

**Zimbabwean Cross Border Women Traders:  
Popular perceptions and scholarly discourse 2000-2020**

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## Abstract

This study focuses on popular and scholarly perceptions of Zimbabwean Cross Border women traders from 2000 -2020 by highlighting the experiences of Zimbabwean women who engage in informal cross-border trade between Zimbabwe and South Africa. Informal cross-border trade involves the exchange of goods and services outside formal channels and is often crucial to the livelihoods of those involved. The research investigates whether and how participation in informal cross-border trade empowers these women by exploring the motivations driving the women to engage in cross-border trading. These include limited formal employment opportunities, the potential for higher income, and the desire to support their families. It examines the impact of the trade on the women's sense of agency, control over their economic circumstances, and the ability to make decisions for themselves and their families.

The study is a qualitative study of scholarly perceptions that analyses article publications from academics such as Gaidzanwa, Muzvidziwa, and Ndlela. The study also reviews popular perceptions from media houses such as *eNCA*, *The Herald*, and *New Zimbabwe*. This multifaceted approach helps provide a comprehensive understanding of the traders' experiences. The study delves into the strategies these women use to cope with the challenges they encounter. These include building support networks in the form of the Zimbabwe Cross Border Traders Association (ZCBTA), developing business acumen, and finding ways to mitigate risks. The study briefly discusses the broader economic and social impacts of women's informal cross-border trade, such as its contribution to economic growth, poverty reduction, and gender dynamics within communities. It uncovers the various challenges faced by Zimbabwean informal cross-border traders by detailing their perceived plight or agency. These challenges include navigating complex customs regulations, dealing with border officials, coping with harassment or bribery, and enduring long waits and administrative hassles. Based on the findings, the study observes the conditions for Zimbabwean women informal cross-border traders. The study notes that by enhancing infrastructure and services at border posts, addressing gender-specific challenges, and creating supportive regulatory frameworks it can better improve the lives of cross border traders.

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## Dedication

This is for my sister, Tadiwanashe Kudakwashe Nherera.

Without your love and encouragement, I would not be where I am today. This is for you, as evidence of the great strength of character you have and all the possibilities the world has for you. May you look at this milestone for us and know of all the things that you can achieve and the impact you have on those around you.

My Evangeline.

## List of Abbreviations

BEMS Border Efficiency Management System

BSAC British South Africa Company

CAF Central African Federation

CD1 Currency/Customs Declaration Form

COMESA Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

DRC Democratic Republic of Congo

EAC East African Community

eNCA eNews Channel Africa

ESAP Economic Structural Adjustment Program

EU European Union

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GNP Gross National Product

GNU Government of National Unity

HIV Human immunodeficiency virus

HIV/AIDS Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

ICBT Informal Cross Border Trade

IFC International Finance Corporation

IMF International Monetary Fund

IOM International Organisation for Migration

MDC Movement for Democratic Change

OGIL Open General Import Licence

PCR                                      Polymerase                                      Chain                                      Reaction

RAF Road Accident Fund

RBZ Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe

RSA Republic of South Africa

SA South Africa

SACBTA Southern African Cross Border Traders Association

SADC Southern Africa Development Community

SME Small to Medium Enterprises

STD Sexually Transmitted Disease

STR Simplified Trade Regime

UDI Unilateral Declaration of Independence

UN United Nations

UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

US \$ United States Dollars

WTO World Trade Organisation

WW11 World War 2

ZANU PF Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front

ZANU Zimbabwe African National Union

ZAPU Zimbabwe African People’s Union

ZBC Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation

ZCBTA Zimbabwe Cross Border Traders Association

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## Introduction

This study reviews popular socio-economic perceptions and scholarly discourses on women's activities in cross-border trade. It suggests that this trade is highly gendered and a product of the Zimbabwean crisis. Cross-border trade became a coping and survival strategy particularly for women, increasing from the 2000s onwards.

Recent scholarship has argued that the narrative about crisis should be revisited, arguing that de-industrialisation, land reform, and high unemployment are products of the natural shape the economy of post-colonial Zimbabwe has taken, even under current President Mnangagwa's "new dispensation".<sup>1</sup> This study will interrogate to what extent cross-border trade became part of this 'new economy' at the turn of the millennium. It draws from an in-depth study of scholarly discourses and popular perceptions of Zimbabwean women cross-border traders.

Through a critical review of scholars such as Garatidye, Ndlela, and Muzvidziwa, among others, as well as social and mainstream media, the study will discuss the forces shaping the various ways in which women involved in cross-border trade have been viewed. Such discourses and perceptions are quite gendered especially as they involve males who work beyond Zimbabwe's border, for example, truck drivers and male cross-border traders, or *malaicha*.<sup>2</sup> To some extent, the study will examine the extent to which male cross border vocations are viewed in contrast to cross-border women activities. It will also consider the effect of cross border trade on these women's marriages, family lives, and communities.

Malaicha or malayitsha, as they are known in isiNdebele, are men who provide courier services between countries and are a basis for comparison with cross border traders who also perform related services. In his article on "Cross Border Couriers as Symbols of Regional Grievance: The Malayitsha Remittance System in Matabeleland, Zimbabwe"<sup>3</sup> Nyamunda explores the nuanced difference in region-to-region cross-border trading. His study sheds

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1 Kirk Helliker & Gerald Chikozho Mazarire, "Mnangagwa's Zimbabwe: Crisis? What Crisis?" *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 56(2), 2021: 171–175. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909620986583>

2 Shona word for someone who transports goods from one country to the other.

3 Tinashé Nyamunda, "Cross-Border Couriers as Symbols of Regional Grievance?" *African Diaspora*, 7(1), 2014: 38-62.

light on the courier business as opposed to how it is generally overlooked, with the focus mainly on women.

The name malayitsha is an IsiNdebele term which means ‘the one who carries a heavy load’. Malayitsha operators consist of private businesses of a range of scales, from small, often unregistered couriers using pick-up trucks or mini buses to ferry money and other goods across the border from South Africa and Botswana to large consortia and registered transport companies.<sup>4</sup>

### Background to the study

As the Zimbabwean mainstream economy collapsed and unemployment increased at the turn of the millennium, many Zimbabweans adopted cross-border trading as a livelihood option. Scholars such as Alois Mlambo, Brian Raftopoulos, Patrick Bond and Masimba Manyanya,<sup>5</sup> among others, have produced in-depth studies of the origins and effects of Zimbabwe’s economic decline from the 1990’s onwards.<sup>6</sup> Identifying factors such as the involvement of Zimbabwe in the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) which bankrupted the country, the fast track land reform programme and the reduced agricultural production, massive de-industrialisation and record unemployment, these scholars have shown how the formal economy declined and transformed into one characterised by informality.<sup>7</sup> Without support from international financial institutions in a context of government mismanagement, the once thriving Zimbabwean economy turned into one characterized by, *kukiya kiya*<sup>8</sup> (just making do).

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4 Nyamunda, “Cross-Border Couriers as Symbols of Regional Grievance?”, 38-62.

5 Alois S Mlambo, “From an Industrial Powerhouse to a Nation of Vendors: Over Two Decades of Economic Decline and Deindustrialization in Zimbabwe 1990–2015”. *Journal of Developing Societies*. 2017;33(1): 99-125; Brian Raftopoulos, “The Zimbabwean Crisis and the Challenges for the Left”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, (32:2) 2016: 203-219; Patrick Bond, & Masimba Munyanya, “Zimbabwe’s Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the Search for Social Justice”. *Capital & Class*. 2006;30(2): 177-179.

6 Patrick Bond, & Masimba Munyanya, “Zimbabwe’s Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the Search for Social Justice”. *Capital & Class*. 2006;30(2):177-179. doi:<sup>10.1177/030981680608900111</sup>

7 Enocent Msindo, “Crisis! What Crisis? The Multiple Dimensions of the Zimbabwean Crisis”, *South African Historical Journal*, 2013: 409-414 DOI: 10.1080/02582473.2013.859723 and AS Mlambo, “From an Industrial Powerhouse to a Nation of Vendors: Over Two Decades of Economic Decline and Deindustrialization in Zimbabwe 1990–2015”. *Journal of Developing Societies*. 2017;33(1): 99-125. doi:<sup>10.1177/0169796X17694518</sup>

8 Shona word referring to multiple ways of making do.

In order to grasp the character and extent of the historical shift, I argue that we must interrogate the common refrain that 'kukiya-kiya' is a strategy for survival. 'We kiya-kiya in order to stay alive', people say, 'in order to eat'. In so far as it is presented in this way as an adjunct to 'bare life', kukiya-kiya appears to be an instinctive response to circumstances.<sup>9</sup>

As the formal economy collapsed and unemployment rose, it was women who, in most cases having had fewer opportunities to access jobs, found it easier to make a living from informal sector opportunities. Amongst those opportunities is cross-border trade. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), women constitute most of the cross-border traders who earn a living from buying and selling commodities across the border. UNCTAD argues that informal cross-border trade has discrete gender impacts: in major cross-border posts women account for a high percentage of informal traders.<sup>10</sup> Along African borders, the livelihoods of entire communities depend on trading activities carried out by small-scale traders, most of whom are unregistered. Informal cross-border trade remains a major characteristic of the African economic and social landscape, representing up to 40 percent of regional trade.<sup>11</sup> In Zimbabwe, these trading activities contribute 30 percent of employment as well as forming part of the backbone of the informal sector.<sup>12</sup> This is due to the flexibility it affords, the small start-up capital it requires, and the earning opportunities it offers in border areas where no other alternative is available. Women make up the largest share of informal traders, representing 70-80 percent of the total in some African countries.<sup>13</sup> In the case of Zimbabwe, as the Institute of Migration has revealed, most cross-border trade is with South Africa.<sup>14</sup>

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9 Jeremy L Jones, " 'Nothing is Straight in Zimbabwe': The Rise of the *Kukiya-kiya* Economy 2000–2008", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36:2, 2010: 285-299.

10 UNCTAD: Prosperity for All. Informal cross-border trade for empowerment of women, economic development, and regional integration in Eastern and Southern Africa.. Accessed 17/10/2021,

11 Victor Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities". *ALTERNATION: Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of the Arts and Humanities in Southern Africa*, 19. (1),2012: 217-238.

12 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities." 227.

13 Serita Garatidye, "An Exploration of the Experiences of Zimbabwean Women Informal Cross-Border Traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge Border Post". M.A dissertation, UCT,2014, 13-15.

14 UNCTAD: Prosperity for All. Informal cross-border trade for empowerment of women, economic development, and regional integration in Eastern and Southern Africa.

<https://unctad.org/project/informal-cross-border-trade-empowerment-women-economic-development-and-regional-integration>. Accessed 17/10/2021.

Not only does South Africa have the most diverse industrial, mining, and agrarian economy in Africa, its proximity to Zimbabwe makes it the most accessible to regional migrants and cross-border traders. Moreover, Zimbabweans do not need travel visas, as they can be issued days ranging from anything up to 90 days per visit at the discretion of immigration officials.

According to the UNCTAD, informal cross border trade between neighbouring countries is often “conducted by vulnerable, small, unregistered traders. The informality refers to the status of the trader (unregistered) not to the trade itself.”<sup>15</sup> Over the years, Zimbabwean women have exploited cultural and linguistic similarities to access products required in the Zimbabwean market from South Africa. According to Daniel Ndlela, “this influx is not a new phenomenon as informal cross-border trading dates back to the late 1980s”.<sup>16</sup> Women’s participation in informal cross-border trade has noticeably increased during the past 20 years because of “economic hardships occasioned by hyperinflation and the collapse of social services in Zimbabwe forced many citizens to look for alternative strategies of survival”.<sup>17</sup>

Monica Kiwanuka and Tamlyn Monson have observed that the nature of emigrants and waves of movement vary considerably over time. They range from traders, shoppers, borderland residents, asylum seekers and unaccompanied minors.<sup>18</sup> In the 1970s and 1980s, for instance, cross-border movement and migration in Zimbabwe was dominated by men. Lovemore Rugube and Innocent Matshe highlight more contemporary shifts to women now constituting a bigger proportion of the informal cross-border movement within South Africa.<sup>19</sup> These shifts have produced interesting tensions and other dynamics in the social constructions of gender that are intertwined with migration which this study explores.

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15 UNCTAD: Prosperity for All. Informal cross-border trade for empowerment of women, economic development, and regional integration in Eastern and Southern Africa.. Accessed 17/10/2021,

16 Daniel B Ndlela. Informal Cross Border Trade: The Case Study of Zimbabwe. Institute for Global Dialogue, 2006: 1-15.

17 Ndlela, “Informal Cross Border Trade: The Case Study of Zimbabwe”, 11.

18 Monica Kiwanuka, and Tamlyn Monson, (eds.), *Zimbabwe Migration into Southern Africa; New trends and Responses*: Johannesburg: Forced Migration Studies Programme Wits University. 2009: 1-95.

19 Sarah N Matshaka, “ ‘Marobot neMawaya’- Traffic Lights and Wire Crafting Zimbabwean Migrants Masculinities in Cape Town”. *Feminist Africa* 13, 2009: 65-85.

The outcomes of Zimbabwe's economic collapse created an opportunity for cross-border trade to thrive. For example, rising food shortages emanating from the decline in agricultural food production left shops with limited ranges of products and low supplies. Because of the country's exchange control policies and as hyperinflation and currency mismatches took their toll, it was uneconomic for corporations to import food products from South Africa, especially with the burden of irregularly enforced price controls. But women cross border traders exploited the opportunity to export, among other things, food items that would be sold on the difficult to regulate parallel market. In this way, as Muzvidziwa demonstrates, Zimbabwe women were able to make a living and support their families.<sup>20</sup> Ndlela provides a case study of how informal cross-border trade cushioned many households in Zimbabwe during the country's 2006-2007 food crisis.<sup>21</sup> Informal cross-border traders make a significant contribution to both the host and sending economies.<sup>22</sup> They are an important element in regional trade and global economies, while also playing a critical role in guaranteeing regional food security.<sup>23</sup> In many ways, therefore, Zimbabwean informal cross-border traders are cultural and economic entrepreneurs.<sup>24</sup>

Although studies on migration tended to characterize migration and regional movement as a male activity, this trend has significantly changed. Women are a significant but unacknowledged group in search of markets and livelihoods, not just for survival but also to enable many to invest and, thus, enter the world of business as entrepreneurs. Cross-border trade is travel intensive, with women specialising in long distance business activities, mainly, by bus. Economic instability, desire for economic independence from their spouses and families, and the fragility and uncertainty of life in Zimbabwe have made some women take up roles beyond being dutiful housewives and home makers. They were thrust into the entrepreneurial world, taking a lead on household matters to compete for their survival. Married cross-border women traders, for instance, have become, in colloquial terms, *varume pachavo* [men in their own right].<sup>25</sup> This is particularly with reference to women informal cross-border traders' breadwinner status.

