUSSION

THE OVERWHELMING RESPONSE from our migrant respondents was clearly that ESAP had had a very negative effect on virtually every area and aspect of life in Zimbabwe: both rural and urban areas had suffered economically and access to employment, health and education was perceived as deteriorating drastically. Again and again, the migrants returned to the intolerable burden which was being caused by price increases.

Very clear geographical differences in the nature and severity of the impact of ESAP were identified. People in the urban areas were worst affected according to our migrants - because all their needs had to be paid for and prices for everything, from food to building materials, were rising. The key difference for rural people in the CAs was that they could (usually) grow (some of) their own food and this cushioned them from the food price rises. Their perceptions are clearly supported by other research in Murehwa communal area and urban Chitungwiza in 1994. This found that the urban sample reported that, over the past year, they had experienced three times as frequently as those surveyed in the rural areas, times when they did not have enough food to feed their families.⁽²³⁾

The lower cost of living (in cash terms) in rural areas has, of course, always been the case for Zimbabwe, as for most African and developing countries. It is primarily this aspect which draws, or forces, some people back to the rural areas when urban in-

23. See reference 12, Bijlmakers *et al.*(1996).

comes are curtailed. The importance of not having to pay for one's food has always been recognized, as evidenced by the following comment made by an elderly Harare resident when asked during another survey what was the biggest problem about living in town.

"Eating bought food. At home we eat what is grown ... you know a cucumber? [Here] I buy a cucumber for a shilling. A cucumber which is eaten by a baboon at home! Ah no..... [But here] you put a bought thing in your mouth! A chicken's egg is bought for twenty cents! Two bob! An egg! So that's a hard life. You buy firewood. Are trees bought? No. You go and break it in the bush. No ... they are selling my tree to me. That is what was hard about living in town."⁽²⁴⁾

However, the evidence from the surveys suggests that this now has a new, and urgent, significance in people's minds because food prices have been so drastically affected by ESAP. Food bills have probably never been so prominent in the budgets of low-income urban families - and the advantages of "free" food never more attractive. One study in Harare has shown that, between 1991 and 1992 alone, for the poorest households sampled, real expenditure fell by 12.4 per cent because incomes did not keep up with prices (which rose 45 per cent over the period) and the share of food in household budgets rose significantly.⁽²⁵⁾ Particularly for people whose experience of rural living is very recent, the cost of food in contemporary urban Zimbabwe may seem virtually unbelievable.

It is interesting to note that, despite the fact that urban agriculture has become increasingly important in Harare in the 1990s,⁽²⁶⁾ none of our respondents referred to this as a factor which would reduce the harshness of ESAP's effect in Harare relative to the CAs. In fact there were only three responses which made any reference to urban agriculture at all: two were related to the **lack** of land in town for growing food although the third noted that "...people have become resourceful, farming everywhere." It would be interesting, therefore, to know whether urban agriculture is more commonly practised by longer-term urban residents, perhaps because they "know the ropes" for obtaining land (albeit usually "illegally") or have less access to rural produce. Whatever the reason for this virtual "silence" on this important urban economic strategy in our surveys, it seems that this is not seen as a panacea by urban residents themselves for ameliorating the food price shocks. On the other hand, a study by Bijlmakers *et al* found that maize production on rural holdings by the residents of urban Chitungwiza had increased very significantly between 1993 and 1994 although this only benefited a minority since only about a fifth of their sample actually had land rights.⁽²⁷⁾

The emphasis placed on rural-urban linkages by some of those surveyed is also highly significant in terms of assessing the real impact of ESAP. Adaptations in such linkages are already known to be one of the important strategies adopted, throughout urban Africa, to survive the exigencies of structural adjustment.⁽²⁸⁾

24. Quotation taken from interviews recorded in Barnes, T. and E. Win (1992), *To Live a Better Life: An oral history of women in the city of Harare, 1930-70*, Baobab Books, Harare, page 202.

25. See reference 12, Kanji (1993).

26. See, for example, Mbiba, B. (1994), "Institutional responses to uncontrolled urban cultivation in Harare: prohibitive or accommodative?" in *Environment and Urbanization* 6:1, pages 188-202; also Drakakis-Smith, D., T. Bowyer-Bower and D. Tevera (1994), "Urban agriculture in Harare" in *Habitat International* 2:17.

