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The geography of women's informal entrepreneurial activities in urban Zambia: place, mobility and locational decision-making

Informal entrepreneurship constitutes an essential source of income for women in sub-Saharan Africa. Research has indicated the importance of location to the productivity of informal enterprises, yet we know little about the geography of African women's entrepreneurial activities and associated decision-making. This article studies how female slum dwellers in Lusaka organise their entrepreneurial activities spatially and how they justify associated locational choices. The study found a substantial variety in spatial arrangements although proximity to the home often took precedence over other business-related considerations. The ability to overcome or take advantage of geography when carrying out business was clearly bound up in wider relationships pertaining to gender, poverty and regulatory frameworks. Important factors contributing to satisfying business-related locational needs included a strong intra-household bargaining position, the ability to outsource reproductive work, social networks, access to financial resources and uneven regulation of space in the residential settlement.

Keywords: slum, gender, livelihoods, locational decision-making, economic activity, informal entrepreneurship, Zambia, geography

Introduction

Caroline lives in Linda compound, a forty-minute bus ride from central Lusaka in Zambia.¹ With money saved from her husband's salary, she and her husband have bought a piece of land outside her hometown Kabwe, a medium-sized town 160 kilometres north of Linda, where they run a chicken farm. They also rent out parts of the land to other enterprises. As the husband's work as a filling station attendant prevents him from regular travel, it is mostly Caroline who takes care of operations. Chickens have a high mortality and to guard against financial risk, Caroline has taken up clothes vending as a side business. She goes to City Market in Lusaka to buy *salaula* – second-hand clothes – and sells them in the main market in Kabwe. She has selected Kabwe as her vending site out of convenience, since it enables her to visit her parents and the chicken farm, but there is also an important economic motive. Since

¹ The name Caroline is a pseudonym, as are all names in this article to protect the integrity of the participants.

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most of the country's *salaula* enters through Lusaka, garments sold in more remote locations fetch higher prices. Caroline can therefore make more profit from selling her garments in Kabwe, even when transport costs are considered.

This article explores the geography of entrepreneurial activities among women who like Caroline live in Lusaka's slums and primarily operate in the informal economy.² Entrepreneurial activities are here understood as economic activities aimed at the production of services or goods for profit (Ahmad and Seymour, 2008). Gough and Langevang (2016) challenge traditional, elitist understandings of entrepreneurship and demonstrate its applicability to the sub-Saharan African informal context by conceptualising it as 'spotting and seizing an opportunity to establish a business and, in the process, taking risks and managing the available resources creatively' (4).

Insights into informal entrepreneurship remain limited in scientific scholarship, particularly from the perspective of gender and its intersection with geography. This study is unique in that it maps the geographies of entrepreneurial activities among female slum dwellers while simultaneously accounting for narratives and motives framing these geographies. Studies on economic activity and geography rarely include female slum residents (exceptions are Chant, 2013; Mandel, 2006; Mitra, 2005; Sunikka-Blank et al., 2019; Verrest and Post, 2007). The relationship between informal entrepreneurship and space is moreover often overlooked, despite research demonstrating the paramount role of location and mobility in business profitability and sustainability (Mandel, 2006). Customers and resources are unevenly distributed in space, and the ability to access those spaces constitutes an important determinant of livelihood outcomes (King, 2011). Mandel (2006) argues that for women involved in trade, mobility is essential to benefit from price differentials between supplier and customer locations. A stable and profitable livelihood has moreover been shown to generate positive synergy effects. Johnson (2021), for example, argues that livelihood performance has an impact on women's participation in political life. It may also result in positive empowerment outcomes (Evans, 2015). Yet, unlike Caroline, informal entrepreneurs often carry out their economic activities in a spatially suboptimal manner, impacting their businesses negatively. The purpose of this article is to examine how business-related locational decision-making interacts with female slum

2 The concept 'slum' is sometimes regarded as a derogatory term that should be replaced by more neutral concepts such as 'informal settlement' or 'low-income settlement'. In this work, I follow UN-Habitat's (2003) recommendation to reclaim the term 'slum'; an ambition shared by the world's largest network of slum dwellers, Slum Dwellers International (SDI). 'Informal' and/or 'low-income' are often too narrow to capture the complexity of the settlements in question, characterised by some or all of the following criteria: insecure tenure, sub-standard housing, insufficient service delivery, and a predominantly poor population (*ibid.*). The settlements in this study fulfil these criteria but are simultaneously socio-economically stratified with middle-income households living side by side with households with incomes below the poverty line, and criss-crossed by formal and informal arrangements pertaining to tenure and services. As a result, they resist simplistic classification into 'informal' or 'low-income'.

dwellers' general position of socio-economic and political marginalisation, but also how unequal relations of power are navigated and negotiated. It challenges the notion of entrepreneurial locational decision-making being the primary outcome of economic rationality and demonstrates the necessity of considering alternative factors. In so doing, it engages with and ties together the fields of economic geography, informal entrepreneurship and gender from the perspective of urban sub-Saharan Africa.

Economic activity and locational decision-making

Entrepreneurial locational decision-making concerns the spatial choices made by entrepreneurs in the execution of their businesses. It includes, among other things, decisions about where to acquire inputs and where to trade. Gärling and Gollidge (2000) define locational decision-making as 'the choices that people frequently make about where to move' (44). These choices are based on cognitive maps constituting mental representations of space that are highly subjective and built on perceptions of physical layout. Repeated exposure to a particular place typically improves the accuracy of the cognitive map vis-à-vis the physical environment. An individual makes a decision about movement by making an assessment of the attributes of particular places in conjunction with the cost and effort of moving (*ibid.*).