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20 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities", 220.

21 Muzvidziwa, "Cross Border Traders: Emerging and Multiple Identities", 218.

22 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities", 229.

23 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities", 217.

24 Muzvidziwa, "Cross Border Traders: Emerging and Multiple Identities", 218.

25 Shona phrase which means just like men.

Cross-border women traders can best be described as having fluid, shifting, and multiple identities. The notion of *kumusha*<sup>26</sup> (home, specifically where they reside, not limited to rural homes) is deeply entrenched in women cross-border traders because, while women are constantly on the move, they stay connected to their home bases. In contrast, male migrants can, in some cases, arguably be described as *machona*, those who stay away from their families and homes for long periods of time.<sup>27</sup> Through cross-border trade, women are connected to places and people in distant places though they remain firmly attached to their home country. Women cross-border traders see networks as a resource that can be effectively mobilised to ensure success in business. For many, cross-border trade is a foolproof and relatively easier method to earn a living than any opportunities available in Zimbabwe.

Despite the importance of informal cross-border trade as a livelihood strategy for women and a significant contribution to the welfare of both the home and the host country, informal cross-border women traders face a myriad of challenges. Some of the challenges include, registration requirements in order to have ease of travel and not get stopped by police, access to finance and credit and having to rely on *machonisa*<sup>28</sup> (who are viewed to be unpredictable) for loans because banks will not give them credit, complying with business-related taxes such as paying for goods purchased at border posts to the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA), unfair and harsh treatment by border officials, police and bus drivers, among others, corruption, and harassment by border officials who extort money from informal cross-border traders, sexual victimization, and safety and security threats as they cross borders.<sup>29</sup> Patrick Makombe notes that informal cross-border trade is generally perceived by the government as a threat that needs to be controlled rather than a genuine economic activity. Makombe's study noted that 73% of the women involved in informal cross-border trade spent a week or less away from home each month and 45% worked for more than nine hours a day.<sup>30</sup> However, these challenges remain largely a matter of speculation rather than the results of academic research. This is largely because it is assumed that the challenges women face are similar to those faced by their male counterparts. There is, therefore, need to accumulate knowledge on

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26 Shona word meaning home.

27 Garatidye, "An Exploration of the Experiences of Zimbabwean Women Informal Cross-Border Traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge Border Post", 220.

28 Shona word for loan sharks.

29 Garatidye, "An Exploration of the Experiences of Zimbabwean Women Informal Cross-Border Traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge Border Post", 63.

30 Francis P Makombe, 2011. "Informal Cross-Border Trade and SADC: The Search for Greater Recognition", *Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa* 2011: 34.



the experiences of cross-border women traders to understand how migration experiences impact on the day to day lives of women. It is important to establish whether cross border trading has enhanced women's empowerment and if popular and scholarly perceptions view their experiences as having a positive outcome for women or not.

### Research Questions

The main purpose of this study is to analyse how cross border women have been presented in both scholarly publications and in popular media and what implications these presentations have on Zimbabwean cross-border traders as women, as migrants, and as traders.

1. What role, if any, did the cross-border Zimbabwean women traders play in Zimbabwe-South African migration patterns and flows and what were their experiences during the Zimbabwean Crisis?
2. In what ways are the women viewed in contrast to their male counterparts who work in cross-border jobs such as truck drivers or *malaicha*? What contribution towards gender specific roles has this made to gender history?
3. What has been the effect of cross border trade on Zimbabwean women in their marriages, families and communities?

### General objectives

This study seeks to identify prevailing patterns and gaps in scholarly literature and media representation of cross border Zimbabwean women traders.

The specific aims and objective are to:

1. Compare and contrast findings from existing literature and this current study on scholarly and popular perceptions of cross border traders,
2. Investigate factors that are peculiar to female cross border traders, as depicted in the literature, and
3. Explore and suggest new possibilities for further research for women cross border traders.

## Methodology

This research will use a qualitative research approach, as it will be a literature review of scholarly articles and popular perceptions based on an analysis of both the print and visual media. This is purely a literature-based study which will evaluate a select list of post-colonial historical studies of Zimbabwean cross border women traders between 2000 and 2020. This study will be historiographical and will analyse scholarly discourses and popular mainstream and social media perceptions and representations of cross border traders.

The study will be informed by the writing of, among many others, Daniel Ndlela, Victor Muzvidziwa, and Serita Garatidye. It will also look at popular media publications such as *News Day*, the *Herald* [Zimbabwe], the *New Zimbabwe*, various internet-based Zimbabwean and South African newspapers, and *eNews Channel Africa (eNCA)*, for example. It will use the ‘different aspects of the problem approach’ in which the different texts that are mentioned above will be analysed and discussed to show how they contribute to a larger whole. This will be done by examining Ndlela, Garatidye, Muzvidziwa and Jamela, whose texts highlight the ways in which there has been a shift in gender perceptions on representations of women with regards to African patriarchy. The above-mentioned authors detail how women are portrayed in the wake of the liberation war. Ndlela and Garatidye examine the representations of women who are informal cross border traders, and their experiences. The study will discuss similarities and differences of the texts and identify any gaps in the way that in which these histories are approached.

## Literature Review

In his paper, “From an Industrial Powerhouse to a Nation of Vendors: Over two decades of Economic Decline and De-Industrialisation in Zimbabwe 1990-2015”<sup>31</sup>, Mlambo examines the decline of the Zimbabwean economy that led to an upsurge of the informal sector and cross border trading. Zimbabwe, which had been a thriving economy and one of the most industrialised countries on the continent, fell into decline in the early 2000s. This was due to several reasons, including, “the decision to award large unbudgeted gratuities to liberation

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31 Alois S Mlambo, “From an Industrial Powerhouse to a Nation of Vendors: Over Two Decades of Economic Decline and Deindustrialization in Zimbabwe 1990–2015”, *Journal of Developing Societies*, 33(1), 2017: 99–125. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0169796X17694518>

war veterans in November 1997 and to send Zimbabwean troops into the Democratic Republic of the Congo in August 1998 to defend that country's president who was under attack from Congolese rebels."<sup>32</sup> The country also went into steady economic decline due to the much rushed and unplanned land reform programme of the early 2000s. This resulted in land being appropriated from white farmers and allocated predominantly to war veterans and other government supporters. The country's rapid economic descent was a chokehold on the formal sector, as industries and factories shut down and moved to neighbouring countries, leaving millions unemployed. Due to the collapse of the formal sector, a lot of people were left stranded without a means of survival, and this expanded the space for informal sector opportunities.<sup>33</sup>

In a study of Zimbabwe's cross border trade, Ndlela examines cross-border trading between Zimbabwe and the neighbouring countries of Zambia, Botswana, Mozambique and South Africa. He focuses on trends, patterns, obstacles and policies on informal cross-border trading, mainly between Zimbabwe and South Africa.<sup>34</sup> Ndlela traces the history of the informal cross-border trade between Zimbabwe and South Africa to the early 1980s when some women took advantage of the Open General Import Licence (OGIL) facility to purchase good for resale. By 1985, this trend had been interrupted due to souring relations between Zimbabwe and the apartheid government in South Africa.<sup>35</sup> The OGIL is a legal instrument introduced by the Ian Smith regime during the 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and was then used by the Zimbabwean government up to the late 1980s to allow Zimbabwean business to import essential goods without having to secure an import licence first. It identifies goods that did not have import restrictions.

The coming of democracy in South Africa in 1994 coincided with the escalation of economic difficulties in Zimbabwe due to the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). ESAP was a government strategy with the goal of reorientating the economy from the production of non-tradeable to the production of tradeable goods.<sup>36</sup> The Zimbabwean government adopted the ESAP plan following pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank and other global financial institutions as a market driven economic

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32 Mlambo, "From an Industrial Powerhouse to a Nation of Vendors", 99–125.

33 Mlambo, "From an Industrial Powerhouse to a Nation of Vendors", 99–125.

34 Ndlela, "Informal Cross Border Trade: The Case Study of Zimbabwe", 13

35 Ndlela, "Informal Cross Border Trade: The Case Study of Zimbabwe", 10.

36 <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/10181>.

policy.<sup>37</sup> As a result of increased poverty due to the resultant economic collapse, there was a sharp rise in informal cross-border trade activities.<sup>38</sup> Ndlela reveals that Zimbabwean informal cross border traders export a wide range of goods to other Southern African countries, including crafts, agricultural products, basketry, crochet products, clothes, and bed and seat covers. Though the goods varied from country to country, depending on the market, these constituted the most basic types of goods exported.<sup>39</sup> Informal cross-border traders in Zimbabwe import a variety of goods from South Africa, including household items (both electrical and non-electrical), motor vehicle spares, industrial equipment, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, clothing, and blankets. Although informal cross-border trading has been found to have positive impacts on the economies of both the home and host countries, the experiences of the traders themselves are not always positive. Despite the benefits, informal cross-border trading is often not as lucrative as one might expect. Some scholars argue that cross border trade allows cheap imports into a country, stifling the local industrial capacity and is a sign of economic crisis rather than a generally beneficial exercise, even if it is a survival strategy for unemployed people. Another opinion is that cross border trade benefits the host country more because of increased business and employment creation. Zimbabwean cross-border traders often have to endure long hours of travel and face various challenges such as delays at the border, harassment by customs and immigration officials, muggings, abuse, exposure to corruption, and regulatory obstacles both in their home country and the host country.<sup>40</sup>

For his study, Muzvidziwa conducted interviews with 20 women in Harare and Chinhoyi who were cross border traders. He stresses the importance of knowing a South African language as a key resource for any person who wants to engage in cross border trade activities.<sup>41</sup> He acknowledges that although these women were not formally educated, with some not having even 'O'-level qualifications, they still had a good command of more than 5 languages to enable them to run their businesses effectively. He also notes that some women engage in cross border trade because of having left unhappy marriages and being, subsequently, faced

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37 Godfrey Kanyenze, "Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP): precursor to the fast track resettlement?" In Medicine Masiwa (ed.), *Post-independence land reform in Zimbabwe: controversies and impact on the economy*, Harare: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Institute of Development Studies, University of Zimbabwe, 2004: 90-124.

38 Ndlela, "Informal Cross Border Trade: The Case Study of Zimbabwe", 17.

39 Ndlela, "Informal Cross Border Trade: The Case Study of Zimbabwe", 13.

40 Ndlela, "Informal Cross Border Trade: The Case Study of Zimbabwe" 13.

41 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities", 217-238.

with the burden of single parenthood and the need to support their children.<sup>42</sup> Muzvidziwa hails these women as being economic empowerment forerunners and for the success of their endeavors. He also acknowledges the legality of their businesses by not calling them informal cross border traders, like many scholars. He concluded that informal cross-border trade as an occupation had given rise to the image of an independent and mobile class of women involved in long distance trans-border business.<sup>43</sup> It is interesting to note how informal cross-border trading has shifted female identities and social roles in their day-to-day life experiences.

Exploring women cross-border experiences, Garatidye examines the effects on gender relations and livelihoods. She was critical about “whether cross-border trade is an empowering endeavour to Zimbabwean women and also whether it has the potential to promote gender equality or not”.<sup>44</sup> Garatidye used the Beitbridge border as a “site with many interesting zones, and it also has the potential to promote or undermine the cross-border trading business”. She explored “the ambivalent relationship between empowerment and hazards of informal cross-border trade”.<sup>45</sup> In light of cross-border trading's ambivalent nature, there are questions around its potential to empower Zimbabwean women and promote gender equality.

The study will also draw on scholarship on cross-border experiences elsewhere in the region. For example, Chikanda and Raimundo discuss the relationship between cross border traders and the police in Mozambique, by focusing on the War on Want.<sup>46</sup> The War on Want refers to the lack of formal employment and struggles of the informal sector as it relates to poverty. This terminology reflects the tension that exists between informal traders and law enforcement agents. Although Maputo traditionally adopted a more tolerant approach to the informal economy, the paper discusses the problems that all informal cross border traders face with the law.

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42 Muzvidziwa, “Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities”, 217-238.

43 Muzvidziwa, “Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities”, 220.

44 Garatidye, “An Exploration of the Experiences of Zimbabwean Women Informal Cross-Border Traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge Border Post”, 87.

45 Garatidye, “An Exploration of the Experiences of Zimbabwean Women Informal Cross-Border Traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge Border Post”, 45.

46 Abel Chikanda, A and Ines Raimundo, “Informal Entrepreneurship and Cross-Border Trade between Mozambique and South Africa”, *Southern African Migration Programme*.  
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvh8qxnd>. 2016: 1- 58.

Chikanda and Raimundo's study recognizes that a significant feature of the post-2000 cross border trade from Mozambique was its diversity. They argue that:

A similar change has also been noticeable in Zimbabwe from the 2010s, with a move to trade with Tanzania, the UAE and Botswana. According to Chikanda and Raimundo, in the early 2000s, female cross border traders made up 71 percent of participants in 2006- 2007.<sup>47</sup>

The report by the World Bank, *Facilitating Cross-Border Trade between the DRC and Neighbors in the Great Lakes Region of Africa: Improving Conditions for Poor Traders*<sup>48</sup> assesses the current situation and opportunities for cross-border trade in agricultural products between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and its neighboring countries, namely, Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda. The report highlights the significance of informal cross-border trade conducted by individual traders, mainly poor women, and emphasizes that informality should not be associated with illegality. It provides detailed information on the present state of cross-border trade, the challenges faced by traders, and policy recommendations for trade facilitation measures at the borders to improve conditions for traders.<sup>49</sup> Utilizing the opportunities for cross-border trade can significantly contribute to the development of the region, poverty reduction, and promote stability. A recent report compares the prices of food products in various markets across the three countries and highlights the potential of cross-border trade to reduce price differences and volatility in the agricultural sector.

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47 Chikanda and Raimundo, "Informal Entrepreneurship and Cross-Border Trade between Mozambique and South Africa" 1- 58.

48 Chikanda and Raimundo, "Informal Entrepreneurship and Cross-Border Trade between Mozambique and South Africa", 1- 58.

49 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2785?show=full>

## Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 provides the introduction and background to the study, the research question, aims and objectives, methodology, a brief literature review, and the chapter outline.

Chapter 2 examines Zimbabwe's Economic Crisis and the informalisation of the economy, including, more particularly, cross-border trading. This chapter contextualises the various scholarly interventions and popular commentary analysed in the study. It will provide a brief historical background of the Zimbabwean economy since 1980, highlighting the progressive economic decline since ESAP and the onset of the crisis in 2000 as a result of the farm invasions. The emphasis is on growing unemployment and other economic hardships which help explain the resort to cross-border trading.

