

Chapter 2

Of Men and Women

'Muzungu! Muzungu!' These shouts welcomed me as I stepped onto the veranda of a house in the western part of Mpatamatu's section 26. Its structure set it apart from the standardized former mine houses around it. The building had been a store from which mineworkers' wives used to buy their groceries. The owner closed it down in the course of the economic recession in the early 2000s following the mine's reprivatization in 1997. He started to rent out the premises to a private school, one of many that mushroomed in former corporate and private buildings within the township. It was around noon and the pupils were heading home, passing me with shouts and laughter. Some were mimicking what they thought was spoken Mandarin in the belief I was one of the Chinese who had been working at the mine since its takeover by CNMC Luanshya Copper Mines (CLM) in 2009. Apparently, the first association of a stranger in this part of Zambia was in the process of moving from a European *muzungu* to a Han Chinese.

The founder of the private school, a former government primary school-teacher resident in Mpatamatu since 1970, was waiting for me in one corner of the large room. I entered what must have been the sales area in the past. The room was divided by cupboards to provide separate areas for different classes. Tables, chairs and letter pictures gracing the walls diverted my attention from the material state of the building to its practical reappropriation as a school. Born in 1949 in Eastern Province, the woman had followed her husband when he came to Mpatamatu. He took a job at the mine when the entire sector was nationalized in 1969/1970. Apart from her secondary education in the town of Chipata in the late 1960s, she had mostly lived in rural areas. She had arrived in Mpatamatu like

many other women as an immediate dependant of her husband. Asked about her move to a mine township like Mpatamatu in the first place, she recalled: 'I was impressed. The life I had to live was very different'.¹

In conversation, the woman teacher remembered distinct material experiences that marked her arrival and new life in a mine township. While she used to sleep on a reed mat in a thatched hut, a bed and sheets awaited her in her brick house, which was covered with asbestos roofing provided by the mine. Subsistence farming ceased to be the economic basis of the household she was supposed to head. Instead, she spent a share of her husband's salary at grocery stores like the one formerly accommodated in the building in which we were talking. A 1970 photo feature 'Progress is Contrast' in Roan Antelope Copper Mines' (RACM) corporate *Horizon* magazine exalted the various forms of infrastructure people gained access to by settling in a mine township like Mpatamatu based on the material differences between 'backward' rural and 'modern' urban life (*Horizon* 1970a: 10–17).

Corporate paternalism was based on a gender division of labour that attributed household management and the social reproduction of the workforce to women. Initially, the mining companies and the colonial government wanted to uphold the dependence of women on men in order to retain indirect rule through the chiefly authorities (Parpart 1986a: 144). However, women had always challenged, altered and replaced this dependence on men. When I conducted fieldwork in Mpatamatu, the township represented not a miners' place based on a male social order, but rather a collection of infrastructural remains that challenged both men and women equally. The township had endured the privatization of Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) and its neglect by successive mine operators. However, women's socio-economic position had changed in the face of these transitions in Mpatamatu.

In this chapter, I investigate the changes in the relationship between men and women before and after the industry's reprivatization. I do so by looking at the position of particular material locations in Mpatamatu within this relationship, namely the former pay line buildings and community centres. My starting point is the 'stabilization of labour', that is, the decrease in the turnover of labour, a process described by managers and scholars alike as becoming established with the development of the copper industry.² Home (2000) showed how this stabilization was made possible by changes in the industry's accommodation for its labour force in the 1930s. It marked the beginning of the large-scale settlement of women and children in the Copperbelt's mine townships, a development which had already taken place at Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK) across the border in the Belgian Congo (Higginson 1989: 61–85).

I retrace women's different practices to both accommodate and challenge their position as dependent housewives under RACM and the Roan Selection Trust (RST) through secondary literature. Based on my own fieldwork, I follow

women to homecraft classes, women's clubs and formal mine employment at the community centres under Roan Consolidated Mines (RCM) and ZCCM's Luanshya Division. Finally, I revisit the post-privatization mass retrenchments of the early 2000s, which mainly affected the men, and the ever-growing economic importance of women in township households.

All aspects of this chapter are connected by the extension of my ethnographic observations into the past and my enquiry into the role of Mpatamatu's former social welfare buildings in the relationship between men and women. The programmes at the community centres showed me that women have always been of socio-economic importance to mineworkers' families. Women were central to the organization of women in the township in what I argue was a maternalist extension of corporate paternalism. Women countered the sharp decline in male wage labour after the privatization of ZCCM by taking up employment themselves and by extending previous economic activities. Unlike most of their husbands, who were used to working full-time at the mine, these women had consistently pursued agricultural subsistence work alongside running a household. This chore provided a vital backup in times of high unemployment and was the entry point for a general reorientation in Mpatamatu away from the modernist vision of urban consumerism towards self-sufficient livelihoods rooted in agricultural subsistence.

Accommodating Women

Established patterns of labour migration existed in southern Africa when RACM opened a recruitment office in Fort Jameson (now Chipata) in 1928. In general, men from the rural areas in the north-eastern part of southern Africa went to the mines in Katanga, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.³ The Copperbelt became a new destination within these existing patterns. The majority of its mineworkers turned out to be Bemba-speaking peoples from Northern Province (now Northern and Muchinga Provinces). This was also the case in Luanshya (Mitchell 1954: 8; RST Roan Antelope Division 1968). The shift from a temporary migratory to a permanently resident labour force was only made possible by the increased presence of women and children in the mine townships, which necessitated other forms of accommodation and additional infrastructures.