The neoclassical school stipulates that the purpose of any spatial decision is to maximise utility, while behaviouralist approaches regard individuals as satisficers rather than striving towards optimum (Gunnerud, 1997; Rahman and Kabir, 2019). As reported by Jankowski et al. (2001), most locational decisions are not preceded by formal analysis but tend to be made on an ad hoc basis. In addition, Gärling and Gollidge (2000) concede that 'choices of decision-making are [...] not necessarily deliberate but may constitute learned adaptations in a particular ecology' (47).

From the perspective of economic activity, utility maximisation translates into maximising productivity (Glaeser, 2007). The behaviouralist approach acknowledges that aspects other than economic gain influence the locational decision of economic actors (Rahman and Kabir, 2019). This notion has been extended by the humanistic school of thought, emphasising the subjectivity of place and the bonds of attachment that people form with particular locations based on their personal experiences (Scannell and Gifford, 2010).

A range of factors influence the opportunity structure framing locational decisions available to economic actors. Hanson and Pratt (1991) established early the impact of gender relations on the locational decision-making of the household. They discovered that residential location preceded women's employment search to a far greater extent than men's, or in other words, that the degree of spatial fixity in job search was more pronounced for women than for men. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that women chose work sites located comparatively closer to the home. This finding has

been repeatedly confirmed through numerous studies (see for example Estrada, 2002; Mahadevia and Advani, 2016; Verrest and Post, 2007), and is believed to be contingent upon conservative gender structures framing women as disproportionately responsible for domestic duties (Hanson and Pratt, 1991).

In the global South, and especially among low-income groups, there is often a blurring between women's productive and reproductive work (Anand and Tiwari, 2006). Women's livelihoods are to a greater degree than men's home-based (Estrada, 2002; Verrest and Post, 2007), connected to time poverty associated with asymmetrically distributed domestic responsibility (Anand and Tiwari, 2006). Time poverty is defined as 'the need to spend long hours working (in either the labour market or domestic work) because the alternative would be even deeper consumption poverty' (Bardasi and Wodon, 2010, 45). Time is a limited resource and time poverty means that people need to sacrifice basic time needs, such as relaxation and leisure, in order to afford others, such as those spent on working (*ibid.*). In sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere, the feminisation of the labour force has not been met by a concomitant increase in men's responsibility for household reproduction. In environments with dysfunctional service delivery – such as the slum – the task to make up for such deficiencies usually falls on the woman (Tacoli, 2012). This increases women's time burdens relative to men's and constrains their ability to pursue livelihoods outside of the home arena (Blackden and Morris-Hughes, 1993).

Another factor behind women's limited spatial scope is patriarchal control. A woman's mobility and access to places are in some contexts circumscribed by informal rules allowing the male head of the household to regulate her spatial scope (Bee and Vogel, 1997; Kantor, 2004) or coding places as unsuitable for women's activities (Beazley, 2002). Finally, the presence of social networks in proximity to the home, of special importance for non-skilled female workers, may also contribute to women working and running business closer to the home (*ibid.*; Hanson and Pratt, 1991; Mitra, 2005).

Socio-economic position plays an additional role in locational decision-making. Poor people's geographical scope is generally more curtailed. Studies from the global South indicate widespread mobility deprivation (Pirie, 2014) among the poor, severely hampering their ability to carry out economic activities beyond territories that can be reached on foot (Anand and Tiwari, 2006; Gough, 2008; Gupta and Mitra, 2002; Mitra, 2005; Salon and Gulyani, 2010). Access to transport is simultaneously a gender issue, where women to a greater degree than men rely on public transport (Preston and McLafferty, 1999; Solá, 2016). In poorer countries, women typically have weaker access to household assets in relation to men, thus affecting their ability to afford transport (Anand and Tiwari, 2006).

Informal entrepreneurs also need to navigate regulatory regimes surrounding the use of space. Space is politicised, and in African cities this often translates into bans on

informal economic activity in public locations (Kamete, 2010; Lindell, 2019; Lindell et al., 2019). Understandings about the adequate use of space can be both formal and informal and serve as exclusionary mechanisms that disproportionately affect politically marginalised groups (Lindell, 2019).

Gender, space and economic activity in Zambia

In Zambia, men and women are largely confined to traditional gender roles stipulating men's authority over women. According to Evans (2015; 2018) men and women are often sorted into different types of work, and men are more likely to occupy management positions. At the same time, gender structures have gradually become more fluid, with women to a greater extent adopting livelihoods traditionally regarded as the sole domain of men (see also Gough et al., 2016). Studies on low-income communities in Lusaka revealed that women predominantly relied on small-scale, informal entrepreneurial activities such as street vending while men to a larger degree engaged in wage work. Women's degree of economic activity was also lower than men's (Gordon, 1999; Hansen, 1997; Mpembamoto et al., 2017).

According to Hansen (1997; 2010), Zambian women's livelihood activities have traditionally been more spatially restricted than men's connected to disproportional involvement in household reproduction. Young women have been demonstrated to be less mobile than men from the same age group as a result of stricter control by guardians and expectations to participate in household work (Gough, 2008). But women's limited spatial livelihood scope may also constitute a remnant from redundant colonial policies placing a ban on female income generation and informal economic activities. Traditionally, this prompted economically active women to confine their activities to low-income settlements in order to evade the attention of the authorities (Hansen, 1997; 2010).