Chapter 3 examines whether there have been any changes in terms of migration and women's empowerment that have been brought about by cross-border traders and their experiences during the period from 2000 to 2020. It also discusses how informal cross-border traders engage in sustainable strategies to cope with the challenges presented by their livelihoods and focuses on the varying perceptions from media outlets, by looking at local and international newspapers and television broadcasts. This chapter analyses any cross-border trading contributions to gender-specific roles and how these can be applied to gender history.

Chapter 4 begins by analysing the establishment of the Zimbabwean Women's Cross Border Association, which began in May 2000. The chapter focuses on defining what a trader is, the differences between Informal cross border traders and cross border traders, differences in gender, as well as the impact of cross border trading on livelihoods.

Chapter 5 discusses the varying scholarly perceptions of Zimbabwean cross-border traders, namely, how scholars and others have interpreted the role and character of cross-border women traders and what the main arguments in their studies are. It compares scholarly and popular perceptions against one another, as well as the findings from existing literature. Lastly, it evaluates the validity of scholarly and other perceptions with a close examination of the arguments advanced and how this relates to the reality as experienced by the women in various published sources. This chapter advances the key arguments of my study through a

theoretical lens, focusing on the depictions and portrayal of the findings of my study and the limitations of this portrayal.

Chapter 6 concludes the study.



## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY OF THE ZIMBABWEAN ECONOMY FROM 1980 TO PRESENT

#### Introduction

From being the second most industrialized country in Sub-Saharan Africa at independence in 1980, the economy of Zimbabwe has declined rapidly to a point where the country ranks among the poorest economic performers in sub-Saharan Africa. In the colonial period, there were three pillars of the economy, and these pillars underpinned the country's vibrant economy through many decades until the Zimbabwean crisis. The pillars are agriculture, mining, and manufacturing. The downfall of the Zimbabwean economy is subject to the collapse of these pillars over the years, followed by poor policy planning and implementation, and corruption, which resulted in the rise of unemployment and the informal sector. By 2015, the national rate of unemployment was estimated at 90%,<sup>50</sup> Due to the harsh economic climate in Zimbabwe, many citizens have resorted to making a living through the informal sector, such as selling second-hand clothes and other basic items. The manufacturing sector has been severely impacted by the economic downturn, with many companies either shutting down or relocating to avoid the unfavourable conditions. As a result, by 2015, the manufacturing sector had almost completely collapsed.. In its two decades of crisis, Zimbabwe's economy has struggled. From 2000 to 2008, the Zimbabwe government made a number of decisions that resulted in hyperinflation, the near total collapse of the economy, a massive humanitarian crisis with 7 million people on food aid, and a third of the population migrating to other countries, especially South Africa.<sup>51</sup> When a modern state suffers a decline or failure, ordinary people usually try to leave as soon as possible and go wherever they can. Zimbabwe is now part of the list of crisis-driven migrations, which includes recent African crises like Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Somalia, and Sierra Leone. Twenty years ago, few could have predicted that Zimbabwe would end up like this, despite the growing political authoritarianism. This paper aims to trace the history of the Zimbabwean economy from 1980 to the present, providing a better understanding of the situation.

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50 Brian Raftopoulos, "The Zimbabwean Crisis and the Challenges for the Left", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, (32:2) 2016: 203-219.

51 Joe Sutcliffe, "'Shinga Mushandi Shinga! Qina Msebenzi Qina!' (Workers be Resolute! Fight On!) The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe 1980-2012" *Journal of Politics & International Studies*, Vol. 8, Winter 2012: 1-23.

## Before 1980

Zimbabwe had a different economic structure prior to the post-colonization era. The economic activities of African states in the region largely reflected the resources of the area and the economic traditions of the inhabitants.<sup>52</sup> The Rozvi Empire was a pre-colonial kingdom that existed in present-day Zimbabwe. It emerged in the 17th century following the decline of the Great Zimbabwe civilization. The Rozvi Empire is believed to have been founded by Changamire Dombo around the 17th century. It was established by the descendants of the Great Zimbabwe rulers who migrated to the southwest. The empire gained strength by absorbing other smaller Shona states and communities. The political structure of the Rozvi Empire was characterized by a centralized monarchy. The ruler, known as the Changamire,<sup>53</sup> held significant power and authority. The empire was also divided into provinces, each governed by a subordinate ruler. The Rozvi people were skilled in agriculture and mining. They engaged in trade with neighbouring regions, exchanging goods such as gold, ivory, and iron.

The Rozvi Empire faced internal and external challenges that led to its decline. Internally, there were power struggles among the ruling elite. Externally, the empire faced pressure from the Portuguese, who were expanding their influence in southern Africa. Additionally, the Nguni people, such as the Ndebele, migrated into the region, further destabilizing the Rozvi state. In the early 19th century, the Ndebele, led by Mzilikazi, invaded the region and displaced the Rozvi rulers. The Rozvi capital, Danangombe, was abandoned, and the empire fragmented. The Rozvi Empire had interactions with the British during the period of European colonization in southern Africa. However, it's important to note that the Rozvi Empire was already in decline by the time significant European contact occurred in the region.

The British, as part of their imperial expansion, were particularly active in southern Africa during the 19th century. The area that would become Zimbabwe saw the arrival of European traders, missionaries, and eventually colonial officials. The British South Africa Company (BSAC), led by Cecil Rhodes, played a significant role in colonizing the region. Before the

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52 Colin Stoneman, *Zimbabwe's Inheritance*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981: 234

53 Shona word meaning chief or leader.

British directly encountered the Rozvi, they had interactions with the Ndebele, who had invaded and displaced the Rozvi Empire in the early 19th century. The Ndebele came into conflict with the British in the late 19th century during what is known as the First Matabele War (1893). The British South Africa Company, with its armed forces, successfully defeated the Ndebele Kingdom. Following the defeat of the Ndebele, the British established control over the region that would become Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The imposition of colonial rule had a significant effect on the native communities, including those that were remnants of the Rozvi Empire.

White settlers were attracted to Zimbabwe and the local people were unable to resist British pressure. The British colonial authorities implemented policies that led to the dispossession of land from indigenous communities, affecting not only the Ndebele but also other groups in the region. This had a lasting impact on the social and economic structure of the area. The British colonial presence had a significant impact on the traditional ways of life, economic systems, and political structures of the indigenous people, including those who might have had historical connections to the Rozvi Empire. Meanwhile the colonial settlers established a thriving capitalist economy that worked for their benefit at the expense of the African majority. It was such economic disparities as well as political and social grievances which, eventually, led to the rise of African nationalism and the, subsequent overthrow of colonialism in 1980.

After independence in 1980, Zimbabwe became a leading manufacturing and agricultural center. It earned the title of "the breadbasket of Africa" and was second only to South Africa in manufacturing in sub-Saharan Africa. The early development of this sector has been studied and analyzed by several scholars such as Colin Stoneman, I. Phimister, A. Mlambo & Pangeti, and Ann Seidman,<sup>54</sup> among others. In summary, the economy of early Southern Rhodesia was mainly based on mining and agriculture, but gradually, a manufacturing sector emerged and thrived after the country attained responsible government in 1923.<sup>55</sup> The colonial settlers took charge of their destiny and resolved to develop the colony's economy in

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54 Colin Stoneman, *Zimbabwe's Inheritance*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1981: 234  
Alois Mlambo, & Evelyn Pangeti, *The Political Economy of the Sugar Industry in Zimbabwe, 1920-90*, 1996; Ann Seidman, "A Development Strategy for Zimbabwe". *Zambezia*, X, (i), 1982:13-27.

their own interest.<sup>56</sup> In the 1930s, the colonial administration began to promote the sector by investing in the country's iron and steel and cotton industries.<sup>57</sup> After the Second World War, manufacturing in the country received a boost from import substitution industrialization. This was followed by the establishment of the Central African Federation (CAF) comprising Rhodesia and Nyasaland from 1953 to 1963, which provided access to a larger domestic market.<sup>58</sup> As a result, the country's manufacturing sector grew significantly to contribute 20% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 1965.<sup>59</sup>

The government of Southern Rhodesia under Prime Minister Ian Smith declared independence unilaterally in 1965, resulting in international economic sanctions against the government in retaliation for its illegal action.<sup>60</sup> During the time of Rhodesia, the country had to produce most of the goods it used to import in order to meet the needs of the local population. To ensure the economy remained viable, the government introduced policies that supported the growth of the manufacturing sector and made the country almost self-sufficient in producing its own consumer goods. These policies were interventionist and protectionist in nature.<sup>61</sup> International economic sanctions imposed after Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) in 1965 did not destroy the country's economy; rather, the economy actually grew under the sanction.<sup>62</sup>

As a result, the mining sector's contribution to GDP had risen to 25% by 1974.<sup>63</sup> During that time, the sector became increasingly dominated by transnational corporate capital which was directed into the country through subsidiaries in South Africa as a way to evade sanctions. The industry mainly focused on catering to the wealthy and semi-wealthy needs of the high-income (white) minority. It was largely concentrated in two urban areas, namely Salisbury

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56 Roselyn D Makoni, "Effects of the economic structural adjustment programme (1991-1993) on the participation of secondary school girls in Zimbabwe", Department of Educational Administration (University of Zimbabwe, 2000: 1-15.

57 Mlambo, "From an industrial powerhouse to a nation of vendors", 99-125.

58 Mlambo, "From an industrial powerhouse to a nation of vendors", 100.

59 Ian Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890-1948: Capital accumulation and class struggle*, Longman Inc, New York, 1988: 1-320.

60 Stoneman, *Zimbabwe's Inheritance*, 189.

61 A S Mlambo, *The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme: The Case of Zimbabwe, 1990-1995*, Harare. University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1997: 1-105

62 Mlambo, "From an industrial powerhouse to a nation of vendors", 91.

63 Ann Seidman, "A Development Strategy for Zimbabwe", *Zambezia*, X, (i), 1982: 13-27.

(Harare) and Bulawayo, accounting for 47% and 22% respectively.<sup>64</sup> As noted, at independence in 1980, Zimbabwe had a well-developed manufacturing sector that was second only to South Africa in sub-Saharan Africa. However, this sector primarily benefited the minority white population. African countries' economic performance was limited due to their inability to secure loans from international investors.

In the post-colonial period, Western governments and institutions continued to maintain relationships with African countries that were fundamentally similar to the previous colonial period. These relationships were extended through investments, aid, loans, and trade policies.<sup>65</sup> The West aimed to establish independence but ended up enforcing the same economic and political policies that led to weak states, political instability, and an imbalanced structural pattern of economies inherited from colonialism. In other words, they did not overturn the existing conditions but continued to reinforce them. The legacies of colonialism include weak states and economic underdevelopment, lopsided economies, and civil society.<sup>66</sup> The legacy of colonialism in civil society is contrary to colonial propaganda, where colonizers claimed to invest in the “well-being” of the colonized while the vast bulk of funds were spent on the military or the colonial administration.<sup>67</sup> Colonial policy actively suppressed education for the majority. Technical education was introduced only in rare instances. For example, “the Congo had only sixteen secondary school graduates at the time of independence, out of a total population of thirteen million. In effect, therefore, the incoming independent government had inherited a highly unequal economy in which the country enjoyed “one of the highest average per capita incomes in sub-Saharan Africa, but the majority of its population remains among the most 5 impoverished in the world”.<sup>68</sup> The challenge was how to redress this imbalance while maintaining the country’s position as a premier manufacturing economy.

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64 Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1981: 1-342.

65 Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 72.

66 Robert Saunders, “Striking Ahead: Industrial Action and Labour Movement Development in Zimbabwe”. In: B. Raftopoulos L. Sachikonye (Eds) *Striking Back: The Labour Movement and the Post-Colonial State in Zimbabwe 1980-2000*. Harare: Weaver Press, 2001: 133-173

67 Saunders, *Striking Ahead: Industrial Action and Labor Movement Development in Zimbabwe*, 133-173.

68 Siedman, “A Development Strategy for Zimbabwe”, 13-27.

## From 1980 to present

Notable efforts were made in the first independence years to improve the quality of life for the African majority who had been marginalised under colonialism. The significant increase in education and health services, along with the implementation of pro-worker legislation that included minimum wage regulations, among other measures, have been well-documented. However, Zimbabwe has faced numerous challenges since 1980. Some of the challenges were born from the period leading to independence and others arose as a result of what becoming independent would mean. These economic challenges are the focus of this chapter. Agricultural land remained in the hands of the white minority and their transnational corporate partners, and this explains the unequal distribution of wealth. Thus, Raftopoulos argued that Zimbabwe retained structures that supported as well as sustained a white elite.<sup>69</sup> Such remnant inequalities, eventually, led to the development of several indigenous business lobby groups demanding a share in the country's economic cake and were, arguably, the driving force for the country's indigenisation policy in 2008.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the colonial legacy, such as unfair economic distribution (inequalities), remained in place in independent Zimbabwe which did not do any good to the promising Zimbabwean economy and eventually led to its downfall.

In the 1980s, Zimbabwe was seen as a country that could potentially solve the complex issues of decolonization and stability in southern Africa.<sup>71</sup> As is true throughout the southern Africa region specifically, and the continent in general, the notion of stability was defined in direct relation to the maintenance of classed and/or raced interests within Africa. According to Bond and Manyanya, in Zimbabwe, a country where one percent of the population owned more than 70 percent of the land at independence, the most difficult problem was that of land - the most critical resource of the postcolonial Zimbabwean society.<sup>72</sup> In 1979, the Lancaster House Agreement resolved the problems between Robert Mugabe and the British government. The agreement established a land fund to compensate white farmers who sold their land for redistribution to blacks, financed by the British and United States

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69 Raftopoulos, "The Zimbabwean Crisis and the Challenges for the Left", 203-219.

70 Mlambo, "From an industrial powerhouse to a nation of vendors", 91.

71 Mlambo, "From an industrial powerhouse to a nation of vendors", 91.

72 Bond and Manyanya, "Zimbabwe's Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the Search for Social Justice", 15.

governments.<sup>73</sup> However, the white settler community resisted giving away their land. President Robert Mugabe then proceeded to grab the land by force. After accusations of corruption, sanctions were imposed on Zimbabwe due to the government's actions. The country experienced a rise in internal political opposition and faced a severe economic crisis, causing the majority of black citizens to remain impoverished and without a voice in the political process. The Lancaster House Agreement, masquerading as a constitution, was designed to maintain the privileges of the white settler elite and the impoverished black ruling class while excluding and disadvantaging the majority of Zimbabweans.<sup>74</sup> Thus, the economic crisis in Zimbabwe resulted when the majority wanted to own land and grab it by force from the whites.