While in 1941 the colonial government had 'showed itself unwilling to commit itself to the policy of establishing a permanent industrialized native population on the Copperbelt' (Hailey 1950: 146–47), the 1948 Urban African Housing Ordinance pressed the mining companies to provide accommodation for employees *and* their dependants (Home 2000: 341). The 1952 Ordinance on Urban African Housing underlined this requirement for every employer in urban areas, the mining companies being the most important of them (Unsworth 1957: 3). When Mpatamatu was started in 1957, family housing was an established



Figure 2.1. A ‘category 5A’ mine house from Mpatamatu’s section 23. Photo by the author.

corporate provision on the Copperbelt. The majority of the 4,700 residential units constructed in Mpatamatu were of ‘category 5A’. The houses comprised three rooms, each being introduced to accommodate a mineworker and his family (see Figure 2.1).⁴

However, the mines realized that accommodating women was not enough to ensure their cooperation in the industrial complex. In the early 1930s, RACM had reacted to the influx of women by providing agricultural plots for subsistence vegetable farming. This was a first step in a process that integrated women into the company’s African mine township and its larger economy. As Chauncey (1981: 139) noted, there was both a social and an economic rationale for absorbing female labour. Women produced food rations at a lower cost than outside professional farmers. The highly gendered urban integration of women went back to female practices in rural areas, such as sowing, harvesting, cooking, brewing and fetching water (Richards 1969: 382). In that sense, female labour in the mine townships represented one of the many links that connected the mines and their townships to distant rural life when it came to everyday practice.

Rural Urbanity

How rural/agricultural and new urban/industrial areas were related to each other through migration has been an academic topic since the first collection of essays on the Copperbelt’s industry edited by Davis (1967) in 1933. Subsequent research carried out by the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute (RLI) followed up on this theme (Mitchell 1951; Wilson 1941, 1942). The topic re-emerged at the centre of a debate on the ‘historiography of transition on the Zambian Copperbelt’ in the 1990s. Ferguson (1990a, 1990b, 1994) accused the RLI of conducting re-

search under a modernist bias and of ignoring the significance of rural–urban ties for people’s lives in the mine townships. He criticized any attempt to periodize social adaptation to life at the mines and questioned the ability of the concept of ‘stabilization’ to grasp the complexity of social practices that cut across the rural–urban divide.

Following Macmillan’s (1993, 1996) reactions to Ferguson, I neither perceive the RLI’s analysis of social change and urbanization as ‘modernist’ or as misjudging the adverse consequences of urbanization for the rural social order, nor do I regard their research as being ignorant of the significance of rural–urban relations for people living at the mines. Rather, Ferguson (1990b: 618) misrepresented the RLI’s research when he reproduced Gluckman’s famous dictum that ‘an African miner is a miner, an African townsman is a townsman’ and concluded that, for Gluckman, urban residents’ ‘rural pasts were of little significance to the analysis of their urban behaviour’. In fact, the opposite was the case.

Gluckman (1956: 17) noted the ‘significant’ influence of a miner’s or townsman’s origin on his behaviour on the very same page as the quote above.⁵ Mitchell had worked with the concept of ‘stabilization’ to correlate the decrease in African labour turnover with the increase in Africans taking up urban residence. His typology of people living in the Copperbelt’s mining towns did not at all neglect rural links. He cautioned that ‘attitude’ – that is, the tendency to go about one’s life with a particular set of social practices – should be derived from the duration of urban residence (Mitchell 1951: 23–27; 1954: 15).

‘Rural pasts’ surfaced in my everyday fieldwork. Mineworkers turned into farmers, formerly dependent housewives into agricultural self-supporters. Rural pasts pervaded the literature on the history of Luanshya as an industrial site. Schumaker (2008: 832) pointed to the former agricultural use of *dambos* (see Chapter 1), while Epstein (1958: 230) showed how tribal representation dissolved into labour-based unionization. It is important to reiterate Peša’s (2020: 544) contention that, irrespective of the employment situation, agricultural subsistence production always coexisted alongside formal industrial wage labour in the urban centres of the Copperbelt, not only during strikes (Parpart 1986b: 48; Powdermaker 1962: 124). I frequently crossed over from Mpatamatu’s eastern to its western part through the Nkulumashiba *dambo*, which was covered with maize fields and vegetable gardens. I realized the presence of urban industrial pasts, such as the abandoned headgears of the 28th and 18th shafts on the horizon, the pot-holed tarmacked streets and the former social welfare buildings that stood out from the increasingly agricultural present of Mpatamatu.

The tension between the township’s urban spatial arrangement, in the forms of the sections, streets and aligned houses, and its practical appropriation, that is, the makeshift shops, houses-turned-businesses and random farm plots, induced me to look at Mpatamatu from the perspective of ‘space [as] a practiced place’ (de Certeau 1988: 117). It was above all what de Certeau (1988: 91–93) termed

‘texturology’, or the materialized representation of a particular planning vision, that accorded Mpatamatu its urban character. The township had been the mine’s “own” place’, created in a hegemonic way. This place was challenged by a ‘space of tactic’ in which those who inhabited the place used and subverted it. These ‘tactics’ accommodated the spatial order in which people lived according to their needs (de Certeau 1988: 35–37; Crang 2011: 108).