Methods and materials

Data were obtained through a survey and semi-structured interviews carried out in three slum settlements (Garden, Bauleni and Linda) in Lusaka, Zambia, in 2016 and 2017. A total of 469 respondents participated in the survey. Sampling was based on a design where an individual home was selected randomly from satellite imagery, constituting the starting point of the data collection. Households were then approached in a circular pattern around the starting point until a predefined quota of thirty households had been surveyed, surrendering data on economic activities of all household members. Upon completion, a new starting point was randomly selected, and the data collection process repeated. This combination of random and strategic sampling was used to facilitate respondent recruitment, as the continuous visibility of the research

team in the selected neighbourhoods fostered trust, thereby encouraging participation and information sharing. Five starting points were used in Garden, Linda and Bauleni respectively. Two hundred women entrepreneurs were identified in the sample (fifty-eight in Bauleni, seventy-six in Garden and sixty-six in Linda), forming the basis of this study.

A statistical analysis aimed at determining the association between the geographical scope of entrepreneurial activities and factors such as age, personal income, household income, education, co-living with spouse or children under eighteen and tenure status was carried out by using SPSS software. Geographical scope was divided into four different scales: intra-settlement (within the residential settlement); extra-settlement (outside the residential settlement but within the greater Lusaka area); extra-urban (beyond the greater Lusaka area but within Zambia); and cross-border/transborder (Zambia border regions and beyond). These scales were turned into a ranked variable (values 1–4) and tested with the continuous variables using Kendall's Tau, and the nominal variables using Mann-Whitney's U-test.

A sub-sample of participants were selected for semi-structured interviews where

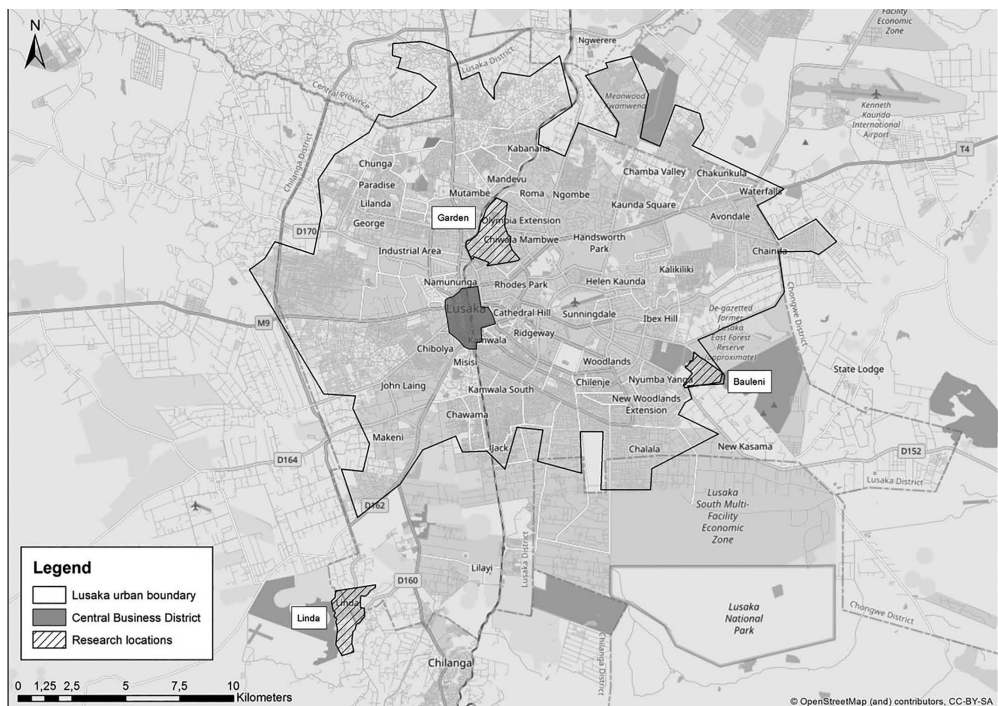


Figure 1 Lusaka and research locations

Source: OpenStreetMap, CC-BY-SA

entrepreneurial geographies and associated decision-making was explored more profoundly. The interviews encompassed forty research participants selected from the survey: eleven from Garden, twenty-one from Bauleni and eight from Linda. Interviews were structured around the information obtained from the individual surveys and recorded after consent from the research participant. Surveys and interviews were conducted in local languages and interpreted by field assistants. Interview data were transcribed, coded and sorted into themes in an iterative manner.

The geography of entrepreneurial activities of female slum dwellers

Figure 2 displays the spatial configuration of Caroline’s entrepreneurial activities including the poultry enterprise, the *salaula* business and her real estate activities.