The economic history of post-colonial Zimbabwe began with the transition to majority rule at independence. The imbalanced economy that the new government inherited and the inappropriate economic policies adopted at independence, eventually, led to the adoption of the ESAP, which, in turn, created further problems of the nation's economy and a growing brain drain.

For instance, Gaidzanwa's report, *Voting with their Feet*, this article examines the issues that plagued the healthcare sector in Zimbabwe, as viewed by medical professionals who emigrated from the country in response to the deteriorating work environment they faced in the 1990s. This situation was, to some extent, a result of the government's implementation of market-based economic reforms under the ESAP framework. Many of the recent changes and structural transformations in the Zimbabwean economy between 1980 and 2010 were attributed to the adoption of the World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment program, which the government officially implemented in 1990. Gaidzanwa's report documents the views of the migrant health professionals who left the country in response to adjustment-induced deteriorations in their working and living conditions. In 1984, Zimbabwe faced a potential need to adjust its economic policies based on the recommendations of the IMF/World Bank. This was triggered by the poor economic growth following the drought of 1982. However, the proposed adjustments included cutting spending

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73 Bond and Manyanya, "Zimbabwe's Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the Search for Social Justice", 197.

74 Latham Shinder, "Zimbabwe's informal sector", International Report: *Monthly Labour Review*, March. 1998, 1-2.

on health and education, which were rejected on social and political grounds by the government. The adoption of such proposals would have eroded the government's support among poorer Zimbabweans.

Thus, Zimbabwe's health expenditure remained consistently high between 1986 and 1990, with an average of 8% of the national budget spent on the health sector.<sup>75</sup> However, Gaidzanwa noted that in 1989, the government suffered a budget deficit of US\$120 million. The country was plunged into debt as the government resorted to borrowing to cover its deficits; by 1992, Zimbabwe's debt service ratio stood at 25.8%. The economic problems associated with the fiscal deficit served, therefore, as the immediate context for the introduction of the economic structural adjustment programme (ESAP) in 1990. The programme was supposed to restore the economy to the high growth levels that were experienced in the 1980s; these averaged about 4% per annum between 1980 and 1989.<sup>76</sup> Gaidzanwa also noted that, until 1989, Zimbabwe had been classified as a lower middle income developing country. After 1989, it ascended into the group of low income developing countries. The major components of the adjustment programme included the stabilization of the economy through the adoption of restrictive fiscal and monetary policies; trade liberalization; the privatization of parastatal bodies; a generalized domestic economic deregulation, including the decontrol of prices; and, as an afterthought, a poverty alleviation component intended to cushion "vulnerable" groups such as those who had been retrenched, poor families and children, against the adverse effects of the reform measures.<sup>77</sup>

### Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP)

After the transition to majority rule the Economic History of Zimbabwe began. At that time, the Zimbabwe Dollar was introduced, replacing the Rhodesian Dollar at par value. Interestingly, the Zimbabwe dollar was more valuable than the US dollar back then.<sup>78</sup> The Zimbabwean dollar was weakened due to economic instability in the late 1990s. Economic

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75 Rudo Gaidzanwa, "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment." *Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala*, 1999: 1-90.

76 Gaidzanwa, "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment", 1-90.

77 Gaidzanwa, "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment", 1-90.

78 Makoni, "Effects of the economic structural adjustment programme (1991-1993) on the participation of secondary school girls in Zimbabwe", 1-15.



instability was caused by factors inherited together with the inappropriate economic policies implemented by the government.

In October 1990, the Zimbabwean government implemented a five-year Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in response to an economic crisis and Western donor pressure.<sup>79</sup> From 1991, the Zimbabwean dollar was devalued repeatedly. This pushed the government to adopt ESAP. Inflation and the devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar led to the printing of more notes, which fuelled inflation even more. ESAP is said to be the culprit that caused the devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar.<sup>80</sup> These were signs of an economy spiralling down and unprecedented levels of hyperinflation in the history of Zimbabwe. Thus, the economic crisis of Zimbabwe saw the adoption of the ESAP by the government.

ESAP was an economic policy adopted as a prescriptive solution to the economic crises of the 1980s.<sup>81</sup> It was formally introduced in Zimbabwe in October 1990 but started in earnest in March 1991 following the agreement between the government of Zimbabwe and the aid agencies and the World Bank in Paris.<sup>82</sup> The ESAP framework adopted by Zimbabwe contained the standard features of World Bank and IMF economic reform strategies. It involved reducing government expenditure by retrenching 25 percent of the civil service establishment, withdrawing subsidies, commercializing and privatizing state-owned companies, and introducing user fees in the health and education sectors, among others. ESAP was implemented in Zimbabwe due to the dysfunctional economy, high inflation, massive unemployment, and inequality inherited by the new government. The inappropriate economic policies adopted at independence also contributed to the need for ESAP.<sup>83</sup> Zimbabwe experienced acute shortages of foreign currency. The shortage of foreign currency was largely a result of a lack of investment in the country.

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79 Makoni, "Effects of the economic structural adjustment programme (1991-1993) on the participation of secondary school girls in Zimbabwe", 1-15.

80 Gaidzanwa, "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment", 1-90.

81 Gideon Zhou and Hardlife Zvoushe, "Public Policy Making in Zimbabwe: A Three Decade Perspective", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, Vol.2 No. 8 (Special Issue-April 2012): 1-11.

82 Siedman, "A Development Strategy for Zimbabwe", 13-27.

83 Makoni, "Effects of the economic structural adjustment programme (1991-1993) on the participation of secondary school girls in Zimbabwe", 1-15.

Unfortunately, ESAP failed to achieve its intended results, instead causing various negative effects on the Zimbabwean economy. It led to an increase in poverty levels, and failed to reduce poverty as intended. The goal of ESAP was to make the Zimbabwean economy more market-oriented by removing government controls and interference, reducing the government budget deficit, emphasizing investment in agricultural, mining, and manufacturing production sectors, as well as improving transport, power, and communication infrastructure.<sup>84</sup> This caused a foreign exchange shortage making it difficult for companies to upgrade obsolete capital equipment as well as resulted in limited job creation. This led to a large part of the population not having access to formal employment. However, based on such evidence in Zimbabwe, one can say ESAP was a failure because of its economic reforms which caused an economic downturn.

### Unemployment

Many African nations are struggling with high levels of unemployment, and Zimbabwe is not an exception. Chikanda and Raimundo showed evidence of a SAMP study conducted in 2014 that Benin had unemployment rates equivalent to those of Zimbabwe.<sup>85</sup> Zimbabwe's formal economy has been in recession, since the late 1990s which has led to the growth of the informal economy. As of 2017, the informal employment now made up about 70 percent of Zimbabwe's overall employment.<sup>86</sup> Although wages for skilled and semiskilled black workers were only 70 percent of those of white workers,<sup>87</sup> it is still double the wages of similar workers in Taiwan, South Korea, and the Philippines, when taking into account cost of living differences.<sup>88</sup> The argument is made by Masamba that in Zimbabwe, rates of unemployment

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84 Joyce A Malaba and Jesimen T Chipika, A gender assessment of African regional communities databases to identify gaps in capturing the activities of women in informal cross border trade. Economic Commission for Africa, United Nations, Addis Ababa, 2012: 1-75 <https://hdl.handle.net/10855/29237>

85 Chikanda and Raimundo, "Informal Entrepreneurship and Cross-Border Trade between Mozambique and South Africa", 1- 58.

86 Nsolo J Mijere, *Informal Cross-Border Trade in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)*. Addis Ababa: OSSREA 2008: 102.

87 Daniel Makina, "Survey of Profile of Migrant Zimbabweans in South Africa: A Pilot Study", University of South Africa, Zimbabwe Diaspora Forum Research Report, 2007: 1-6.

88 Chikanda and Raimundo, "Informal Entrepreneurship and Cross-Border Trade between Mozambique and South Africa", 1- 58.

are extremely high, and the emphasis must be on first increasing employment and then increasing wages and productivity.<sup>89</sup>

The informal economy is efficient at generating job opportunities at a very low cost for at least some segments of the population. In some African nations, self-employment and micro-enterprise activity in the informal economy in the late 1980s absorbed some workers who had lost their jobs in the formal economy.<sup>90</sup> Jobs in Zimbabwe's formal economy (including civil service jobs, agriculture, manufacturing, and export operations) showed negative growth in 1998, while some jobs in the informal economy (including small businesses, vendors, and illegal trade operations) were showing positive growth.<sup>91</sup> According to Shinder, jobs in the informal economy are difficult for the government to regulate and monitor and, hence, may be more difficult for the government to encourage.<sup>92</sup> The informal sector in Zimbabwe is not taxed, which discourages its growth. However, its workers and owners spend their income in the formal economy, potentially creating more jobs. Given Zimbabwe's high unemployment rates, prioritizing job creation in the informal sector could have a positive impact on the overall economy.

The country's high unemployment rates have resulted in an economic and cultural crisis, causing deterioration of Zimbabwe's infrastructure and underutilization of human capital. Many Zimbabweans are dissatisfied with the current situation. As such, the government cannot afford to wait for long-term analysis and must act promptly to address the crisis.<sup>93</sup> In many cities, businesses in the informal economy are a result of inadequate education and training, high rates of unemployment in the formal economy, and the poor and working poor striving to improve their economic conditions. Utilizing the informal sector can have positive short-term effects in alleviating unemployment. As a result of failed economic growth and poverty reduction efforts, Zimbabwe saw the rise of informal trading.

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89 Bond and Manyanya, "Zimbabwe's Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the Search for Social Justice", 15.

90 Neil H Thomas, "Land Reform in Zimbabwe", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 24, No 4, 2003: 691–712.

91 Nsolo J Mijere, *Informal Cross-Border Trade in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)*. Addis Ababa: OSSREA 2008: 102.

92 Shinder, "Zimbabwe's informal sector", 1-2.

93 Afrika and Ajumbo, "Informal Cross Border Trade in Africa: Implications and Policy Recommendations", 1-13.

## Rise of informal trading

Globalization and trade liberalization have encouraged formal international trade worldwide, leading to renewed efforts to improve the international competitiveness of formal enterprises. Amidst these changes, there is growing interest in the extent of informal sector activity as a form of income-generating or subsistence activity in both developed and developing countries, as noted by Muzvidziwa.<sup>94</sup> There is no agreement as to what constitutes an informal economy. The lack of consensus on the proper definition is reflected in the lack of systematic information about all the caveats of this sector.

Informal trade across the border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique was thriving during the early 2000s despite bottlenecks related to tariff and non-tariff factors. Even with increased trade liberalisation between the two countries, the trend continued during the period between 2009 and 2013.<sup>95</sup> This called for a deeper analysis of the causes, nature, and magnitude of this form of trade. An analysis of the profile of informal traders and the informal trade circuit surfaced the role of domestic trade distortions and formal-informal interactions that encouraged informal trade. According to McFadden, Zimbabwean women dominated the trade route, supporting the belief that informal trade opens opportunities that women are normally deprived of in the formal economy.<sup>96</sup> Further, an analysis of institutional environment, anchored in insights from the new institutional economics, indicated that informal traders had well-developed ways or opportunities for reducing high transaction costs that characterized the formal channel. For this reason, Mudyazvivi postulated that trade liberalisation, although necessary, was not a sufficient factor to shift informal trade into formal channels.<sup>97</sup> Other factors that discouraged informal traders to turn from the formal sector were complex paperwork and registration procedures, demand for third-country goods,

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94 Victor Muzvidziwa, *Women without Borders: Informal Cross Border Trade among Women in the Southern African Development Community Region (SADC)*, Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA).2005: 196

95 Sheneyah, Abonge, & Fonjong, "Rethinking the Nature, Implications, and Challenges of Informal Cross Border trade by Women from Cameroon across the Cameroon-Nigeria Southwestern Borders", 8.

96 Patricia McFadden, "Becoming Postcolonial: African Women Changing the Meaning of Citizenship" *Meridians Feminism Race Transnationalism* Vol. 6, No. 1 (2005): 1-22.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40338681> .

97 Elton Mudyazvivi, "The Nature of Informal Cross Border Trade and its Implications for Regional Integration: The Case of Forbes and Machipanda Border Posts of Zimbabwe and Mozambique", 1-12.

and efficiency of the informal channel. In addition, informal trade was estimated to have grown by 97% since 1999 to 2008, making a case for the necessity of its inclusion in national trade statistics.<sup>98</sup> With regard to policy, Zimbabwe and Mozambique needed to improve the operations of their trade-related institutions to reduce transaction costs alongside liberalisation. This is relevant to the Zimbabwean lives in that, informal traders and the informal trade circuit have dominated all sectors in Zimbabwe.

Research conducted by Muzvidziwa, Malaba & Chipika has focused on empowering informal cross-border traders. Muzvidziwa's study examines how cross-border trade has helped some families in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe to overcome poverty. Sub-Saharan Africa is considered the most expensive region in the world to conduct business. The World Bank and International Finance Corporation attribute this to high customs charges, fees, and other business costs and delays, which are triple the amount charged in other parts of the world.<sup>99</sup> Formal and informal cross-border trade in West Africa has increased since the 1990s because of economic liberalization policies, population growth, urbanization, and regional integration.<sup>100</sup> This is linked to the Zimbabwean situation in that, the Zimbabwean economy has been weakened by massive immigration, urbanisation, and unemployment. ICBT has different origins across the continent, but in Africa and Ajumbo, it is associated with pull factors such as low or no tariffs and cross-border price differentials in the country where the goods are sold. Poor infrastructure, limited access to finances, high tariffs, delays, and other unfavourable conditions in source countries also discourage formal trade. Personal considerations, including the level of education, available knowledge and information, opportunities, and business networks of those involved in the trade, also play a significant role. Therefore, based on the above information, it can be deduced that the growth of informal cross-border trading in Zimbabwe was a direct result of the economic crisis in the country.

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98 Mudyazvivi, "The Nature of Informal Cross Border Trade and its Implications for Regional Integration: The Case of Forbes and Machipanda Border Posts of Zimbabwe and Mozambique", 1-12.

99 Malaba & Chipika, "The Southern African Development Community Free Trade Area (SADC FTA) from a gender perspective: What is in the FTA for the poor, excluded, and marginalized women?" 16.

100 Mudyazvivi, "The Nature of Informal Cross Border Trade and its Implications for Regional Integration: The Case of Forbes and Machipanda Border Posts of Zimbabwe and Mozambique", 1-12.