Gluckman (2006: 16) saw the behaviour of African labour migrants as rooted in ‘social situations’. It was influenced by migrants’ rural origins and their urban residence, but above all by the situation itself (Gluckman 1956: 17; Werbner 1984: 161). Parpart (1986a: 147–52) found that women in RACM’s first African township Roan were housewives, brewers, gardeners, petty traders, housekeepers, gamblers, prostitutes and mine employees. Clearly, these activities were influenced by the corporate living environment at the mine. Women continually adapted themselves to the changing face of the mine townships and the facilities provided by the mining company within them.

In Mpatamatu, Luanshya’s second and, in comparison to Roan, more comprehensively planned African mine township, more material corporate provisions marked the ‘social situations’. They ascribed social positions to men and women in their relationship with each other. During my fieldwork, I saw how women were turned into housewives and employed by the mine. At the former community centres, female domesticity was institutionalized by employing women in social welfare programmes. Some women started to instruct other women on how to be ‘modern’ housewives. These programmes were based on the corporate and government view that women needed to be occupied. The 1938 *Pim Report* had called for more welfare measures for women:

Some welfare work has been carried out by the mines and it is now being extended by the appointment of welfare sisters, financed in equal shares by the mines, by Government and from beer hall funds. Other proposals for expenditure from beer hall funds include libraries and swimming baths. *There is a great deal of leeway to be made up in these directions, especially in providing new interests and occupations for the large number of women* [emphasis added]. (Pim 1938: 47)

Occupying Women

Educational and economic programmes organized at Mpatamatu’s community centres became the corporate practice to provide ‘new interests and occupations’ for women. The programmes were a direct consequence of the increased presence of women that was a result of labour stabilization. Women programmes were a paternalistic practice that was also rooted in an attempt by the mine to ‘divert miners away from politics and towards social and economic advancement’ (Par-

part 1983: 141). Similarly, miners' wives were supposed to strive for the social and economic advancement of their families. The mining companies were convinced that to this end women of rural origin had to be instructed on how to lead 'modern' urban lives. Clearly the change in the material living environment was substantial, as the teacher at the beginning of this chapter confirmed. In Luanshya, RST actively encouraged mineworkers to send their wives to the community centres. Its *Citizen Handbook* for Roan and Mpatamatu mine townships from the early 1960s read:

At other centres, your wife can learn how to run a modern home. Classes are held in needlework, cookery, child welfare, hygiene and homecrafts. (RST Roan Antelope Division Undated: 13)

These 'other centres' were in fact community centres or 'women centres' that had been started in Mindolo, a township of Kitwe, in 1939. The idea for the centres originated in the 'educational and welfare work' of the United Missions in the Copper Belt (UMCB), a collaboration of several missions (Parpart 1986a: 146; Taylor and Lehmann 1961: 39, 45). The centres became a material representation of the three Cs that had been propagated by David Livingstone (1813–1873): Christianity, commerce and civilization. The mining companies welcomed European missions as a disciplining force into their townships. Plots in Mpatamatu had been reserved for church buildings from an early stage in the township's development (RACM 1960a: 3; RST Roan Antelope Division 1963a). Taylor and Lehmann (1961: 34, 45) noted that sometimes prayer houses were built by the mining companies themselves and that UMCB's European women volunteers were found on the welfare committees of each mine on the Copperbelt by 1945. The (European) African Women's Welfare Officer in Roan writing about turning 'African wives' into 'help-mate[s]' like in any other 'civilised community' in *Horizon* magazine (Lloyd 1960: 27), the content of the classes mentioned in the *Citizen Handbook* above and the women in white aprons at one of Roan's women centres listening to the welfare officer Boniface Koloko (*Horizon* 1963: 20) all illustrate McClintock's assessment that 'African women were subjected to the civilizing mission of cotton and soap'. The gender division of labour on the mines reverberated with what she termed the 'gendering of imperialism' (McClintock 1995: 31; see also Evans 2015).

The classes at the community centres extended corporate paternalism from the male workers to their female dependants. Men had been linked to the company through their work down the shafts. Women entered into a direct relationship with the mine through the programmes at the community centres. African men had been turned into 'boys' by their White superiors. Being infantilized became a social experience at the mines both under and above ground. Accordingly, women became 'modern housewives' by making them students of the industry's

modernism, a corporate practice that survived political independence (Ferguson 1999: 166–67). As noted by McClintock, to ‘civilize’ the African population had been an imperial practice under British colonialism. In 1957, a welfare supervisor wrote to the African personnel manager at Rhokana (now Mopani Copper Mines (MCM)) in Kitwe:

By changing [African women’s] norms and educating them to appreciate the necessity for health, hygiene, family discipline, and a rigid adherence to moral codes, and the rewards to be had from honest endeavor and self-help, we will aid them in developing a new culture, which, based on our ideology and concepts of Christianity and democracy, will be within their concepts of tribal social life and therefore understood and acceptable to them. (Cited in Parpart 1986a: 147)

The fact that mineworker husbands were instructed to send their wives to homecraft classes revealed the male order underlying the social relations between men and women in the mine township. Mining was for men and of men: their labour represented the basis of the entire industry. The household was for women: they were responsible for the social reproduction of the male workforce. This division, between men in formal employment and women in formal dependence, made men the breadwinners of mineworker families. Men’s employment opened up the paternalistic provisions of the mine that cemented their dominant socio-economic position. Former mineworkers’ wives told me how they *only* needed their husbands’ mine IDs to visit a clinic, collect food rations or shop in the township’s grocery stores and have items delivered to their homes. Allocations were subject to employment, and women subject to their husbands in receiving them.