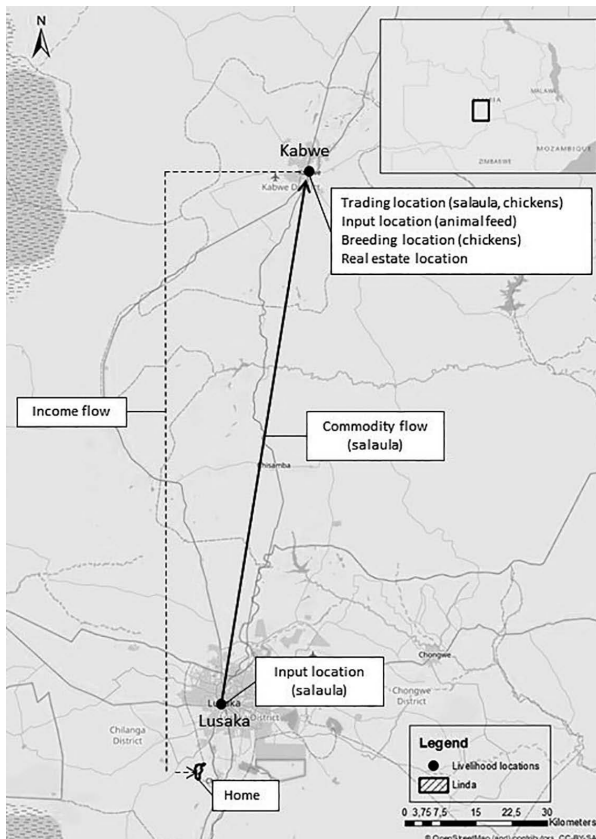


Figure 2 The geography of Caroline’s enterprises
Source: OpenStreetMap, CC-BY-SA

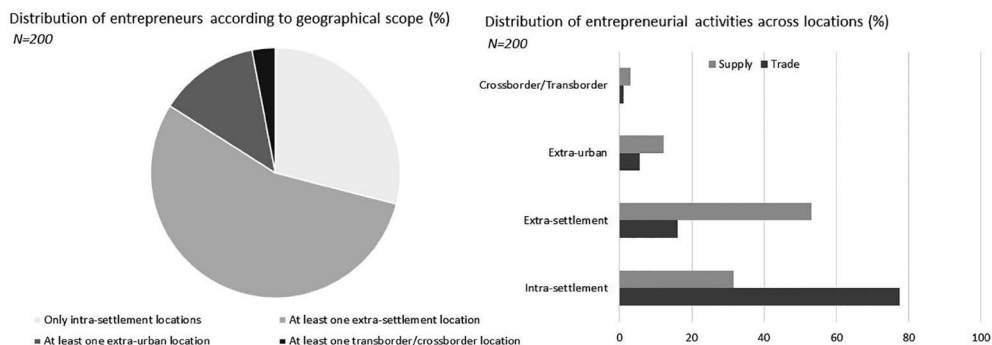


Figure 3 The geographical scope of participants' entrepreneurial activities

The fact that she has one extra-urban business location in combination with no intra-settlement activities strongly sets her apart from the rest of the sample. In line with previous research (Estrada, 2002; Mahadevia and Advani, 2016; Solá, 2016; Verrest and Post, 2007), the immediate vicinity proved critical for women's business activities although this typically included the larger Lusaka area. As seen in Figure 3, 29 per cent of research participants carried out their business activities entirely within the settlement. A majority of participants (55 per cent) had at least one extra-settlement business location, 13 per cent reached beyond Lusaka and its surroundings, and 3 per cent traded at or across borders. Conversely, 65 per cent of entrepreneurs had at least one home-based activity, resonating with previous findings from sub-Saharan Africa (see for example Esson et al., 2016).

Locational decision-making primarily revolved around two different activities: input acquisition and trading. Other activities, such as processing and storage, commonly took place in the area of trading and are therefore not handled separately in this article. Whereas extra-settlement activities were predominantly supply-oriented, entrepreneurs overwhelmingly favoured the intra-settlement sphere for trading. Interestingly, the geographical scope of business did not appear to be associated with factors such as age, education, personal income, tenure status, or co-living with spouse or children under eighteen (see Table 1). The analysis thus indicates that individual characteristics and conditions could not satisfactorily explain the variety in spatial strategies among the research participants. This makes it even more pertinent to examine narratives around the motives for pursuing particular spatial business arrangements.

Table 1 The association between geographical scope and household/individual factors

Factor	Correlation	Significance	N
Household income (ZMW)	-0.156	0.018*	142
Personal income (ZMW)	0.063	0.298	168
Education (number of years in school)	-0.088	0.139	193
Age	-0.08	0.153	198
Living with spouse (Y/N)		0.072	200
Tenure (owner/tenant)		0.239	197
Children under eighteen in household (Y/N)		0.532	199
Own children under eighteen in household (Y/N)		0.96	192

*Significant at the 0.05 level

Justifying informal entrepreneurial geographies

In the case of Caroline, her social and emotional connections made Kabwe a natural starting point for the poultry enterprise. This bond includes a sense of familiarity facilitating the purchase of land and enabling her to make an informed assessment of locational properties. It has additionally put her in contact with a customer base for her products. The presence of family in Kabwe has provided her with a place to stay during business-related visits and ensures that her enterprises are continuously looked after in her absence.

According to Caroline, the decision to start a poultry enterprise preceded its localisation. At the same time, it cannot be regarded as fully separate from it. She remained open to other geographical possibilities, but with her current experience, she concedes that it would have been very difficult to initiate and sustain operations without the local knowledge and social network associated with her hometown. Perhaps, she reflects, her business decision was subconsciously influenced by the assumption that her Kabwe connection would enhance the enterprise's feasibility. The *salaula* business, on the other hand, constitutes an example of an enterprise partly founded as a response to a pre-existing mobility pattern. Caroline spotted an opportunity to reap additional profits from her regular Kabwe trips by exploiting the spatially uneven demand and supply configuration associated with second-hand clothes.

At home, Caroline takes full responsibility for childcare and household work. In her absence, her chores are taken over by her husband. He works the nightshift, which means that he is able to cook, clean and look after the children during the day. This arrangement is unusual, and Caroline does not believe that it is solely related to his stake in the business. She describes her husband as a 'good man' who recognises the important contribution of her activities to the household. Unlike so many other men, she claims, he has never questioned her movements or displayed any signs of jealousy.

Nevertheless, she speculates that her close association with her family when in Kabwe contributes to his lenience, as it would be difficult to become involved in extra-marital relations without their finding out. It is possible that he would be less complacent had her business activities been located in a setting beyond the watchful eye of trusted relatives.