In Zimbabwe, women's involvement in informal cross-border trade (ICBT) has become increasingly popular and important as a safety net for unemployment. Although it is recognized that women's earnings from ICBT help reduce poverty and empower them, there is little evidence on the specific patterns of ICBT carried out by women, as pointed out by Sheneyeh, Abonge, and Fonjong.<sup>101</sup> Continentally, women involved in ICBT between the Cameroon-Nigeria borders are young between 21 - 40 years and married with large families and the same can be said in Zimbabwe. In Zimbabwe, women are involved in informal trade because they have access to business capital through informal thrift channels.<sup>102</sup> Women in Zimbabwe are often motivated to engage in informal cross-border trading (ICBT) due to financial constraints and the potential for greater profits through tax evasion and smuggling. Although women's participation in ICBT can help reduce household poverty and empower them, it can also negatively impact state customs revenue.

Scholars have observed that informal cross-border trading has become a crucial livelihood strategy for women whose households have been pushed into poverty due to Zimbabwe's economic and political instability. This highlights the significant impact of ICBT on the daily lives of women in the country.<sup>103</sup> Informal cross-border trade plays a significant role in both the host and sending economies, contributing to regional trade and global economies, and ensuring regional food security. However, despite its importance as a livelihood strategy for women and its contribution to the welfare of both the home and host country, informal cross-border women traders face several challenges. Makombe notes that informal cross-border trade is often seen as a threat that needs to be controlled rather than a genuine economic activity. As a result, there are several obstacles that informal cross-border women traders face, including registration requirements, access to finance and credit, compliance with business-related taxes, corruption, and harassment by border officials who extort money from them. As a result, Garatidye believes

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101 Isah Adamu Sheneyeh, Christiana Abonge, & Lotsmart Fonjong, . "Rethinking the Nature, Implications and Challenges of Informal Cross Border Trade by Women from Cameroon across the Cameroon-Nigeria Southwestern Borders". *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 9, Vol.9, No.10, 2021: 248-266.

102 Mudyazvivi, "The Nature of Informal Cross Border Trade and its Implications for Regional Integration: The Case of Forbes and Machipanda Border Posts of Zimbabwe and Mozambique", 1-12.

103 Victor Ngonidzashe Muzvidziwa, "Double-Rootedness and Networking among Urban Migrants in Zimbabwe", *Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology*, 1:1-2, 2010: 81.90, DOI: [10.1080/09766634.2010.11885541](https://doi.org/10.1080/09766634.2010.11885541)

there are a number of obstacles that informal cross-border women traders face, for example, registration requirements, access to finance and credit, as well as the necessity to comply with business-related taxes, corruption and harassment by border officials who extort money from informal cross-border traders.<sup>104</sup>

Thus, based on different views by different scholars, it is noted that informal cross-border trading in Zimbabwe is a livelihood strategy for women whose households have been pushed into poverty as a result of Zimbabwe's economic and political down turn.

Lastly, informal trade had been rising since 2000. Informal imports into Zimbabwe were estimated at US\$ 15 million while exports were estimated at US\$5.8 million. This was an approximate increase of 97% since 1999.<sup>105</sup> The observed human traffic across the border and estimates of value of trade went to demonstrate the increasing market value of ICBT. Even the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) Governor Gideon Gono estimated that Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs), informal and micro-enterprises accounted for between 15% and 20% of Zimbabwe's GDP.<sup>106</sup> The exclusion of informal trade statistics implied that policies and regional trade strategies were based on flawed facts and therefore likely to be disconnected from realities that obtained on the ground. As averred by McFadden, while the growth in ICBT could be viewed as integration from below, the Zimbabwe and Mozambique subsystem needed to be aware of its potential to undermine formal trade arrangements such as restrictions on third country goods which could be originating from the developed world.<sup>107</sup> The result of this scenario would be to cripple the development of the productive capacity of the region or reinforce centres of export power concentrations. Thus, an effective integration strategy would be one that builds in improving local production capacity and rationalizing regional economies.

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<sup>104</sup> Garatidye, "An Exploration of the Experiences of Zimbabwean Women Informal Cross-Border Traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge Border Post", 79.

<sup>105</sup> Ndiaye, "Case Study on Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade: Women Informal Traders Transcending African Border, Myths, Facts, and Way Forwards. International Trade Centre", 79.

<sup>106</sup> Garatidye, "An Exploration of the Experiences of Zimbabwean Women Informal Cross-Border Traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge Border Post", 84.

<sup>107</sup> McFadden, "Becoming Postcolonial: African Women Changing the Meaning of Citizenship", 15.

## Zimbabwean 21<sup>st</sup> century economic events

Zimbabwe has become synonymous with economic and social chaos for many, especially after recent events. Towards the end of 2008, after a decade-long economic decline, the inflation rate reached record-setting levels. Public services, such as healthcare and education, have disintegrated to a large extent. Jones cited a number of challenges that affected the Zimbabwean economy, and these are, political turmoil and violence, cholera outbreaks, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), corruption and patrimonialism.<sup>108</sup> These challenges grossly affected the economic performance of the country. However, some do very well indeed despite the massive challenges. Despite periods of intense political instability, there has not been much in the way of protest. At the ground level, economic disaster is rather mundane: it leads to more queues and gloomy faces, more plotting and scheming, all interrupted by occasional moments of prayer, reminiscence, anger, and alcohol-induced bravery. People do what they must; they survive. Because, ultimately - as Zimbabwean English has it - that's all that really matters.

The new economy of Zimbabwe is heterogeneous, meaning it comprises vending, illegal foreign currency trading, bribing, corruption, and informal trading.<sup>109</sup> Informal trading is in Shona referred to as kukiya-kiya. This means that the Zimbabwean economy is thriving on kukiya-kiya. Kukiya-kiya means people are dodging formal ways of doing business, exploiting available resources for survival. Far from being a new phenomenon, its logic has always been a part of the country's urban landscape. What has changed is, therefore, not the fact that some people are involved in informal trading, but that the economy has come to be defined by kukiya-kiya.<sup>110</sup> This is relevant in that, from 2000 to this day, the economy of Zimbabwe has turned into a kukiya-kiya economy, as informal routes are proving to be prospering.<sup>111</sup> This has derailed the progress of the Zimbabwean economy. Based on this

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108 Jones, " 'Nothing is Straight in Zimbabwe': The Rise of the Kukiya-kiya Economy 2000–2008", 289.

109 Jones, " 'Nothing is Straight in Zimbabwe': The Rise of the Kukiya-kiya Economy 2000–2008", 290.

110 Lovemore Rugube and Innocent Matshe, "Economy Livelihoods: Africa In Informal Cross-Border Traders And The Creation of the SADC Common Market", In Kwandiwe Kondo And Chinenyengezi", Ejiogu (Eds). *Africa In Focus: Governance In the 21st Century*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council. 2011: 234.

111 Rugube and Matshe, "Economy Livelihoods: Africa In Informal Cross-Border Traders And The Creation of the SADC Common Market In Kwandiwe Kondo And Chinenyengezi", 100.



analysis, the Zimbabwean situation entails that, everyone is involved in informal trading one way or the other.

Due to the rise of informal trading, the Zimbabwean economy has failed to deal with the unequal economic legacies, income inequalities, unemployment, tensions over land reform, increasing prices of basic goods, as well as de-industrialization.<sup>112</sup> The promise of integrating into the global economy led to a severe economic crisis under a regime plagued by mismanagement, corruption, and a serious loss of legitimacy. Faced with this crisis, the ruling party tried to revive its political fortunes through three measures. Firstly, large payouts were made to war veterans who fought in the liberation struggle in 1997 after they protested against their continued marginalization by Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), both economically and politically.<sup>113</sup> Secondly, what weakened the Zimbabwean economy was Zimbabwe's participation in the crisis in Congo, as well as Mugabe's land reform program, largely though not solely through the coercive deployment of a combination of war veterans and unemployed youth.<sup>114</sup> Thus, a number of issues as mentioned above affected the Zimbabwean economy leading the people to be involved in informal trading.

After a long struggle against colonial rule, which lasted for about 15 years, The Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) took up arms to liberate the country from white colonial rule, leading to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.<sup>115</sup> One of the expectations that came with being a newly independent country run by its own people, was that previous grievances would be addressed and corrected, if not separated. In light of this, the people's belief in their elected government did not yield results as disgruntlement continued.<sup>116</sup> Thus, it can be noted that the government failed its followers.

Following the victory of the Zimbabwean government at independence, the government adopted a number of measures to provide better living conditions for its people. One of them includes the expansion of education facilities to provide free primary education and free

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112 Jones, "Nothing is Straight in Zimbabwe": The Rise of the Kukiya-kiya Economy 2000–2008, 287.

113 Thomas, "Land Reform in Zimbabwe", 691–712.

114 Brian Raftopoulos & Ian Phimister, *Keep on Knocking: A History of the Labour Movement in Zimbabwe 1900-1997*, Baobab books, 1997: 164.

115 Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe 1890-1948: Capital accumulation and class struggle*, 1-320.

116 Raftopolous & Phimister, *Keep on Knocking: A History of the Labour Movement in Zimbabwe 1900-1997*, 164.

health services to benefit the poor majority.<sup>117</sup> Also, the government subsidised basic consumer goods such as mealie meal (staple food), milk, cooking oil, and several other items to make them affordable to the Zimbabwean poor. The government also promulgated the minimum wage law to make sure that workers receive decent living wages, and this improved the quality of life of the Zimbabwean majority.<sup>118</sup> It is paramount to note that these measures imposed by the Zimbabwean government did not improve the lives of the Zimbabwean people in the long term.

### Conclusion

This chapter has traced the economic history of Zimbabwe since 1980. Authors such as Gaidzanwa, Makombe and McFadden looked into activities like ESAP, land reform, informal trading, inflation, and unemployment. Zimbabwe had a different economic structure prior to and during the post-colonization era. In the 1980s, ESAP was an economic policy adopted to tackle Zimbabwe's economic crises. It contained the standard features of the World Bank and IMF economic reform strategies. The country's economy was dysfunctional, and it was coupled with high inflation, massive unemployment, and inequality. The new government inherited these issues, along with inappropriate economic policies adopted at independence. Unfortunately, ESAP in Zimbabwe increased poverty levels instead of reducing it.

The government made notable efforts to improve the quality of life for the majority who had been marginalized under colonialism in the first years of independence. Upon the establishment of the new regime, the government adopted several measures to better the lives of Zimbabweans. One of them was the expansion of education facilities to provide free primary education and free health services to benefit the poor majority. The government also subsidised basic consumer goods such as mealie meal (the staple food), milk, cooking oil, and several other items to make them affordable to the Zimbabwean poor.

It is crucial to note that the measures imposed by the Zimbabwean government did not improve the lives of the people of Zimbabwe in the long run, with an economic downturn that

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117 Sutcliffe, “‘Shinga Mushandi Shinga! Qina Msebenzi Qina!’ (Workers be Resolute! Fight On!) The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe 1980-2012”, 17.

118 Thomas, “Land Reform in Zimbabwe”, 691–712.

started in the late 1990s. Therefore, it can be concluded that the economy of Zimbabwe has faced numerous challenges, temporary fixes, and a lack of sustainability.

## CHAPTER III

### **The main drivers of migration in Southern Rhodesian/Rhodesian//Zimbabwean history between 1890 and 2010.**

#### Introduction

The history of migration in what is now Zimbabwe, formerly known as Southern Rhodesia and Rhodesia, between 1890 and 2010, was shaped by a complex interplay of economic, political, social, and environmental factors. These factors influenced both internal and external migration patterns in the region. This chapter attempts to identify key drivers of migration in Southern Rhodesian history between 1890 and 2010. The chapter provides ways to evaluate the significance or importance of various factors related to development and poverty reduction, and suggests research that needs to be conducted in this field. The first part of the chapter will offer a concise overview of the driving forces behind migration from 1890 to 2020. Migration has been a crucial aspect of Zimbabwe's history, driven by various factors over different periods. During colonialism (1890-1965), European settlers were attracted to Southern Rhodesia by the British and sought land and economic opportunities. This led to the displacement of indigenous populations. At the same time, the colonial authorities encouraged labour migration, both internal and external, to meet the growing labour demand in the mining and agriculture sectors. Many Africans moved from their rural areas to work in mines, farms, and urban centres.

During the same period, the discovery of rich mineral resources, including gold and diamonds, attracted a significant number of labour migrants, both local and foreign, to the mining industry. Large commercial farms and cash crop production also attracted labour from neighbouring countries and rural areas, as well as white settlers. The growth of urban centres like Salisbury (now Harare) and Bulawayo presented economic opportunities, drawing rural residents to cities.

In the period of political changes (1965-1980), the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) declared by the white-minority government in 1965 led to international sanctions and political instability. This prompted some white Rhodesians to emigrate while increasing internal migration, as African populations were affected by political conflict and economic

downturns. Additionally, the armed struggle for independence (1960s-1980) led to internal displacement as people fled violence and persecution. Many sought refuge in neighbouring countries like Zambia and Mozambique. With independence in 1980, the end of white-minority rule saw the return of exiled Zimbabweans and the repatriation of refugees, contributing to internal migration patterns.

The controversial fast-track land reform program initiated in the early 2000s aimed to redistribute land from white commercial farmers to landless black Zimbabweans and led to significant internal migration as people sought land and economic opportunities. The economic instability and hyperinflation during the 2000s also resulted in a significant emigration of Zimbabweans in search of better economic prospects abroad, creating a Zimbabwean diaspora in countries like South Africa, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

Environmental factors such as periodic droughts and food shortages in Zimbabwe forced rural populations to migrate in search of food and water. The Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) epidemic had a significant effect on migration patterns as well. The high mortality rate affected both rural and urban populations. Some people moved in search of better healthcare or to escape the impact of the epidemic.

Lastly, the existence of family and social networks played a significant role in migration decisions. People often migrated to areas where they had relatives or acquaintances who could provide support and assistance. Population migration into and out of present-day Zimbabwe long pre-dates European conquest and the imposition of artificial colonial borders. Not only did people move from one area to another as the need arose,<sup>119</sup> Ethnic boundaries in Zimbabwe have been fluid enough to allow individuals or groups to move in or out of population clusters and ethnic groupings with relative ease. Even after the establishment of colonial boundaries, this movement did not cease. These arbitrary borders divided families, clan groups, and ethnic communities between different colonies. However, local communities generally ignored these colonial impositions and went about their normal business with their kith and kin, crossing borders without regard to colonial laws and immigration requirements. Due to the demands of the growing mining and agriculture sectors, colonial authorities

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119 Herbert Chimhundu, "Early Missionaries and the Ethnolinguistic Factor during the Invention of Tribalism in Zimbabwe", *The Journal of African History*, 33, 1, 1992: 87–109.

implemented regulations encouraging internal and external labour migration. Consequently, many Africans moved from their rural areas to work in mines, farms, and urban centres, and Zimbabwe has been heavily involved in movement both within and outside its borders, even supplying labour to South African gold mines.