The position of the social welfare buildings within the relationship of men and women revealed two ways in which women were dependent on men to make a living in a mine township like Mpatamatu. Legally, women needed their husbands’ identity as mine employees to gain access to the ‘amenities’ of the township and the provisions made available to them. Financially, women needed a share of their husbands’ salary to run the household. This need increased when the mining companies abolished food rations and introduced inclusive wages in the mid-1950s (Parpart 1986a: 153).

Women handled these dependencies in various ways. Chauncey (1981: 145, 150) found that some women generated their own income, most efficiently by brewing beer. Others became ‘responsible for managing the family budget’. Harries-Jones (1964: 44) documented how women fought for their ‘proper supply of food and clothes’ at the mine’s advice bureaus. Mpatamatu’s residents told me how women followed their husbands to the pay line buildings on pay day in order to secure their share of their husbands’ incomes immediately. Others took a

job at the mine as nurses, teachers or typists.⁶ Mijere's (1985: 300) survey showed that some women who had joined the classes at the community centres eventually ended up trading, a biographical trajectory that I also found in the lives of my research participants.

The biography of Fenia Muyutu, a former social worker at the community centres in Roan and Mpatamatu, illustrates how the socio-economic position of women in a mine township changed from being dependent on men and regulated by the company to being employed by the company, provided with economic opportunities and equipped with business skills, which proved crucial after the fall of corporate paternalism. Born in 1959 into a mineworker's family, Fenia Muyutu had first gone to school in Luanshya's Roan mine township before giving birth to her first child at the age of sixteen. A home economics course at a Catholic mission opened the door for her to later become a homecraft teacher and youth organizer. In 1978, she was employed by RCM and was allocated a single-quarters house like unmarried men. During her time at the mine, she rose to the G5 supervisor pay grade (see endnote 13). After her marriage in 1982, she moved with her husband when he was transferred to ZCCM's Luanshya Division in 1983.⁷

On a tour of Mpatamatu's three former community centres, Fenia Muyutu recalled the details of corporate programmes for women. At Kansengu Community Centre in section 21, Mpatamatu's oldest centre built in the early 1960s (RST Roan Antelope Division 1962a), she explained to me what her job as a homecraft teacher had comprised: 'We were teaching them housekeeping, budgeting, child care and sewing, and gardening'.⁸ Courses were organized over a duration of six months and were usually attended by fifteen to twenty-five women.⁹ She taught on a daily basis in the mornings and afternoons. Classes were mainly for women, but they were also offered to girls. Gardening courses were open to boys, too (RCM Luanshya Division 1977). Kansengu Community Centre also housed Mpatamatu's advice bureau, the same corporate institution for domestic dispute management that Harries-Jones (1964) had investigated in neighbouring Roan township.

Standing in front of her former classroom with me, Fenia Muyutu directed my attention to the room next door, which once housed a kitchen with two electric stoves. The idea of cooking with electric appliances in the township seemed completely removed from Mpatamatu's reality and almost sceptical to me. Long power cuts were the rule during my fieldwork. The electric stove turned into a symbol of a past filled with modernist 'expectations of domesticity' (Ferguson 1999: 166–206). In contrast, the *imbaula* brazier told of the township's immediate economic conditions: it was made from scrap metal, needed no electricity, and ran on charcoal, a fuel that was locally produced and cheaply available, albeit with devastating consequences for the local environment (Peša 2017).

The homecraft classes for women had started as a corporate attempt to control women and to dictate how they were supposed to navigate the urban living environment. The classes followed the same paternalist logic that had first incorporated men into the industrial complex. Inspired by Lankton's (1991: 163) reflections on how Lake Superior copper mines 'nurtured a man's body, mind, and soul', I see this functional nature of Foucauldian 'biopolitics' and its use to relegate bodies to their prescribed positions (Foucault 1998: 140–41) also being at work in Luanshya.

RACM recruited men, transported them to the mine, provided accommodation and food rations, subordinated them to the racist labour regime and the work underground, and allowed them to be regenerated at the mine hospitals and leisure facilities. Similarly, women were accommodated as housewives, sent to garden plots, educated at community centres, and taken care of at the mine section clinics. Women's mere presence in the township drew them into the mine's 'political field' (Foucault 1995: 25–26), one shaped by the power relations connecting the African and European labour forces, their dependants and the company with each other.

However, looking at the paternalistic provisions of the mine in Luanshya from the perspective of a functional understanding of 'biopolitics' falls short of the conceptual capacity of Foucault's reflections on power, potentially resulting in an analytical bias towards the imperial formations that created the Copperbelt's spatial order and mine townships like Mpatamatu (see Chapter 1). The different occupations of women in the township revealed how the apparent straightforwardness of a spatial urban design was dissolved into the complexity of everyday social practice. Collier (2009) emphasizes that Foucault in fact gave a 'topological' nature to 'biopolitics'. At its core is a correlation of different 'technologies of power'. 'Biopolitics' must be understood as a 'problem space', an analytical space that examines the diverse practices of power without reducing material sites and social phenomena to any one prevailing source of power (Collier 2009: 79, 88–89, 93).