Caroline's spatial design may be viewed as economically successful and rational given how she is profiting from geographically uneven demand and supply, but like other informal female entrepreneurs, her locational decisions-making is bound up in a complex web of considerations, reflecting her own, unique framework of opportunity and constraint. The extra-urban scope of operations is enabled by a relatively permissive marital climate, a husband willing to shoulder household chores, and a strong social network. The latter, in combination with an economic cost–benefit analysis that Caroline deems satisfactory, appear to be the main drivers behind the geographical design of her business.

The following section looks at geographical designs more broadly, and the reasonings that accompany them. In line with the distinction between supply activities and trade activities that emerged in the data, each of them is discussed separately.

Acquiring inputs

There was considerable variation in the spatial arrangements framing input acquisition although most research participants reported a relatively limited spatial range when sourcing inputs. Entrepreneurs with only one livelihood location – generally a food stall, bar, grocery stand or shop – tended to organise inputs to be delivered directly to the vending site. This strategy of *stationary supply* could only be deployed by women whose businesses were of a scale that could support the associated extra cost. Bar owners selling branded alcohol received free deliveries from brewery outlets, but other types of goods required private agreements with relatives or acquaintances performing the service for a nominal fee. Research participants making use of this design were often older and made references to poor health, making travelling inconvenient. Others considered their time to be precious and more efficiently utilised when trading. Leaving their vending site meant temporary cessation of business whose negative impact outweighed the extra costs associated with direct deliveries. A third group referred to their family situation, where disability or illness among family members prevented them from leaving their home for longer intervals.

Research participants obtaining inputs from within the settlement (*intra-settlement supply*) stated profitability as one of their main rationales. This group of women often referred to insurmountable transport costs as 'eating the profit' and thus saw no reason to travel to acquire items which could easily be sourced locally. Vendors of processed food, such as pastries and home-made beverages, also preferred buying ingredients

within the settlement to avoid transporting heavy sacks across town, particularly in the light of small price differentials. In addition, processed food commodities were generally perceived to generate higher profits than unprocessed products, hence reducing the importance of the marginal added value obtained from sourcing inputs elsewhere.

Extra-settlement supply entailed sourcing inputs from outside the research participant's residential settlement. For Garden residents, acquiring supplies from the central City Market was nearly standard, but considerably less so for residents in the more peripherally located Linda and Bauleni. These residents primarily travelled to the City Market to obtain food commodities such as *kapenta* (dried juvenile fish) and beans, fetching higher than average prices in their local markets. Research participants sourcing food items from locations outside the settlements, whether from the City Market or peri-urban farms, indicated better quality of produce and lower prices as their main drivers. For non-food items the Kamwala shop cluster in the city centre played a critical role. Kamwala was known among the research participants as Lusaka's wholesale hub, offering both variety and low prices. Some perceived it as the only feasible option, or simply as 'the place where everybody goes'.

Entrepreneurs with higher turnover were more likely to obtain their supply from specialised sources outside the settlement. Participants within this category often described their input locations as *commodity-coded*. These locations specialised in the production, processing and trading of particular commodities and were able to squeeze prices while maintaining good quality. For example, one Bauleni research participant running a thriving barbeque stand regularly travelled to Chibolya at the other side of town to purchase cheap, high-quality pork, despite pork being available in the local market.

Cross-border trade and transborder trade was exercised by a small number of research participants and encompassed travelling to border posts and urban centres in neighbouring countries. In most cases, the choice of supply location was solely based on economic returns since a majority had no particular connection to these sites. They had usually been introduced to the trade by friends or relatives and had therefore taken advantage of pre-existing social and spatial arrangements enabling the business. This included tapping in on knowledge about border crossing strategies, negotiation and price levels, as well as transportation and accommodation networks.

A majority of research participants appeared to have a relatively fixed relationship to their supply location. They had accepted the travelling, the quality of the location, and associated proceedings as an integral part of their livelihood and were not actively looking to change this situation. Some expressed a type of social embeddedness, in the sense that they had formed a mutual dependency relationship with a particular supplier. The *raison d'être* of these arrangements involved being able to negotiate better prices, receive credit, being notified when a new batch of commodities had arrived, having the supplier reserve and put away popular items despite high

demand, being offered to choose first among the merchandise, or having exclusive access to the commodities of highest quality. Nevertheless, there were also research participants who received no particular advantage from using the same supplier, and those who saw benefits from having multiple ones. For example, one research participant remarked that seeking out new suppliers lacking the routine and customer base of more established suppliers made it easier for her to secure better deals.

Trading

Vending sites were typically made up by a makeshift stall by the roadside or in someone's yard, or less frequently by a permanent structure such as a shop. Trading could also entail selling directly from the ground, or from a container while being on the move.

Home-based vending was by far the most popular locational strategy. Two particular incentives emerged: economic viability and the need to fulfil reproductive duties. Most research participants described their choice of location as a strategy to cut costs by saving on fees or rent associated with selling in the marketplace or from a shop. A more fundamental rationale behind the decision to use the home arena was the fact that it allowed productive and reproductive activities to mix. Many women regarded this as crucial for the continued existence of their enterprises. The choice of enterprise was for many a function of its locational properties. Home-based trade opened up opportunities and spaces for cleaning, cooking and keeping an eye on the children:

[I] will hear 'hodi'³ and go and sell. And then just come back here and do the cleaning, the cooking. It's different when [I am] going far. The children will starve, the place will look very dirty. (grocery shop owner, Bauleni)

Home-based trade also combined well with caring for infants. With this arrangement, pregnancy did not have to present an obstacle to income generation. In addition, home-based trade usually involved having family members nearby. This entailed greater flexibility: in case one needed to leave the vending site, there would often be someone at home to keep an eye on the goods. There would also be people around to assist with chores or run errands. Another significant asset was the sense of security and relaxation associated with being on one's own turf. As another trader remarked:

[A]t the market, I would spend my time just sitting there and I would have to do my house chores when I come back. And very tired. Even for children, I won't have time! When the child comes from school and needs help with homework, I would not have that time. Because I'm tired! You want to rest! Now at home, you'd be working, relaxed, selling people, doing house chores... Much better! (grocery shop owner, Bauleni)

3 Polite address.

A sense of security could also emerge from avoiding public exposure. The home with its walls, doors and private spaces generally invoked a feeling of being safe. One research participant, running a night-time barbecue business, described how the location just outside her home enabled her to continue selling during hours when it was generally regarded as unsafe for people to move around. It allowed her to target people returning home after the bars had closed, without significant risk for her own well-being.