The inception and perpetuation of migration have been explained in terms of disparities in conditions between different places driving movement. According to P. Ibbotson, push-pull models in some studies suggest that migrants were pushed by low incomes in their countries or regions and pulled by better prospects in more affluent areas.<sup>120</sup> Critics of this neo-classical approach (an approach that emphasises individual or group behaviour and human relations in determining productivity) argue that long-standing inequities deriving from centuries of exploitation of poor countries by rich ones drove migration, which was perpetuated by the structures of labour markets in richer countries. Other explanations have been sought in household decision-making and in social networks. Some have seen migration as a household strategy motivated by the need to spread risk, rather than an individual matter.<sup>121</sup> Others have underlined the importance of chains, networks and culture in keeping migration going once established by pioneers.<sup>122</sup> Thus, one of the key drivers of migration in Southern Rhodesian history between 1890 and 2010 was low income in the country.

At the end of the 19th century, the first Indian immigrants arrived in Southern Rhodesia, following the arrival of the white settler Pioneer Column from the south. As the British South Africa Company (BSAC) established its control over the territory, these men, mostly from the western Indian state of Gujarat, became an urbanized trading community. They established family lines by bringing their wives and children over to settle. According to Patel,

They were both colonizers and colonized, collaborators and resisters; settlers who claimed colonizing rights of imperial citizenship, but also colonized subjects from another imperial space facing discrimination in another colony.<sup>123</sup>

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120 Susan Chirwa, "TEBA is Power: Rural Labour, Migrancy and Fishing in Malawi, 1890s -1985", PhD Thesis, Queens University, 2012: 133-4.

121 Sally Peberdy and Christian M Rogerson, "Transnationalism and Non-South African Entrepreneurs in South Africa's Small and Medium Microenterprise Economy". *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 34(1) 2000: 20- 40.

122 Chirwa, "TEBA is Power: Rural Labour, Migrancy and Fishing in Malawi, 1890s -1985", 133.

123 Trishula Rashna Patel, "Becoming Zimbabwean: A History of Indians in Rhodesia, 1890-1980", Georgetown University, D.Phil.thesis, 2021: 357.

For almost a century, Indians used the language of the colonizers to assert their affiliation to the British Empire and Rhodesia. They also fought to preserve their own cultural traditions and opposed the imposition of British standards. This brought them closer to the African nationalist movement.

Prior to British colonization in 1890, white hunters, adventurers, explorers, and missionaries travelled through the region between the Limpopo and the Zambezi rivers, but none of them settled there permanently. However, this changed when a group of around 700 white people, known as the Pioneer Column, arrived. They were armed and funded by Cecil John Rhodes through his British South Africa Company (BSAC). This group claimed the land, which later became known as Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), for Britain by raising the Union Jack at Fort Salisbury (now Harare) in 1890.<sup>124</sup> Thereafter, the BSAC and subsequent self-governing administrations after 1923 made determined efforts to encourage white immigration into the country in line with Rhodes' dream of developing Rhodesia as a white man's country. Early white immigration was fuelled in the run-up to the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910.<sup>125</sup> There was a large inflow of mostly English-speaking immigrants from South Africa between 1901 and 1911 making this the fastest white population growth decade in the entire period of colonial rule. Negotiated on favourable terms for the Afrikaners, the Union helped to push English-speaking South Africans into Rhodesia.<sup>126</sup> Thus, based on this analysis it can be noted that, colonialization was one of the key drivers of migration in Southern Rhodesian history between 1890 and 2010.

In addition to the reasons mentioned earlier, increased white immigration to Zimbabwe was also a result of the BSAC government's efforts to attract white communities into the country. The colonizing project of Rhodes was driven by the belief that the land north of the Limpopo had large gold deposits that would compare favourably with, if not surpass, those on the Rand. However, the country did not have as abundant gold deposits as had been envisioned. So, from 1902 onwards, the BSAC government started promoting commercial agriculture, as

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124 Tsuneo Yoshikuni, *African Urban Experiences in Colonial Zimbabwe: A Social History of Harare before 1925* Harare: Weaver Press, 2007: 162.

125 Elliot B Makambe, "The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia and the Problem of the African 'Highwaymen', 1903-1923: A Study in the Limitations of Early Independent Labour Migration". *African Affairs* 79(317) (1980): 548–660.

126 Makambe, "The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia and the Problem of the African 'Highwaymen', 1903-1923: A Study in the Limitations of Early Independent Labour Migration". 548–66.

it accepted the fact that gold-mining was not going to bring great wealth to the country. In 1908, it adopted a white-agriculture policy that deliberately promoted settler agriculture; this included reducing land prices to prospective settlers and expanding the foreign and contract labour supply system to provide sufficient agricultural labour.<sup>127</sup> Henceforth, based on this analysis it can be noted that, colonialization and white immigration were one of the key drivers of migration in Southern Rhodesian history between 1890 and 2010.

Findings on motives for migration confirm the centrality of economic motivations among Zimbabwean migrants to Botswana, Malawi and South Africa, although economic motivation and reasons related to persecution and violence are not mutually exclusive. A few Zimbabweans noted political persecution, including harassment and persecution of Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) supporters by ZANU PF party leaders, as the main reason for their move.<sup>128</sup> According to Adepoju's interviews with Zimbabweans, the main reason for their migration was the economic crisis. This was due to factors such as unemployment, hyperinflation, currency devaluation, poverty, food shortages, and the failure of major economic and public service sectors such as healthcare and education. Many saw migration as the only solution to an economic situation that denied them basic human rights, putting their survival and that of their families at risk. Therefore, it can be concluded that asylum-seeking and the economic crisis were key drivers of migration in Southern Rhodesian history between 1890 and 2010.

The sub-continent's liberation struggles from the 1960s to 1994 also contributed to migration. The wars created many refugees from Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa who went to neighbouring countries, especially Zambia, DRC, and Tanzania. Angolan refugees tended to flee to DRC and Zambia, while Zimbabwean and South African refugees went to Zambia and Tanzania. After the defeat of Portuguese colonialism in 1975, they moved to Mozambique. In 1975, for example, an estimated 15,000

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127 Makambe, "The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia and the Problem of the African 'Highwaymen', 1903-1923: A Study in the Limitations of Early Independent Labour Migration", 548-660.

128 Aderanti Adepoju, "The Dimension of the Refugee Problem in Africa", *African Affairs* 81(322) 1982: 21-35.



Zimbabwean refugees entered Mozambique. By 1976, 70,000 Zimbabwean refugees had crossed the border, and the number rose to 150,000 by 1979.<sup>129</sup>

Poverty was at first held to be a key driver of migration. However, Chirwa noted that, since the early 1990s it has been recognised that the poorest often cannot migrate since resources are needed to do so, especially for international migration<sup>130</sup>. It is therefore typically not the poorest of the poor who migrate, extreme poverty actually prevents people from migrating because they lack resources to do so. While they are certain things one can do for clandestine migration, such as crossing a river and jumping over a fence. All of these activities may not need permit application, but still need a bit of money for the family that gets left behind and money for the person looking to resettle. While there may be a strong relationship between migration, poverty, and its alleviation, poverty in itself may not be a driver of migration.<sup>131</sup> Acknowledgement of this has led to much debate about the relationship between migration and development, in particular, whether development can reduce the pressures that drive migration or in fact, can stimulate more migration by giving people the resources to move.<sup>132</sup>

During the years of Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), white emigration increased due to the deteriorating economic and political situation and the intensifying military conflict between the government and nationalist liberation forces. However, in the first few years of UDI, the country actually experienced net migration gains. This was partly due to the Rhodesian government's concerted efforts to attract immigrants through vigorous propaganda campaigns in Europe, travel subsidies, and incentives such as housing, tax relief, and customs concessions, among others. Ian Henderson cites these efforts as a reason for the initial migration gains.<sup>133</sup> Also, immigrants were also attracted by job opportunities as the Rhodesian economy was quite vibrant because of the hothouse effect

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129 Jonathan Crush & Daniel Tevera, *Zimbabwe's Exodus: Crisis, Migration, Survival. A History of Zimbabwean Migration to 1990*, Cape Town: Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP) & International Development Research Centre (IDRC) 2010: 52-78.

130 Chirwa, "TEBA is Power: Rural Labour, Migrancy and Fishing in Malawi, 1890s -1985", 133.

131 Makambe, "The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia and the Problem of the African 'Highwaymen', 1903-1923: A Study in the Limitations of Early Independent Labour Migration". 548-660.

132 Makambe, "The Nyasaland African Labour 'Ulendos' to Southern Rhodesia and the Problem of the African 'Highwaymen', 1903-1923: A Study in the Limitations of Early Independent Labour Migration", 548-660.

133 Ian Henderson, "White Populism in Southern Rhodesia", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 14(4) 1972: 387-399.

created by Rhodesian exchange controls as a result of its sanctions. The Rhodesian economy adopted import substitution industrialisation strategies that created career openings for skilled workers in the country's expanding manufacturing sector.<sup>134</sup> The number of white immigrants coming into the country could have been greater if the Rhodesian governments had not been very selective about the type of immigrants they accepted. The government only allowed in British white immigrants, which discouraged other nationalities and ethnic groups from migrating to the country. In 1921, there were 33,620 whites in Rhodesia, of which 32,203 were British by birth or naturalization. By 1931, British settlers accounted for 92% of the white population. Even after World War II (WWII), the majority of immigrants were British-born, and almost half migrated directly from Britain to Rhodesia. Therefore, based on this analysis, it can be concluded that economic and political instability played a significant role in the migration patterns of Southern Rhodesia between 1890 and 2010.

According to Francis Musoni, essentially, initiatives that aim to reduce migration from countries in the global South to those in the global North can be effective if they address the underlying reasons that drive migration. These reasons often include violent conflict, differences in living standards, and poverty in the countries from which migrants come. To achieve this goal, it is important to promote development, alleviate poverty, and reduce conflict in the countries of origin. By doing so, we can reduce the need for people to migrate in search of better opportunities elsewhere.<sup>135</sup> This policy thrust developed in the 1980s in the context of forced migration but later came to be applied to economic migration as well. For example, efforts were made from the later 1990s to integrate approaches to migration and asylum in European Union (EU) policy.<sup>136</sup> Various measures have been proposed to alleviate migration pressure through development and conflict prevention. The concern with root causes, determinants, and drivers has been discussed in many international policy initiatives, including the Global Commission on Migration and Development (2003-5), the UN (United Nations) High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development (2006), and the ongoing Global Forum on Migration and Development. It can be inferred that violent conflict,

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134 Barry M Schutz, "European Population Patterns, Cultural Persistence, and Political Change in Rhodesia", *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 7(1), 1973: 3-25.

135 Francis Musoni, "Border Jumping and Migration Control in Southern Africa." Indiana University Press. 2020: 218.

136 Mijere, *Informal Cross-Border Trade in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)*, 102.

disparities in living standards, and poverty are some key drivers of migration in Southern Rhodesian history from 1890 to 2010.

Several predisposing factors contribute to the creation of a context in which migration is more likely. For instance, structural disparities between places of migrant origin and destination shaped by the macro-political economy. Such predisposing factors may be outcomes of broad processes such as globalization, environmental change, urbanization, and demographic transformation. According to Alois Mlambo, economic disparities between territories sending and receiving migrants include differences in earnings, livelihoods, and living standards shaped by the unfolding of the global political economy and its inequities.<sup>137</sup> What might be called political disparities include the relative prevalence of conflict, persecution and other dimensions of human rights and human security, associated with trends of nation building, disintegration and reconstitution in regions of migrant's origin.<sup>138</sup> There are various differences in the environment between the places people migrate from and the places they migrate to. These include things like the availability of resources, the quality of soil, water supply and the amount of forest area. Other factors that play a role include proximity to borders and desired destinations. Some of these differences can be measured, such as variations in income, spending on healthcare and education, the number of healthcare workers, and the level of school attendance. Together, these economic, political and environmental factors fall under the category of human security, and disparities in these areas can lead to migration.

Migration can take many different forms, and the decisions and actions of the people and communities affected play a significant role in shaping it. People use their agency to process their social experiences and find ways to cope with life, even in the face of extreme coercion.<sup>139</sup> The extent to which they can exert agency will reflect both their individual and collective capabilities and the room for manoeuvre for exercising them in any particular

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137 Alois S Mlambo, "History of Zimbabwean Migration", in Jonathan Crush and Daniel Tevera(eds.), *Zimbabwe's Exodus: Crisis, Migration, Survival*, 52-78

138 Jo Oucho and Njoku Ola Ama, "The impact of migration policy on the Reproductive Health of Migrants and Refugees: A Case Study of Botswana", *Journal of the South African Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care*, 2014: 51(3).

139 Daniel Makina, "Survey of Profile of Migrant Zimbabweans in South Africa: A Pilot Study", *Zimbabwe Diaspora Forum Research Report*, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2007: 1-6.

encounter.<sup>140</sup> Migration is a complex phenomenon influenced by various factors such as gender, generation, class, ethnicity, and other social cleavages. The decisions and actions of people and communities affected by push and pull factors play a significant role in shaping migration. Apart from this, the influence of other actors and agents including national and local government officials, businesses, international agencies, civil society organizations, and brokers also needs to be taken into account while analysing migration.

Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the internal dynamics of migration processes established by transnational social networks and the migration industry that might stimulate further migration even without any external drivers in areas of origin or destination. Therefore, migration cannot be attributed to a single cause or factor but is shaped by multiple factors and actors.

Regarding labour migration, it was a prevalent trend mainly during the inter-war period. However, even in 1914, the tendency for large numbers of Nyasas to leave their villages periodically in search of work abroad was well established. Unfortunately, Crush and Perbady postulated that

official data on these labour movements are not very reliable and can frequently be shown to contain gross inaccuracies. Thus the actual numbers involved are not known; all that can be stated with confidence is that many thousands made their way to the mining and farming centres of Southern Rhodesia and the Transvaal and, to a lesser extent, to Northern Rhodesia, the Congo, Tanganyika and Portuguese East Africa: sufficient, in fact, to cause occasional labour shortages in the Southern Province of Nyasaland. Therefore, based on this assumption it can be noted that, labour was one of the key drivers of migration in Southern Rhodesian history between 1890 and 2010.<sup>141</sup>

With the exception of Botswana, where the majority of migrants are still male, there has been an increase in the number of female Zimbabwean migrants. Most migrants travel to South Africa for leisure, informal trading or shopping. Others move to look for temporary work opportunities, particularly in the service, construction and tourism industries. Research conducted by Elliot Makambe indicates that Zimbabwean migrants in these four countries usually travel alone, leaving their families and dependents behind, and stay for short periods

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140 Musoni, "Border Jumping and Migration Control in Southern Africa", 218.