27. See reference 12, Bijlmakers *et al*, (1996).

28. See Potts, D. (1995), "Shall we go home? Increasing urban poverty in African cities and migrator processes" in *Geographical Journal* 161:3, pages 245-264; also Potts, D. (1997), "Urban lives: adopting new strategies and adapting rural links" in Rakodi, C. (editor) *The Urban Challenge in Africa: Growth and Management of its Large Cities* United Nations University Press, Tokyo, pages 447-494.

29. See reference 12, Kanji and Jazdowska (1993), page 21; also Rakodi (1994), pages 660-61.

Variations in Zimbabwe under ESAP have also been noted by other researchers.⁽²⁹⁾ Fewer visits "home", sending children to the rural areas, increased consumption of maize brought in from the communal areas and return migration to avoid destitution are amongst the strategies noted. As this study has shown, the latter strategy is not just perceived as a problem for the individual migrant but also for the communal areas to which they return. This is because they are seen as "burdening" the rural areas - obviously people feel that, on the whole, they are unable to contribute enough in terms of added agricultural production to cover their consumption needs (of both food and non-food items). This is scarcely surprising given that this is the underlying rationale for migration to town in the first place for many migrants. Indirectly, ESAP is also seen as contributing to the land shortage problem in the rural areas.

Whilst rural-urban linkages involve very important flows and transactions in both directions, the responses from this survey indicate quite clearly that the expectations of Zimbabwean people - which might be seen as an element of the Zimbabwean "moral economy" - are essentially that net contributions should be **from** the urban areas **to** the rural areas. This is evidenced from the concern displayed about reductions in remittances to rural kinfolk necessitated by the impact of ESAP on urban incomes - many respondents obviously felt guilty about this. There was no suggestion that the shift in the nature of rural-urban linkages was acceptable in some way as a *quid pro quo* for previous urban to rural flows. Thus, the comment that "...urban workers support the rural poor" was not in competition with any perceptions that, nowadays, perhaps the rural areas **should** help the urban poor. Even under the stringent conditions of ESAP then, and in the context of a generally held perception that the urban areas had been hardest hit, the indications are that the structural conditions of life in the CAs are still seen as distinctly disadvantageous compared to those in town.

This point leads on to the general issue of how ESAP is perceived to have affected the CAs. The fact that prices for **non-farm** inputs were perceived as being the **main** problem for the communal areas is regarded as highly significant. There is often an assumption by proponents of structural adjustment that improvements in the rural-urban terms of trade and income gap will be made if crop and livestock prices are enhanced in real terms. However, structural adjustment also tends to lead to price increases for food and consumer items. If the latter are important in rural budgets, then any increases in income from agricultural sales may be dissipated by the greater expense for consumption, or even exceeded, leaving rural households worse off. Many rural households in Zimbabwe are partly, or even highly, dependent upon bought food for a variety of reasons mainly connected with the country's history of land alienation and migrant labour. It is, therefore, not surprising that this factor was pinpointed by so many of our respondents as being the most important problem that ESAP had created for rural people in the communal areas.

The importance of buying food in many rural budgets is prob-

ably not something which policy makers have taken sufficiently into account, either in Zimbabwe or Africa as a whole. The migrants who spoke to us in Harare were only too well aware of the problem and there are a number of other countries where such perceptions would probably be replicated. For example, in Malawi most peasant households are not food self-sufficient and this is probably even more true for South African households in the former "homelands". Thus, any move in South Africa towards structural adjustment type policies is likely to have very negative effects on the rural areas - and food prices have already been spiralling upwards in the 1990s as subsidies are removed.

This issue about bought food is also relevant to assessing methodologies which measure the rural-urban income gap in Africa. For example, Jamal and Weeks' seminal work which considers this topic in the context of a critique of SAPs⁽³⁰⁾ tends to assume that rural households' food needs in Africa are met from subsistence production and not, therefore, affected by national food price rises. Such an assumption may be sufficiently realistic to yield useful comparative indices for rural and urban incomes in some sub-Saharan African countries where land shortages are not a major issue, and the history and nature of migrant labour is rather different from that typical of many Southern African countries. However, it may well lead to misleading results in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Botswana and Namibia.