Intra-settlement vending occurred on a continuum ranging from businesses being in near proximity to the dwelling to those encountered up to a half an hour's walk from the home. In between, there were numerous micro-spatial arrangements based on unique sets of circumstances and rationales. Similar to the motives of home-based vendors, these designs were predominantly built around economic considerations unfolding within a more or less rigid gender framework stipulating women's social roles. However, these reasonings were also intersected by a multitude of other conditions reflecting the exclusiveness of each research participant's situation. The examples below serve to illustrate this point.

A vegetable vendor in Linda reported being forbidden by her landlord to use her home as a business premises. She traded from a bench by a path passing through her neighbourhood because of its relative proximity to her home, enabling her to leave her station for the preparation of meals. She also described how other roadside locations in her neighbourhood were commodity-coded, meaning that they only specialised in one or a few items. This system was partly upheld by the traders who looked unfavourably upon commodity mixing, and simultaneously maintained by the consumers:

In that place, they only sell cabbages. The traders will be angry if I bring other things to sell. And the people who come there will be not be interested in my vegetables. They will already have gotten those elsewhere. (vegetable vendor, Linda)

Another vegetable vendor, operating from Bauleni, explained how she divided her trading between locations based on the perishability of her items. Most vegetables were sold from the stand at the entrance of her yard, except for avocados which she traded from a piece of fabric on the ground at the farmers' trucks landing site. According to her experience, ripe avocados easily became damaged during her walk home, thus depreciating in value.

Another Bauleni research participant described how she had no say in the choice of trading location. In contrast to the traders who purchased items from the farmers and disposed with them in whatever way they saw fit, her economic situation only allowed her to sell vegetables directly on the farmers' behalf. This entailed receiving a box of vegetables which she agreed to sell for a particular amount to be handed over to the farmer at the end of the day. In exchange, she was allowed to keep the extra profits that she managed to acquire from the trade. This arrangement made

her unable to leave the off-loading site until the money had been handed over, or she would risk being accused of theft.

For non-food items, an alternative marketing strategy entailed the *extra-urban vending* of urban-sourced goods in smaller urban centres or villages and was usually exercised sporadically. In these cases, such as Caroline's, trading had been taken up as a response to an already existing need to travel, either to visit close relatives or cultivate one's piece of land. In this regard, the decision to trade was based on the emergence of an opportunity brought about by demand and supply imbalances between Lusaka and the rest of the country. As a result, making necessary arrangements, such as finding a cheap and safe place to stay, was rarely an issue since these structures were already in place. The research participant's social embeddedness with her destination also meant that the initial links of a customer network were already established. In some cases, the enterprise took on a life of its own, producing new mobility needs and becoming equally or even more important than the original rationale behind traveling. In other cases, the enterprise remained a secondary activity, subordinate to the purpose of visiting family or seeing to the crops.

Selling was predominantly stationary, but there were also examples of *mobile vending* strategies. Ambulant hawking entailed moving around in public areas, often in transport hubs and along major thoroughfares, offering snacks from bags or baskets. Another approach consisted of door-to-door trading where potential customers were targeted directly in their homes. These constitute opportunistic trading methods, in contrast to more strategic methods which involved arranging to deliver commodities to consumers at a particular time and place. The traders' choice of location commonly relied on two critical factors: good transportation access and high demand. But social factors also had an impact. One research participant living in a crowded dwelling prepared her snacks at her mother's more spacious home in a different part of town. Rather than transporting her heavy basket to another part of town, and in the process compromising the freshness of her commodities, she had chosen her mother's home as a starting point for her trade.

During the interviews, it became obvious that the research participants held clear and consistent views about the profitability of different business locations. They knew well which spatial arrangements yielded the highest profit and tried to make the best locational decision within their own unique framework of opportunity and constraint. There were those who were clearly dissatisfied with their choice of business venue but saw themselves lacking either the financial means or personal freedom to take their trading activities elsewhere. Their complaint was primarily economic, in the sense that the location itself did not generate enough customers. This predominantly applied to research participants with businesses located inside the residential neighbourhoods some distance from major thoroughfares. But an inferior location could also be offset by a strong social network. One research participant explained how

she had taken over her trading location from her mother, who was well-known and respected in the community. She retained her consumer base and worked hard to make them feel welcome, resulting in customers seeking her out especially, despite merchandise being more easily accessible elsewhere.

Overall, most research participants appeared content with their position and considered it to be the best option under the circumstances. A majority expressed a special attachment to their trading spot which had developed through regular use. It represented a personal territory in public environments from which one could watch the world go by while doing something of importance.

Several of the research participants found the social aspects of trading enjoyable. An important reason behind the development of a special bond to the vending site was the relationships that they formed with customers and/or other trading women:

These women here are my friends. If something happens, I know they will help me. If somebody needs to leave [her stand], somebody will look after it. If a customer or a passer-by is rude, we all protest. It happens sometimes that [customers] will insult you. Maybe they are drunk or just crazy. Alone, you feel unsafe. But with the other [traders] around me, I know I can handle it. (vegetable vendor, Bauleni)

As shown in this statement, these relationships often grow into valuable social networks, contributing to a sense of community.