141 Crush and Perbady, *Migration in Southern Africa*, 67.

of time.<sup>142</sup> Zimbabweans interviewed in the four countries by Makambe indicated that they mainly come to “seek employment in formal and informal sectors; to trade; and to purchase basic necessities such as medicines, groceries, clothes, and other household goods all in order to support struggling families left behind”.<sup>143</sup> In addition to the above, given that all countries provide emergency medical services at no cost, some “female Zimbabweans in Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana indicated that they had crossed the border primarily to access antenatal and childbirth services.”<sup>144</sup> Therefore, based on this assumption it can be noted that, in search of greener pastures was one of the key drivers of migration in Southern Rhodesian history between 1890 and 2010.

The majority of Zimbabwean migrants travel to South Africa and Botswana, due to the economic stability and high wage and employment standards.<sup>145</sup> Many Zimbabweans are influenced by long-standing ethnic ties and networks when choosing a destination country. This is especially true for Zimbabwean migrants to Malawi, where relatives and friends in these countries help with migrants' accommodation, food and job-seeking efforts. Although Zimbabweans can be found throughout the receiving countries, they are often concentrated in urban areas where there are better job opportunities or trading options.<sup>146</sup> Migration within southern Africa is a multifaceted phenomenon driven by various factors, including economic opportunities, political instability, environmental pressures, and social factors. It involves both internal migration within countries and international migration across borders. People from countries in southern Africa often move to other countries in search of better job opportunities and improved living conditions. Maxim Bolt is a scholar who has conducted research on migration and related topics, particularly in the context of southern Africa. His

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142 Makambe, “The Nyasaland African Labour ‘Ulendos’ to Southern Rhodesia and the Problem of the African ‘Highwaymen’, 1903-1923: A Study in the Limitations of Early Independent Labour Migration”. 548–66.

143 Makambe, “The Nyasaland African Labour ‘Ulendos’ to Southern Rhodesia and the Problem of the African ‘Highwaymen’, 1903-1923: A Study in the Limitations of Early Independent Labour Migration”. 548–66.

144 Chibaro, O. 2016. *African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1933*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1976, 120.

145 Sheri D Weiser, Karen Leiter, David R Bangsberg, Lisa M Butler, Fiona Percy-de Korte, Zakhe Hlanze, Nthabiseng Phaladze, Vincent Lacopino, Michele Heisler. “Food Insufficiency Is Associated with High-Risk Sexual Behaviour among Women in Botswana and Swaziland”. *PLOS Medicine* 4(10) 2007: 260.

146 McCarthy, K., Chersich, M., Vearey, J., Meyer-Rath, G., Jaffer, A., Simpwallo, S. and Venter, W. “Good treatment outcomes among foreigners receiving antiretroviral therapy in Johannesburg”. *International Journal of STD & AIDS. South Africa*, 20(12) 2009.

work shows that migrants tend to move from urban areas in Zimbabwe to urban areas in neighbouring countries. This confirms the Forced Migration Studies Programme's research in Johannesburg, which established that cross-border migrants living in the inner-city are more likely to have urban linkages and greater knowledge and experience of urban environments. Labour migration to South Africa, which is driven by economic stability and high wage and employment standards, has had a significant impact on the region's economy. This was also one of the key drivers of migration in Southern Rhodesian history between 1890 and 2010. As of 2010, the majority of Zimbabweans in Botswana resided in cities like Gaborone, Francistown, Lobatse, Selibe-Phikwe, and major villages like Malepolole and Muchudi. In Mozambique, they are mainly located in Manica, Tete, Beira, and Maputo regions but can also be found in Gaza province and Cabo. In Malawi, Zimbabweans tend to favor the southern parts of the country, including Blantyre, Mangochi, and Nsanje, and to a lesser extent Lilongwe, due to ethnic connections with people in these areas.<sup>147</sup> In Zambia, the majority is found in Lusaka and Livingstone, but Chirundu, Siavonga and Luangwa are also destinations. The common feature is that many Zimbabwean migrants live in poor neighbourhoods and shanty towns, with 15-20 people sharing the rent for a single house.<sup>148</sup> Many circular migrants stay for a short time on each visit and this arrangement helps them find low-cost shelter. Most households share a single apartment with up to four other households. However, Zimbabweans in Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, and Zambia have a different experience of circular migration compared to other nationalities of cross-border migrants due to its higher level and regularity.<sup>149</sup> Rather than permanently migrating with their families, the households of migrants continue to live in Zimbabwe while the breadwinners travel for short periods to urban areas across the border to support them. Thus, the main driver of migration in Southern Rhodesia was the desire to provide for their families.

The beginning of African migration for paid employment did not depend on the establishment of peace or the imposition of taxation, although these were significant

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147 Chirwa, "TEBA is Power: Rural Labour, Migrancy and Fishing in Malawi, 1890s -1985", 133.

148 Themban Dube "Land Migration and Belonging: A History of the Basotho in Southern Rhodesia c.1890–1960s", *South African Historical Journal*, 72(3) 2020: 1-4.

149 Sanderson, F. E. "The Development of Labour Migration from Nyasaland, 1891-1914." *The Journal of African History* 2, no. 2 (1961): 259–71. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/180001>.

incentives for such migration.<sup>150</sup> Labor migration in Nyasaland was largely driven by economic incentives provided by the slave trade and legitimate trading by the Portuguese and British explorers and missionaries, prior to the first British administration in the region. It is worth noting that since the early 1890s, Nguru from Portuguese East Africa and Ngoni from the areas to the west of Lake Nyasa moved to the Shire Highlands to work for Europeans. These laborers were mostly from areas outside direct European control, and were severely affected by tribal warfare, as pointed out by Vigneswaran.<sup>151</sup> At this time there were less than 300 Europeans resident in the whole of Nyasaland and North-Eastern Rhodesia as compared with approximately 2000 in Southern Rhodesia. Therefore, based on this analysis it can be noted that, paid employment was one of the key drivers of migration in Southern Rhodesian history between 1890 and 2010.

Lastly, in assessing the connections between economics and politics in driving migration to and from Southern Rhodesia, it is important to note that trade and entrepreneurship have a high cultural value for Zimbabwean populations.<sup>152</sup> The extent of the Zimbabwean diaspora and its well-established trading networks, not only in South Africa (SA) but more widely across Africa, in Europe and North America, also mean that Zimbabwe populations are well-recognised as being extremely effective and successful businessmen, who are often able to undercut local salespersons.<sup>153</sup> It is closely integrated into the global capitalist economy and has excellent transport connections. Therefore, based on this analysis it can be noted that, entrepreneurship was one of the key drivers of migration in Southern Rhodesian history between 1890 and 2010.

To sum up, this chapter has identified the principal drivers of migration which is what led to this study's concerns. On a macro-level, economic and demographic disparities stemming from the uneven processes of globalisation and demographic transition represent predisposing factors that underpin the sustained inflow of migrant domestic workers from Southern Rhodesia into other parts of the world. High levels of unemployment and underemployment

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150 Jean Pierre Misago with Loren B. Landau and Tamlyn Monson, "Towards Tolerance, Law, and Dignity: Addressing Violence against Foreign Nationals in South Africa", Research conducted for IOM by the Forced Migration Studies Programme at the University of the Witwatersrand, 2009:1-67.

151 Kiwanuka and Monson, "Zimbabwe Migration into Southern Africa; New trends and Responses", 1-95.

152 Mijere, *Informal Cross-Border Trade in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)*, 91.

153 Musoni, "Border Jumping and Migration Control in Southern Africa," 218.

in Zimbabwe are among the proximate factors that push many women to migrate into other parts of the world where higher wages are offered, and where growing demand for migrant domestic labour has become embedded in their labour markets. The encouragement of Zimbabwean out-migration to secure remittances and drivers inducing migration between the countries. Also, this driver complex can be termed the Southern Rhodesia political economy of opportunity. Southern Rhodesia understandings of the human security that they most value centre on an economic autonomy that the Republic of South Africa (RSA) is best placed to provide.



## CHAPTER IV

### Informal Cross Border Traders and the rise of the ZCBTA

#### Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to discuss Zimbabwe's informal cross-border trade and cross-border trade, the economic crisis and the informalisation of the economy, cross-border trading. The chapter's emphasis will be on growing unemployment and other economic hardships which resulted in the economic gap that led to cross-border trading. In the early 1980s Zimbabwe was touted as a nation that held the promise of a resolution to the seemingly intractable problems of de-colonization and stability in southern Africa. Women are still facing abuse and are being denied the right to access many benefits and opportunities. This chapter will achieve its goal through addressing the following questions, informal cross border trade from beginning till now, distinguish between informal cross border trade and cross border trade, define what a trader is (in the economic and social), is there a difference in genders (do the challenges differ), and what was the impact on livelihoods based on political change, is that what led to the creation of the informal sector thus informal cross border trade. The chapter also discussed what was the role of the government on both sides, in South and Zimbabwe, and lastly, what was Killer Zivhu's contribution.

#### Informal cross-border trade from 2000 till 2020.

Zimbabwe has witnessed the rapid expansion of informal cross-border trading (ICBT) with neighbouring countries over the past two decades. According to Jones, beginning in the mid-1990s when the country embarked on its Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP), a large number of people were forced into informal employment through worsening economic conditions and the decline in formal sector jobs.<sup>154</sup> The country's post-2000 economic collapse resulted in the closure of many industries and created market opportunities for the further expansion of ICBT. ICBT in Zimbabwe remains a female-dominated activity, and women made up 68% of the sample survey conducted by Jones. Furthermore, traders exhibit a relatively youthful profile, with a mean age of 33 years in this sample. Cross-border traders are generally well educated, with 66% of the sample holding a high school diploma,

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154 Jones, " 'Nothing is Straight in Zimbabwe': The Rise of the Kukiya-kiya Economy 2000–2008", 285-299

and 14% having post-secondary educational qualifications.<sup>155</sup> Nearly 90% of the respondents interviewed by Jones had started their businesses in the post-2000 era. Most had never held a formal job and went into ICBT either because they were unemployed or already involved in informal sector activities in Zimbabwe. Seventy percent of the traders rely on ICBT only for survival and have no other sources of income. This points to the origins of informal cross-border trade in Zimbabwe.

The processes of globalisation and trade liberalisation promote formal international trade world-wide. The processes have been accompanied by the renewed vigour to improve international competitiveness of the formal enterprises. Amidst these changes, Muzvidziwa averred that, there is a growing interest in the extent of informal sector activity as a form of income generating or subsistence activity within the developed and developing countries.<sup>156</sup> However, little agreement exists in the literature as to what constitutes the informal economy, what activities in addition to monetary exchange make up the informal economy and where these activities are located. The lack of consensus on the proper definition is reflected in the lack of systematic information about all the caveats of this sector. As a result, the informal cross-border trade has failed to attract the attention of the academic researchers. Little is known about whether the benefits of globalisation and trade liberalisation trickle down to the lower end of the informal sector. This chapter explores and describes the problems faced by the Zimbabwe informal cross-border traders operating between Zimbabwe and South Africa. It provides a profile of their experiences and problems along different stages of their journey. That is between their homes and the border gates, at the border gates on their way to South Africa, on their journey to South Africa, in South Africa, and the border gates on their return journey to Zimbabwe. It is imperative to examine the relationships between these traders and the traders in South Africa to track what happens to their goods once they are imported into Zimbabwe. Thus, it is concluded that trade and non-trade barriers pose a number of serious problems for the informal traders, and therefore hinder the development of international trade in the informal sector.

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155 Jones, “ ‘Nothing is Straight in Zimbabwe’: The Rise of the Kukiya-kiya Economy 2000–2008”, 285-299

156 Muzvidziwa, “Women without Borders: Informal Cross Border trade in the Southern African Development Community Region (SADC)”, 74.

Informal trade across the border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique in 1996 despite bottlenecks related to tariff and non-tariff factors.<sup>157</sup> Even with increased trade liberalisation between the two countries, the trend continued. This called for deeper analysis into the causes, nature and magnitude of this form of trade. An analysis of the profile of informal traders and the informal trade circuit surfaced the role of domestic trade distortions, and formal-informal interactions that encouraged informal trade. According to McFadden, Zimbabwean women dominated the trade route,<sup>158</sup> supporting the belief that informal trade opens opportunities which women are normally deprived of in the formal economy. Further, an analysis of institutional environment, anchored in insights from the new institutional economics, indicated that informal traders had well developed ways or opportunities for reducing high transaction costs that characterized the formal channel. For this reason, Mudyazvivi postulated that trade liberalisation, although necessary, was not a sufficient factor to shift informal trade into formal channels. Other factors that discouraged informal traders to turn formal were complex paperwork and registration procedures, demand for third country goods and efficiency of the informal channel.<sup>159</sup> In addition, informal trade was estimated to have grown by 97% since 1999, making a case for the necessity of its inclusion in national trade statistics. With regards to policy, Zimbabwe and Mozambique needed to improve the operations of their trade-related institutions to reduce transaction costs alongside liberalisation. It can be deduced that, informal traders and the informal trade circuit surfaced the role of domestic trade distortions, and formal-informal interactions that encouraged informal trade.

Studies by Muzvidziwa,<sup>160</sup> and Malaba & Chipika<sup>161</sup> have focused on the economic empowerment of informal cross border traders, while Muzvidziwa examines how cross-border trade has been a strategy to climb out of poverty for some families in Masvingo

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157 Jose Luis Macamo, "Estimates of Unrecorded Cross-Border Trade Between Mozambique and Her Neighbors Implications for Food Security", *World Vision International – Mozambique*, No. 88, 1999: 93.

158 Muzvidziwa, "Women without Borders: Informal Cross Border trade in the Southern African Development Community Region (SADC)", 74.

159 Mudyazvivi, "The Nature of Informal Cross Border Trade and Its Implications for Regional Integration: The Case of Forbes and Machipanda Border Posts of Zimbabwe and Mozambique" 12.

160 Mudyazvivi, "The Nature of Informal Cross Border Trade and Its Implications for Regional Integration: The Case of Forbes and Machipanda Border Posts of Zimbabwe and Mozambique" 10.

161 Joyce A Malaba and Jesimen T Chipika, "Gender Assessment of African Regional Communities Databases to Identifying Gaps to Capturing the Activities of Women Informal Cross-border Trade", *United Nations Economics for Africa*, 2012: 1-90.