The economic and educational programmes at the community centres had been part of RACM's and RST's corporate strategy of defining the position for women. After independence, the gendered division of labour at the mines remained in place. To this day, mine labour is dominated by men with few exceptions (Musonda 2020). 'Zambianization', the replacement of skilled expatriate workers with Zambian personnel, was all about men (Burawoy 1972a). The state-owned successors, RCM and ZCCM, continued the programmes for women at the community centres, sustaining the homecraft teacher as another female job category. The centres remained focused on the education of women and girls as housewives. However, women's clubs in particular fostered joint economic action and solidarity networks among women.



Figure 2.2. Former Kabulangeti Community Centre in section 24. Photo by the author.

Kabulangeti Community Centre in section 24 opened in 1963 (see Figure 2.2, RST Roan Antelope Division 1963c). Fenia Muyutu explained to me how different women's clubs engaged in poultry-breeding and tailoring. She pointed down Kamilendo Street (see Map 0.1), where the mine had provided a building to serve as a chicken run. The clubs did not have to pay any rent and shared the profits from selling the meat. Other women were sewing baby dresses, which were directly distributed to new-born infants at Roan's mine hospital. Payment for their work came from the mine. The clubs represented a fusion of earlier attempts by the mining company to take advantage of female labour and women's initiatives to generate their own income in order to reduce their dependence on men.

Infrastructure once provided for women, emblematic of the unitary structure of the mine extending its authority over women, was hard for me to imagine as we walked down the pot-holed Kamilendo Street towards the southern boundary of the township. A concrete rubbish dump with traces of ash surrounded by dried-up maize plants was all Fenia Muyutu and I found in the place where chickens were formerly raised to be sold in the township's market. Poultry-breeding still existed in Mpatamatu, but it had moved from corporate infrastructure spanning community centres, women's clubs and other mine facilities to the back gardens of the privatized mine houses. Mine township autarky, once outlined for Mpatamatu in the 1957 development plan, had been reduced to private autarky.

From being forced to circumvent the highly regulated order of the mine township, often resorting to practices prosecuted by company and tribal representatives, women entered the homecraft classes as students and teachers like Fenia Muyutu. African women took over these classes and the organization of women from European women volunteers. Hartnack (2016) investigated the role

of European women in the education of African women and their reproduction as housewives under colonialism in the context of Southern Rhodesian farms. He identified a crucial correspondent to the paternalism underlying the gendered organization of labour, which he referred to as ‘domestic maternalism’. Inspired by mission schools, White ‘farmers’ wives’ played ‘the role of the nurturing mother-figure to the resident [Black] population’ (Hartnack 2016: 49–54, 62–67). This role was played out in homecraft clubs for women on the farms.

Similarly, I see ‘domestic maternalism’ represented by the homecraft classes and the women’s clubs run and organized at the community centres in Mpatamatu. However, in following Hartnack’s (2016: 66) reference to Law (2011), I do not understand the homecraft classes and women’s clubs in mere functional terms, placed exclusively in the service of the company to ‘civilize’ and ‘modernize’ mineworkers’ wives. African women became their own teachers, like Ada Phiri featured in the *Horizon* (1963: 20) article on Boniface Koloko mentioned above, or Fenia Muyutu at the Kansengu Community Centre. Women organized themselves into micro-cooperatives at the Kabulangeti Community Centre, while others like Fenia Muyutu became nursery and pre-school teachers at the Muliashi Community Centre. Moreover, women eventually used the skills acquired at the community centres to make a living outside the mine economy.

Fenia Muyutu remembered her time as a pre-school teacher at Muliashi Community Centre (see Figure 2.3). She was posted to the two small shelters next to the main building in 1984. The centre had become operational in the second half of the 1970s.¹⁰ Next to the characteristic C-shaped main building¹¹ were a playground, a netball court and a football pitch. Fenia Muyutu prepared children aged five to six for school by teaching them reading and writing. Her classes usually ran for up to three hours in the mornings. The chairs piled into one of the shelters still hinted at that particular past.

Fenia Muyutu and myself entered the main building from the back through a passageway and stopped in front of the western wing. The toilets had been abandoned and become dysfunctional. The main building stood in silence: red brick walls, grey concrete tiles, eroded asbestos roofing and gaping broken windows



Figure 2.3. Former Muliashi Community Centre in section 26. Photo by the author.

behind bars. Occasionally, the doors to the run-down toilets would bang against the wall because of a weak breeze in the September heat. The green around the centre, which I remembered from my first visit in April 2016, right after the rainy season, had given way to a dusty ochre. Abandoned playground equipment was the only thing pointing to the usual presence of the pupils of a private school, who had left for the holidays (see Chapter 3).

Rather than leaving women to fend for themselves outside corporate control, the provision of ‘new interests and occupations’ (Pim 1938: 47), such as home-craft classes and women’s clubs, integrated women into the unitary structure of the mine as both participants and instructors. The centres were corporate places that enabled the company to extend its bodily control over women and children. In return, the women took advantage of the educational and economic programmes for their own personal ends. The community centres both reproduced women as mineworkers’ housewives and opened up paths for women to increase their economic self-reliance.