Understanding locational decision-making among female entrepreneurs

The study indicates that female entrepreneurs exercised a variety of spatial arrangements in the execution of their livelihoods. Locational decision-making typically incorporated two elements: the actual location and its inherent qualities, and the mobility required to move between the location and the home. The data demonstrate that locational decision-making often comprised a continuous rather than singular process, characterised by regular weighing of options intertwined with gradual habituation. Decision-making could be *opportunistic* (Pioch and Byrom, 2004), as in selecting locations on the basis of economic optimum within a personal framework of opportunity and constraint. It could be *pragmatic* (ibid.), exemplified through the adoption of livelihoods aligned with already existing mobility and locational needs, such as when Caroline decided to sell *salaula* during her Kabwe visits to profit from the location's higher prices. Locational decision-making could also have an obvious ad hoc component (Gärling and Collidge, 2000; Jankowski et al., 2001), illustrated by perfunctorily selecting business locations based on the perceived behaviour of 'everybody else'.

Despite the diversity in spatial livelihood arrangements, the research participants' locational decision-making predominantly encompassed two crucial dimensions:

economic rationality and gender. In addition to these, factors related to regulatory framework, social networks and emotional attachment contributed to influencing locational choices. The next sections present and discuss these dimensions in more detail.

Economic rationality

Economic rationality constitutes a pillar in approaches to livelihood-related locational decision-making (Gunnerud, 1997; Rahman and Kabir, 2019). The importance of this dimension was confirmed through perceptions about affordability and profitability permeating the research participants' deliberations about the spatiality of business operations. Examples of entrepreneurs' economic rationales included strategic fidelity (or non-fidelity) to suppliers to negotiate better deals or using the home as a livelihood location for reasons of cost-efficiency. In line with a previous study by Mandel (2006), it was clear that mobility, particularly long-distance but also within the greater Lusaka area, constituted a strategy to profit from differential supply and demand configurations. Taking advantage of locational price differentials was crucial to overcome competition, especially in overcrowded sectors. Nevertheless, these opportunities were out of reach for many research participants unable to raise the start-up capital required to access public transport. This inability to afford transport required to access more lucrative livelihood opportunities constitutes a clear example of mobility deprivation (Pirie, 2014). Here, it also aligns with the concept of a spatial poverty trap, understood as being economically excluded from locations and mobilities through which financial means can be accumulated (Jalan and Ravallion, 2002). Issues of affordability not only affected mobility, but also access to profitable locations in the research participants' vicinity. A large segment of entrepreneurs found themselves in relatively unprofitable locations, unable to afford the fees associated with locations with better commercial potential.

Gender constraints

Gender constrained the spatial execution of entrepreneurial activities principally through two mechanisms: directly through patriarchal control and indirectly through expectation of the fulfilment of reproductive duties, augmenting women's time burdens.

Patriarchal control was typically executed by male, senior household members, most commonly the husband, and involved ascertaining that women remained within their socially assigned gender roles. It was noted that women in conjugal relations often reported initial suspicion from their spouses towards their livelihood-related mobility. In accordance with Amine and Straub's (2009) findings, activities that required longer

absences from the home were particularly contentious as they not only infringed on the 'natural order' of operation in the household, but also on the spouse's ability to oversee the activities of his partner. As one participant remarked:

When I was living with my husband, I would never have been able to [travel regularly to Tanzania]. He would have been too jealous. Where did you sleep? Who did you see? He would have taken his jealousy out on me. (cross-border trader, Garden)

The trader described a situation where her ex-husband's urge to control her movements exposed her to the threat of domestic violence. This is an extreme display of patriarchal control and while not unique, most women are subjected to masculine power based on the naturalised notion of men's status as the households' primary authority.

With regards to intra-household power dynamics, the gender system varied in rigidity. There were women whose partners supported their livelihood ventures wholeheartedly, including their full mobility needs. There were also cases where partners changed position and laxed their authority after realising the extent of the female partner's contribution. Some male partners were thus making trade-offs between lack of control and increased standard of living, and/or increased their sense of respect upon seeing their partner as an equal (or superior) provider. Importantly, these developments indicate that norms circumscribing women's mobility should be seen as fluid and prone to change in response to female agency, albeit within limits and subjected to individual variation. Previous studies on intra-household power relations demonstrate that economic activity, particularly through control over resources, may impact positively on women's ability to make independent decisions, and improves their position in the household (Agarwal, 1997; Evans, 2015; Kabeer, 1999).

Societal demands on women as the household's primary caregivers constituted a greater challenge to livelihood-related mobility than patriarchal control. Intra-settlement entrepreneurial locations largely reflected women's spatial confinement as an outcome of significant reproductive workloads. Maintaining household responsibility while pursuing a livelihood effectively increased women's time poverty (Bardasi and Wodon, 2006), as it reduced the time available for rest and leisure. For women whose livelihood activities required them to be absent from the home, compensatory measures included waking up very early in the morning (between 3:30 and 5:00 am) to prepare breakfast, clean the house, sweep, and wash the dishes. This strategy, involving the playing by the rules set by a hegemonic gender system in compensation for the ability to pursue one's goals, corresponds well to the concept of 'patriarchal bargain' coined by Kandiyoti (1988).

Regulatory framework

Female entrepreneurs' spatial livelihood arrangements were alternately hampered and assisted by formal rules and tacit understandings regulating the use of space. Property relations constitute an evident example where tenants preferring to operate from the home had to rely on the goodwill of their landlord. Another example was the existence of commodity-coded locations entailing the spatial clustering of vendors selling specific commodities, resulting in the physical exclusion of vendors of other commodities. This practice appeared on several scales, from a collection of stalls on a narrow path to whole neighbourhoods enjoying a city-wide reputation.