Another issue to consider in terms of the advantage gained by rural areas by SAP recommendations to increase prices for crops and to liberalize marketing arrangements is whether the advantages are sustained. Analysis of specific country experiences shows that frequently seemingly significant price rises are rapidly eroded by inflation so that farmers' gains in real terms are short-lived. This, for example, was true of Malawian maize prices in the 1980s. Furthermore, the ending of farmers' subsidies (particularly on fertilizer) may negate crop price rises, and liberalization of the agricultural trade has often not helped farmers because the capacity of private traders to fill the technical, transport and capital investment gaps left by marketing boards has often been grossly overestimated. Thus, arrangements for marketing the 1993-94 maize crop in Zambia were chaotic and disastrous for the farmers. Our survey indicates that fertilizer price rises have been a particular problem in Zimbabwe, as they were frequently mentioned by respondents. Further very significant rises in fertilizer prices have occurred since the survey as well - they rose by 49 per cent in March 1995 and by a further 10 per cent in August of the same year.⁽³¹⁾ The scale of the problem is suggested by other recent research which found that the use of purchased fertilizer in one CA in Zimbabwe, Chivi, had effectively ceased and this is attributed to the collapse in real wage incomes and rises in fertilizer prices caused by ESAP.⁽³²⁾

Another factor worthy of note is the frequency with which housing problems were singled out as being an ESAP-related problem. For those who were trying to build houses, their perceptions are supported by the statistics which show that, during

30. Jamal, V. and J. Weeks (1994), *Africa Misunderstood: Or whatever happened to the rural-urban gap?*, MacMillan, Basingstoke.

31. Economist Intelligence Unit (1995), *Zimbabwe Report*, September.

32. Scoones, I. (1997), "Landscapes, fields and soils: Understanding the history of soil fertility management in southern Zimbabwe" in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23:4, pages 615-34.

33. Bond, P. (1996), "Review article: Who foots the bill? Contrasting views on the success of structural adjustment in Zimbabwe" in *Journal of Southern African Studies* 22:1, pages 167-174.

34. Some proportion of this rise is undoubtedly due to AIDS related deaths. However, the article in which this doubling was reported, and which was written by an OXFAM policy advisor, makes it clear that ESAP has played a significant part in the increased death rates. See Watkins, Kevin (1996), "Zimbabwe 'miracle cure' fails to save the poor" in *Guardian* 26 July.

35. Economist Intelligence Unit (1994), *Zimbabwe Report*, March.

36. See reference 12, Rakodi (1994), page 661, emphasis added.

37. See reference 13, Potts and Mutambirwa (1990).

ESAP, the building prices index has nearly always risen faster than general retail prices. In addition to this, there have been very serious problems for the housing sector caused by "...two inordinate increases in the interest rate mandated by the [World] Bank's macro-economic department during 1991" which led to Zimbabwe's building societies failing to make any home loans to new borrowers for two years.⁽³³⁾ As low-income housing strategies in Zimbabwe, unusually for sub-Saharan Africa, rely heavily on building society loans, this was clearly a huge disadvantage for the urban poor - and directly attributable to ESAP. ESAP has, therefore, actively discouraged one of the most productive (in both economic and welfare terms) activities of Zimbabwe's urban low-income population - their investment in housing.

The disastrous impact of SAPs on health and education in Africa is now a commonplace observation. The World Bank has now revised its valuation of the importance of such welfare expenditure but, unfortunately, the damage has already been done. Zimbabwe's people have not escaped this tragedy, and both health and education issues signified strongly in their perceptions of the effects of ESAP in both rural and urban areas. It is interesting to note that the comments of our respondents suggest that rural children may be more affected by being removed from school - despite the fact that rural primary schools still do not charge fees. The sense that health in Zimbabwe has deteriorated under ESAP is clearly supported by the facts: a 1996 Harare City Council survey found that infant mortality rates in the city have doubled since 1990⁽³⁴⁾ (national rates halved during the pre-adjustment 1980s); Harare's maternal mortality rates have also risen significantly and those in rural areas have doubled.⁽³⁵⁾

IX. CONCLUSION

BOTH URBAN AND rural people in Zimbabwe appear to have suffered many disadvantages from ESAP. The views of rural-urban migrants, who could be expected to have informed opinions about ESAP's impact on both urban and rural areas, are clearly that both areas have experienced serious economic and social difficulties because of ESAP policies although the urban areas have been hardest hit. Where rural-urban linkages have been affected however, the impact has, to some extent, tended to shift the flows so that rural areas are no longer receiving as much money from the urban areas as they used to and are having to cope with extra family members who might otherwise have been in town. One of the impacts of ESAP in urban Zimbabwe has been starkly characterized as "...unemployment, followed by return to the rural areas or **destitution.**"⁽³⁶⁾ Urban destitution is becoming more evident in Harare in the 1990s, particularly for those who have no rural alternative such as the landless, widows and orphans. The safety net of the CAs has always been vital for urban households⁽³⁷⁾ and the ESAP era is proving yet again the significance of that safety net.