After being retrenched from ZCCM in 1986, Fenia Muyutu first turned to cattle-trading. In the early 1990s, she ran a chicken business from her private home. At the time of my fieldwork, she grew maize for her family plus a small surplus to be sold in the market. Her economic activity had been marked by what Mususa described as the ‘villagisation’ of life in Luanshya.¹² To Mususa, villagisation was the approach of ‘thinking about place regardless of how it is *politically* categorised (urban or rural), [focusing] much more on what a place affords its inhabitants, and the affective experiences it generates’ (Mususa 2014: 38).

Informal economic activities, prominent in Luanshya since the early 2000s, have been conceptualized by Mususa (2010: 385) through the concept of ‘trying’. From one’s social life being set by mine employment, it became ‘a journey of attempts and improvisations’ (Mususa 2014: 104). ‘Trying’ was rooted in a Gluckmanian situational negotiation between people’s own agency and the structural conditions in the townships. From the perspective of Fenia Muyutu’s biography, two main characteristics of ‘trying’ were evident. First, privatized mine houses became the centres of economic activity. Second, agricultural subsistence practices moved from the margins to the centre of household economies (see also Mususa 2010: 384; 2014: 97). The industry’s idea of the ‘modern’ consumerist home had become an urban past.

Retrenching Men

How dramatically the respective positions of men and women had changed since the privatization of ZCCM’s Luanshya Division can be illustrated by looking at the experiences of two couples whom I interviewed and spent time with on several occasions. The husbands’ lives provided vivid examples of how personal biographies were moulded by the history of the mine in general and the township

of Mpatamatu and its social welfare buildings in particular. Their biographies are interspersed with material experiences made in those buildings. Both men were born into mineworker families in the early 1960s. Their fathers worked in RST's Luanshya Division, the successor to RACM. Their families were among the first to take up residence in the newly developed township of Mpatamatu at the turn of the 1960s. One of the two had been born at the township's first mine clinic in section 21, which opened in 1959 (Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland Ministry of Health–Northern Rhodesia 1959). The other went to pre-school at Kabulangeti Community Centre. They both went to the government primary schools in the township, engaged in after-school activities at the community centres and visited secondary schools in neighbouring Roan township. Eventually they became mineworkers themselves, both starting out as general workers at the lowest employment levels G6 and 7 under ZCCM in 1985 and 1990 respectively.¹³

The dismantling of ZCCM marked a turning point in each man's life. Being born into mineworker families, their lives had always been connected to the material living environment run by the mine: the clinics, the community centres, the sports facilities, that is, the social welfare buildings erected exclusively for mineworkers and their dependants. Binani Industries' asset-stripping through RAMCOZ and the bankruptcy of the subsidiary that ensued marked the beginning of a process of social and material ruination. The men were not only retrenched, ruining their economic and social lives, they also lost access to the mine's corporate provisions. The social welfare buildings were ignored by subsequent mine operators, ruining the landscape in which the men and their families lived. One of these two men managed to get re-employed by the mine in 2010 after several years of trying as a businessman. In 2014, he was discharged permanently by CLM's subcontractor, China 15th Metallurgical Construction Group Corporation (15MCC).

There are two issues in the lives of these men that I would like to emphasize. First, a look at one of the men's payslips reveals the extensive nature of a husband's position as the family's breadwinner. Second, retracing the other man's participation in training programmes in order to accommodate technical changes in the industry exemplified the active approach of some men to the task of saving themselves from unemployment in an increasingly mechanized industrial sector.

RCM and ZCCM continued the corporate paternalism first introduced by the private enterprises that had run the mine from before independence until the industry's nationalization in 1969/1970. Corporate paternalism included what many Zambians consider the economic favouritism towards mine employees that led scholars to identify the mines' workforce as a 'labour aristocracy' (see Chapter 3). The nature of this subsidization becomes clear from looking at the 1992 ZCCM pay statement in Figure 2.4. Earnings in the right-hand column listed basic pay, production bonuses, allowances based on the pay scale and job per-

formed, as well as a mealie meal allowance.¹⁴ In the case of this particular underground mineworker of the lowest level, UG7, the acting allowance acknowledged his work in the capacity of a worker two tiers up at the level of UG5.

The deductions in the left-hand column included income tax (PAYE, i.e. pay as you earn), the Zambia National Provident Fund (ZNPf) pension scheme and the Mineworkers Union of Zambia (MUZ) subscription fee. These general deductions were followed by positions special to the mines: a subsidized rent for the mine house being occupied, a voluntary savings scheme, a loan scheme and additional subsidized mealie meal. One fifty-kilogram bag was complimentary; above that, bags were deducted from the salary and accounted for on the payslip. The 'employee number' pointed to the paternalist provisions not accounted for by the figures on the payslip. Mine houses were provided with free water, sewerage and electricity (including the bulbs). Groceries could be bought at subsidized rates on credit and delivered to one's home, for example essentials such as cooking oil, eggs and meat. Mineworkers' children were eligible for free nappies and education allowances. Health care for a mineworker's family was organized through the employment number, usually referred to as the 'mine ID', at the section clinics of the township. The husband's job at the mine provided an all-round economic basis for mineworkers' families and women's domestic labour as housewives.