Rules surrounding marketplaces tended to vary with scale and location. Access to the official marketplaces in the settlements was formalised and exclusion appeared mainly connected to fees rather than to barriers like lack of information and knowledge, or social ties. Impromptu marketplaces composed by clusters of traders along main access roads did not require fees or negotiation of entry but seemed to operate according to the logic of first-come-first-served. Anybody attempting to put up a stall in a vacant spot was generally tolerated, as long as the structure did not interfere with traffic flows. This degree of inclusiveness provides an interesting contrast to previous studies. In a study from urban markets in Ghana, Sowatey et al. (2018) described marketplaces as surrounded by rigid entry barriers, demanding high degrees of social ties and capital to negotiate access. Other studies have depicted marketplaces as sites for power struggles and contestation, underlining their often-politicised nature (Goodfellow, 2013; Lindell and Ampaire, 2016). Hansen (2010) has documented similar struggles being played out in Lusaka's City Market. The relative peripherality of the markets in the research locations most likely contributed to their low entry requirements.

A factor having a major impact on entrepreneurial activities and associated spatial arrangements was the existence of unregulated spaces in the settlements. These spaces primarily consisted of roads and footpaths but also unused land near people's dwellings. Some places were clearly off-bounds, like spaces in direct association with permanent shops, banks or the local police office. In general, however, once the geographical scope of livelihood operations had been established with regards to the research participant's personal framework of opportunity and constraint, gaining actual access to the designated location was often a non-issue.

The findings on locational decision-making in relation to space regulations fit well with Lindell's (2019) description of urban spaces in low-income countries as regulated in an uneven manner. Entrepreneurial locations were criss-crossed by various formal and informal regulatory arrangements revealed through habituation. An important conclusion is that the lack of regulation surrounding some spaces in the settlement enabled women to carry out entrepreneurial activities adjusted to their everyday realities. As these sites were perceived as less profitable than official marketplaces, they nevertheless provided a greater challenge to livelihood sustainability.

Social networks, social bonds and place attachment

The importance of social networks for women's livelihood geographies (Hanson and Pratt, 1991; Mitra, 2005) was clearly valid in this study. For some research participants, the decision to adopt a certain livelihood strategy automatically conveyed a certain locational configuration. This was especially salient for cross-border traders, whose livelihoods were based around the interaction with specialised suppliers in locations requiring significant mobility. Social networks were essential in introducing them to the trade, as a majority of these traders had been encouraged to take up the livelihood through a relative or friend.

Studies on place attachment and livelihood locations in the global South are not plentiful, but Sowatey et al. (2018) provide an example of how Ghanaian market women created a sense of belonging to their trade locations through childhood memories and feelings of pride emanating from the ability to provide. Similar orientations were found among the research participants and influenced their locational decision-making, although in a somewhat different way. The impact of social networks and feelings of belonging motivated the research participants to adhere to certain locations, a decision not only based on the perception of economic benefits. Attachment was typically the outcome of continuous interaction and relationship building. Socialisation with competitors, colleagues, suppliers and customers appeared to incrementally fuel processes of embeddedness and provide locational fixity.

According to Manzo (2005), places become imbued with meaning through iterative performances and collections of experiences. Fenster (2005) labels these practices 'ritualistic repetitions' (249), functioning as a means to make claims to territories. Research participants declaring emotional affiliation to their livelihood locations typically suggested that this had emerged through their entrepreneurial activities. An exception was constituted by research participants running home-based enterprises on the basis of a feeling of comfort. Place attachment, therefore, was not usually instrumental in the initial phases of locational choice but seemed to promote the propensity to remain in a particular location, thus emphasising the *continuous* nature of locational decision-making.

Conclusion

Far from being a homogeneous group, female entrepreneurs in the slum displayed considerable diversity in the spatial nature of economic activities. At the same time, there was a striking similarity in the challenges they faced in formulating spatially satisfactory strategies. Gendered power relations hampered research participants' mobility and access to spaces through patriarchal control and disproportional reproductive responsibility contributing to time poverty. Informal and formal regulatory regimes framed certain spaces as off-bounds, whilst poverty impacted on the ability to afford transport and negotiate access to lucrative locations for trading.

There was also variety in participants' *relationship* to the geography of their entrepreneurial activities. Geography constituted a reality alternately accommodated, resisted and negotiated. It was not only a framework reluctantly surrendered to, but also an asset drawn upon creatively to increase gain – economic or other. A notable find is that satisfaction with one's spatial arrangement was not necessarily defined in economic terms, but also through social relationships, comfort, safety and quality of life. This underlines how economic rationality becomes intertwined with emotion as well as subjective deliberations associated with contextual power regimes and 'learned adaptations' (Gärling and Collidge, 2000, 47), thus illuminating the complexity of entrepreneurial locational decision-making and the need to shift our gaze from mere utility maximisation. We also need to consider locational decision-making as a continuous process, again not necessarily determined by the sole pursuit of economic profit, but by experiences and performances of socialisation and habituation.

By carving out niches in order to survive, provide and sometimes prosper, this study has demonstrated how women entrepreneurs in the slum navigate the territories of their settlements, the city and beyond. In so doing, they simultaneously navigate the highly uneven landscapes of patriarchal relations, poverty and informal and formal regulations, displaying, as Bayat (2007) notes, 'flexibility, pragmatism [and] negotiation' in the context of 'constant struggle for survival and self-development' (579).

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