My second case follows a mineworker's attempt to accommodate himself to the changes in the mining industry by acquiring new qualifications. Samuel Yumba joined ZCCM to work at the Baluba underground mine in 1985 and began as a G7 general worker. A threshold on the path to job advancement was the blasting licence he acquired in 1992. A promotion to a G4 supervisor for earth-moving machine operators underground followed the year after. Moving earth underground inspired him to learn how to do it on the surface, and he joined a training course to become a dumper-truck driver. After his exit from and re-entry into the mine, Samuel Yumba was employed as a driver during the development of the Muliashi open-cast mine. CLM had taken over the mine in Luanshya from Luanshya Copper Mines (LCM) in 2009 with only the Baluba shaft in operation. According to former mineworkers, the 18th and 28th shafts had remained flooded since RAMCOZ's bankruptcy. During the time of my fieldwork, CLM placed Baluba into maintenance. Muliashi pit became the single site of extraction in Luanshya and the cornerstone in the transition from underground to surface mining of the ore body. As a driver who had helped clear the bush, Samuel Yumba became aware of this transition and went on another training course that would make him eligible for the roles of supervisor and instructor for drilling operations on the surface as a 15MCC employee.¹⁵

Samuel Yumba's initiative was in stark contrast to the local discourse on mineworkers as forsaken victims of the industry lost in the wasteful spending of their terminal benefits and the consumption of alcohol. I did encounter men with such derailed biographies and witnessed widespread alcoholism in Mpata-

matu, but this is in no way representative of the full range of social trajectories set in motion by the mine's reprivatization. Unfortunately, all the qualifications Samuel Yumba acquired did not prevent him from being retrenched. Subcontractors' work in open pits was organized by season. Emulating the ticket system of the colonial days of the Copperbelt's mines, mineworkers like him had to lurch from one contract to the next. Furthermore, twenty-five years of work at the mines had taken their toll on his health. Finally, 15MCC failed to renew his contract in 2014. He returned to his house and plot, which he had bought from his terminal benefits in 1997. Behind the house, he showed me his self-made chicken run and the vegetables growing there. 'The only hope we have is going into the bush', remarked Laurence Banda, another former mineworker who had served for over twenty years.¹⁶ While Laurence Banda was referring to the fact that people like him were literally going into the bush outside the township to farm, I observed people like Samuel Yumba bringing 'the bush' into Mpatamatu in their back gardens.

The transition whereby 'the bush' comes into the township clearly contradicts previous ideas about an urban Copperbelt, home of the industry, and its rural hinterlands, home of the labour force. While early RLI research on urbanization by Wilson (1941, 1942) had stressed the rural–urban dichotomy, follow-up research by members of the Manchester School adopted a more integrative stance by looking at rural and urban areas as part of a single sphere subdued by capital (Kapferer 2006: 150). I therefore support Mususa (2014: 48) in her view that the dichotomy is analytically useless when describing social change in post-reprivatization mining towns like Luanshya.

The research participants in my fieldwork have simply been trying to make the best of particular situations for themselves and their families. For many this involves agricultural activities in their back gardens, on undeveloped land in the township and in 'the bush' south of Mpatamatu. At the core, these situations are linked by post-industrial ruination: the decline of formal employment, the decay of infrastructures previously related to this formal employment, and a restructuring of household economies away from men towards women.

Replacing Men

After the reprivatization of Luanshya's mine, women's labour became crucial for their families. The former government teacher in the initial vignette at the beginning of this chapter did not retire but founded her own school to generate an income for the household. Fenia Muyutu had been a mine employee herself. From the social work for women at the community centres of Roan and Mpatamatu in the service of the mine, she went into livestock trading and ultimately subsistence agriculture. She had to replace her retrenched husband's salary. The wives of the two former mineworkers presented above followed a similar trajectory. They

started as housewives dependent on their husbands and cared for by the mine, before stepping in and generating the main source of income for their families.

Both women were born in the 1970s, one into a family in Zambia's Southern Province, the other into a mineworker's family living in Mpatamatu. While the latter received her education at the township's schools and had lived there ever since, the former came to Luanshya through a relative in pursuit of tertiary education in 1991. Upon getting married, the women moved in with their husbands. Both knew what it meant to live the life of a housewife able to use the mine's infrastructures through her husband's identity as a mineworker. They gave birth to children in Roan's mine hospital and sought health care at Mpatamatu's section clinics. These living conditions changed in the wake of their husbands' foreseeable unemployment in the early 2000s. One woman joined a teachers' college and returned with a primary schoolteacher's certificate in 1999, while the other headed for a service company related to the mine. They managed to get into formal employment in 2000 and 2008 respectively.

Ruin in Mpatamatu was experienced by men and women as a retrenchment, a loss of status, exclusion from corporate provisions and exposure to material decay. These experiences multiplied with the number of dependants in a mineworker's household. The housewife-turned-teacher introduced above provided the sole income for her family at the time of my fieldwork. She was the only person in formal employment among her nine siblings. She and her husband had taken in three children of deceased relatives and accommodated the family of their first grandchild. They had all lost access to the mine's provisions and all depended on the woman's salary as a primary school teacher, an income from the government payment of which was frequently delayed. Asked how the family managed to make a living, the woman replied: 'Well, here and there'.

In terms of their contribution to the household, women moved from domestic work and casual earnings to increased economic activity and formal employment. They replaced men as breadwinners not only because the ending of corporate paternalism removed men's central socio-economic position, but also because women themselves took the initiative, leaving their positions as formally prescribed 'dependants'. Families in Mpatamatu explained to me how formal employment decreased mainly for men after the mine's reprivatization. The majority of retrenched workers in the early 2000s were men. Many of them went into the informal sector, previously a domain of women. According to a survey by Smart (2014: 267), the share of households participating in urban agriculture in Luanshya rose to 93 per cent.

The situation for some women moved in precisely the opposite direction. Thus, Samuel Yumba's wife joined a security firm subcontracted by CLM. The looting of mine equipment and metal infrastructure components had surged after RAMCOZ had started dismantling mine facilities for scrap metal in front of everyone's eyes. To protect the mine's property remained a huge challenge

for every mine operator. Sometimes the security companies themselves were involved in the thefts (Wangwe 2016). As if to complete the total reversal of the positions of men and women in Mpatamatu, Samuel Yumba's family was eligible to visit the last remaining mine clinic in the township and the mine hospital in Luanshya through his wife's employment. It was *her* ID that *he* needed to receive treatment. However, the state of corporate health facilities had deteriorated after ZCCM's privatization (Tembo 2009: 77). Mpatamatu's residents generally preferred the government clinic in section 26, which was maintained by the Ministry of Health, had previously been renovated, and was soon to be supported by the reopening of the section 25 clinic.¹⁷

Household economics in Mpatamatu re-centred around the family member with the most stable income, irrespective of whether it was the husband or wife. This reorientation happened in light of structural changes that reduced the mine from its status as the provider of a living environment. These changes involved both a corporate retreat from the residential areas of the mine's labour force and the separation of the township's residents from its abandoned corporate social welfare buildings. Interestingly, many of the programmes that were once started to attribute to women a particular dependent socio-economic position provided those very women with the skills and knowledge they needed to help them replace their husbands' lost income.

Practices of dependence therefore equipped these women with the skills that allowed them to cope with the collapse of the corporate structure they and their families had previously depended on. Dependence was turned upside down within families living in Mpatamatu and within the relationship between the township and its residents. As the next chapter will show, the abandoned material environment became dependent on the initiative of a particular social group, one that had previously been in a subaltern position in Mpatamatu, namely government teachers.

Notes

1. Resident of Mpatamatu, interview with the author, 11 August 2016, Mpatamatu.
2. See Prain (1956), Robinson (1967: 173–77), Mitchell (1951).
3. See Moore (1948: 125), Onselen (1976: 238), Luchembe (1982: 247–48), Meebelo (1986: 7).
4. For a detailed construction plan, see RST Roan Antelope Division (1964e: drawing 502-2348/2).
5. On the critique of the RLI, see also Kapferer (2006: 150–51).
6. See *Horizon* (1970b). Former mine clinic nurse, interview with the author, 9 July 2016, Kamfinsa; Fenia Muyutu, interview with the author, 30 August 2016, Mpatamatu; Resident of Mpatamatu, interview with the author, 20 September 2016, Luanshya.
7. Fenia Muyutu, interview with the author, 30 August 2016, Mpatamatu.
8. Fenia Muyutu, community centre tour with the author, 14 September 2016, Mpatamatu.

9. Fenia Muyutu remembered the details of her job precisely, and I found them confirmed in archival material. Community development reports from 1970 and 1975 noted that ‘23 women [had] been enrolled for Home Maker’s Course’ and that ‘a new course [had] started with 23 women . . .’. See RMMTMB (1970, 1975).
10. The centre was first mentioned in an RCM (1977) report on youth development in the township commissioned by RCM’s personnel director. It did not appear in the earlier reports of 1970, 1974 and 1975. See RMMTMB (1970; 1974a: 3–5; 1975: 3–4).
11. The main building’s structure can be traced back to the 1961 drawings attached to the 1964 appropriation request for Kabulangeti Community Centre. See RST Roan Antelope Division (1963c).
12. Devisch (1996: 573) first defined ‘villagisation’ in his work on Kinshasa, DRC, in the 1970s as ‘a process of psychic and social endogenisation of modern city life, thus allowing the migrant to surmount the schizophrenic split between the traditional, rural and “pagan” life as against the new urban, Christian world’.
13. ZCCM’s pay scale comprised six grades: G6/7 for general workers like shovelers, G5 for specialized workers like samplers, G4 for craftsmen like pumpmen, G3 for supervisors and section bosses, G2 for shift bosses and G1 for senior shift bosses. A ‘U’ was added to the pay grade, as in the case of Figure 2.4, for miners working underground. Boniface Mwanza, first township tour with the author, 28 April 2016, Mpatamatu.
14. Mealie meal is coarse maize flour that is made into a porridge known as *nshima* or *ubwali* by adding hot water. It is the staple food of Zambia and other parts of southern Africa.
15. Samuel Yumba, first interview with the author, 27 May 2016, Mpatamatu; second interview with the author, 6 August 2016, Mpatamatu.
16. Laurence Banda, interview with the author, 21 September 2016, Mpatamatu.
17. See United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund Eastern and Southern Africa (2016). During a post-fieldwork revisit to Mpatamatu in July 2018, I found that the section 25 clinic was indeed back in service.