Province, Zimbabwe. Sub-Saharan Africa is considered the world's most expensive region to do business. This, the World Bank, and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) assert, can be attributed to the fees and official custom charges, and other business costs and delays, which are three times higher than elsewhere in the world.<sup>162</sup> Formal and informal cross-border trade in West Africa has increased since the 1990s because of economic liberalization policies, population growth, urbanization, and regional integration. The origin of ICBT may differ across the continent but Afrika and Ajumbo, associate their practice to three common factors: the pull factors in the form of low or no tariffs and cross-border price differential in the country where the goods are sold; conditions (poor infrastructures, limited access to finances, high tariff, delays, etc.) in source countries discouraging formal trade; and personal considerations (level of education, available knowledge and information, opportunities, and business networks of those involved in the trade).<sup>163</sup> Thus, economic crisis in Zimbabwe has paved for the growth of informal cross-border trading.

Women's participation in informal cross border trade (ICBT) in Zimbabwe has progressively become a popular and vital safety net to unemployment. Women's dominance in the informal sector points to how the sector is more attuned to the needs of women such as familial obligations, lack of skills or formalised learning, and cultural and societal pressures. According to Sheneyeh, Abonge, & Fonjong, while it has been acknowledged that earnings from women's ICBT activities contribute to reductions in poverty and women's empowerment,<sup>164</sup> scant evidence reports the patterns of ICBT carried out by women. Continentally, women involved in ICBT between the Cameroon-Nigeria borders are young between 21 - 40 years and married with large families. While the women involved come from diverse demographics and trade with assorted goods, they started off as informal traders with access to business capital through informal thrift channels.<sup>165</sup> By and large, women are motivated into ICBT by capital constraint to start a formal business and the possibilities to

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162 <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/822281468162849713/highlights-from-the-annual-report-2011>.

163 Afrika and Ajumbo, "Informal Cross Border Trade in Africa: Implications and Policy Recommendations", 1-13.

164 Sheneyah, Abonge, & Fonjong, "Rethinking the Nature, Implications, and Challenges of Informal Cross Border trade by Women from Cameroon across the Cameroon-Nigeria Southwestern Borders", 8.

165 Sheneyah, Abonge, & Fonjong, "Rethinking the Nature, Implications, and Challenges of Informal Cross Border trade by Women from Cameroon across the Cameroon-Nigeria Southwestern Borders", 10.

make more profit due to tax evasion and smuggling. While women's ICBT impacts on reductions in household poverty and women's empowerment, these activities affect state custom revenue. A better policy framework that increases women's profitability and protects state revenue by addressing custom and police corruption is indispensable for the sustainability of the economic impact of ICBT. Thus, unfair treatment of women in the formal sector had driven them to dominate the informal sector.

A number of scholars have noted that informal cross-border trading in Zimbabwe is a livelihood strategy for women whose households have been pushed into poverty as a result of Zimbabwe's economic and political down turn. This demonstrates how informal cross border trading has transformed women's day to day lives in the country. Muzvidziwa shows how families in Zimbabwe were able to leave poverty behind through cross-border trading activities.<sup>166</sup> Ndiaye concurs, noting how informal cross- border trade cushioned many households in Zimbabwe during the 2006-2007 food crisis.<sup>167</sup> Informal cross-border traders are a unique category of migrants whose activities have a significant contribution to both the host and sending economies, and have become an integral sector for regional trade and global economies, while playing a critical role of guaranteeing regional food security.<sup>168</sup> Informal cross-border women merchants encounter several obstacles, despite the fact that it is a vital means of subsistence for them and greatly benefits the welfare of both the home and the host nation.<sup>169</sup> Therefore, according to Garatidye, there are a number of challenges that informal cross-border women traders must overcome. These include the need to comply with business-related taxes, registration requirements, financing and credit availability, and harassment from corrupt border officials who demand money from these traders. Thus, it can be inferred from varying perspectives held by various academics that informal cross-border trading in Zimbabwe serves as a means of subsistence for women whose households have been forced into poverty as a result of the country's political and economic collapse.

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166 Victor Ngonidzashe Muzvidziwa, "Cross Border Trade: A Strategy for climbing out of poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe", *Zambezia*, 25, 1998: 29-58.

167 Ndiaye, "Case Study on Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade: Women Informal Traders Transcending African Borders, Myths, facts, and Way Forward", 56.

168 Ndiaye, "Case Study on Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade: Women Informal Traders Transcending African Borders, Myths, facts, and Way Forward", 56.

169 Percy Makombe, "Informal Cross Border Trade and SADC: The Search for Greater Recognition" *Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa*, 2011: 1-6

Lastly, informal trade had been rising since the year 2000. Informal imports into Zimbabwe were estimated at US\$ 15 million while exports were estimated at US\$5.8 million. This was an approximate increase of 97% since 1999. The observed human traffic across the border and estimates of value of trade went to demonstrate the increasing market value of ICBT. Even the RBZ Governor Gideon Gono estimated that SMEs, informal and micro-enterprises accounted for between 15% and 20% of Zimbabwe's GDP. Exclusion of informal trade statistics implied that policies and regional trade strategies were based on flawed facts and therefore likely to be disconnected with realities that obtained on the ground. As averred by McFadden, while the growth in ICBT could be viewed as integration from below, the Zimbabwe and Mozambique subsystem needed to be aware of its potential to undermine formal trade arrangements such as restrictions on third country goods which could be originating from the developed world.<sup>170</sup> The result of this scenario would be to cripple the development of the productive capacity of the region or reinforce centres of export power concentrations. Thus, an effective integration strategy would be one that builds in improving local production capacity and rationalizing regional economies.

#### Difference between informal cross-border trade and cross-border trade

This section will first address cross-border commerce and then go on to explore informal cross-border trade in order to highlight the distinctions between the two types of cross-border trade demand. Cross-border women traders have been portrayed using the witchcraft idiom. In the traditional African setting, witches were thought to be cannibals, killers, and antisocial people. A person's humanity was denied when they were called a witch. According to Matakanye, during South Africa's apartheid era in the 1980s, traders across borders were depicted as witches who were supposedly indifferent to the plight of the Black majority.<sup>171</sup> According to news reports, the sale of human parts as "muti"—similar to love potions—to cross-border traffickers is associated with the belief that combining human parts with specific herbs will bring good fortune to a business owner. In South Africa, the 'muti' trade is very widespread. During Kiwanuka and Monson's fieldwork, these allegations were so common that a kind of national manic dread of ritual murder connected to cross-border trade developed. *The Herald* carried a number of stories that, despite being subsequently shown to

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170 McFadden, *Becoming Postcolonial: African Women Changing the Meaning of Citizenship*, 1-22.

171 Kiwanuka and Monson, 'Zimbabwe Migration into Southern Africa; New trends and Responses', 1-95.

be untrue, served to feed the public's hatred and dread of women cross-border dealers as antisocial beings.<sup>172</sup> The Herald published these stories about Masvingo, Harare, Mutare, Bulawayo, and other Zimbabwean locations, perpetuating the witchcraft myth that denigrated female business owners and associated their prosperity with antisocial behaviour. As a result, there has been a bad representation of female cross-border traders.

The projection in the media of cross-border women traders as prostitutes has been a consistent feature of Zimbabwean media reports, using women's sexuality as a smear campaign.<sup>173</sup> Narratives of cross border traders engaging in prostitution with haulage truck drivers and individuals spending extended periods in South Africa solely for the purpose of selling their bodies were also prevalent and associated with issues related to the management of HIV/AIDS. This was a part of the ongoing attempts to blame women for losing their culture and being unfaithful. It was alleged that cross border women had families and other husbands outside of Zimbabwe and these men are the ones who would give them the money they would spend. This takes away their initiative of finding employment by reducing them to prostitutes. when it comes to the source of national problems. As cited by Muzvidziwa, even a popular Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) Television drama series on Monday evenings had a play depicting cross-border women traders as people who prostituted themselves.<sup>174</sup> Preachers in certain churches attacked this alleged behaviour as though it were gospel. This explains why some of the widows in Muzvidziwa's study of the Masvingo sample were denied passports by their late husbands, who thought married women should not engage in cross-border trade. The study's respondents, however, pointed out that all attempts to thwart or undermine women's cross-border trade had failed.<sup>175</sup> A significant source of income for them during the difficult times of the ESAP was cross-border trade. Consequently, it is noted that there were more cross-border traders than before.

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172 <https://www.herald.co.zw/by-road-to-dar-and-back-a-day-in-the-life-of-a-cross-border-trader/>

173 Angela P Cheater and Rudo Gaidzanwa, "Citizenship in Neo-patrilineal states: Gender and mobility in Southern Africa", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, XXII, (ii), 1996: 189-200.

174 Muzvidziwa, "Women without Borders: Informal Cross Border trade in the Southern African Development Community Region (SADC)", 74.

175 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities", 217-238.

Politically, cross-border traders were labelled unpatriotic.<sup>176</sup> They were viewed as partners with the repressive government during the apartheid era. The cross-border traders' currency-market share was very small compared to the many loss-making parastatals, but they were perceived as taking away much-needed "foreign currency."<sup>177</sup> This was true even though the women used their rightful foreign currency vacation benefits; the true offenders of "foreign currency" consumption were elite businesspeople, politicians, and government officials. Cross-border traders were still portrayed as smugglers of various goods in some academic studies by authors like Muzidziwa and popular perceptions; this was part of the strategy to criminalize the trade as distinct from lawful, male-dominated "business." This clarifies the nature of cross-border trade as a result.

Cross-border trade was clearly moulding a new type of business woman in Zimbabwe. This was more than what Gaelle Lacaze in the case of Mongolian traders referred to as 'businessmen of the transition' or informal 'suitcase traders'.<sup>178</sup> Cross-border women traders were known as *vakadzi vekuSouth* (the women who go down South; this was a reference to South Africa) in the 1990s and early 2000s. This phrase was used regardless of the woman trader's destination. The phrase was also used to refer to success and business acumen. Women who worked as cross-border traders were starting to be stereotyped as men because they were the primary providers for their families and had a strong will to succeed. They were recognized and called *varume pachavo*, or independent men. By demonstrating that women can also be astute, prosperous businesspeople, the women had shattering the glass ceiling. This clarifies the types of difficulties encountered by international traders.

However, some women disclosed that they knew of certain cross-border traders from Zimbabwe who had valid passports from Malawi and South Africa. Zimbabwe forbids dual citizenship, but South Africa does. Due to ancestry, many Zimbabweans were eligible for dual citizenship. In addition to their other nationalities, over a million Zimbabweans are of Malawian descent, and many more have South African ancestry.<sup>179</sup> It was challenging for

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176 Cheater and Gaidzanwa, "Citizenship in Neo-Patrilineal states: Gender and mobility in Southern Africa", 189-200.

177 Jones, " 'Nothing is Straight in Zimbabwe': The Rise of the *Kukiya-kiya* Economy 2000–2008", 285-299.

178 Gaelle Lacaze, "'Run after Time': The Roads of Suitcase Traders", *Asian Ethnicity*, 11, 2, 2010: 191 – 208.

179 McFadden, *Becoming Postcolonial: African Women Changing the Meaning of Citizenship*, 1-22.



Zimbabweans to obtain a South Africa visa due to numerous barriers. Those with a Malawian passport, however, were exempt from the requirement for a visa. Furthermore, insisting on mono citizenship when other states do not is more of a symbolic gesture. It's highly likely that a few of the cross-border traders were able to enter South Africa with a valid passport from a nation other than Zimbabwe. In their critical analysis, Cheater and Gaidzanwa noted that women in Zimbabwe continued to carve out spaces for themselves to conduct prosperous cross-border business ventures under the watchful eyes of hostile states, including Zimbabwe, despite the patriarchal state's limited success in doing so.<sup>180</sup> By giving the impression that they were weak and following official policy, women cross-border traders were able to get past gatekeepers and state functionaries like immigration and customs officials in many cases. This is what Scott means when he talks about the "weapons of the weak."<sup>181</sup> The women became more adept tactical "politicians" as a result of their strategic responses to meet the different demands in conducting their business. The informal cross-border trade will be explained below, but this explains the cross-border trade.

On the other hand, registered or unregistered cross-border business activities centred primarily on popular economy are referred to as informal cross-border trade (ICBT). One of the primary features of this trade, according to Mlambo, is that tax returns are not required to be filed at the end of each fiscal year and are therefore not recorded in national accounts.<sup>182</sup> Cross-border trade is typically carried out by women and other small-scale, quasi-professional traders who use a variety of methods to transport modest amounts of goods across national borders. Article 2 of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Trade Protocol emphasizes that trade agreements will help to enhance the environment for local, international, and cross-border investment.<sup>183</sup> In order to facilitate trade, institutional and policy reforms must be implemented in an efficient and effective manner. The primary obstacle is addressing the development of the infrastructure, which includes the road and rail networks, the absence of storage facilities, the lack of internet resources for market intelligence, the restrictions placed on cross-border traders in their ability to obtain market

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180 Cheater and Gaidzanwa, "Citizenship in Neo-Patrilineal states: Gender and mobility in Southern Africa", 189-200.

181 James C Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1985, 1-389.

182 Mlambo, "From an Industrial Powerhouse to a Nation of Vendors", 99-125.

183 Mudyazvivi, "The Nature of Informal Cross Border Trade and its Implications for Regional Integration: The Case of Forbes and Machipanda Border Posts of Zimbabwe and Mozambique", 78.

data, determine what is required, where it is needed, in what quantities, and what packaging standards are, etc.

A number of infrastructure-related challenges face by the ICBTs lead to market distortion. Raftopolous and Phimister claim that returns on investment are drastically decreased and that the cost of goods entering neighbouring countries increases.<sup>184</sup> Due to profit margins being low, traders typically have little money left over for reinvestment. The absence of product standardization is another issue raised by the ICBT. It is obvious that organizations in charge of standards and quality assurance must stand by them.<sup>185</sup> Their goods would become more competitive in the fiercely competitive local and international markets with these services. The need for design studios, for example, is crucial for standardizing the production of furniture, crafts, textile materials, and jewellery. However, traders lack access to these facilities, which could enhance the value of their products.<sup>186</sup> The traders encounter difficulties obtaining funding to launch and even grow their enterprises. The situation for this partially developed sector is made worse by the strict regulations that banks demand and the currency shortage that certain countries in the region are facing. It is concerning that, even in nations with sufficient foreign exchange reserves, women are disproportionately penalized by the numerous and taxing trading procedures, which stunts the expansion of their enterprises. This demonstrates how ICBT and cross-border trade are not the same thing.

Small-scale agricultural production is the primary activity of the majority of ICBTs involved in food product trading. Their governments did not, however, provide them with much technical assistance. Numerous governments have eliminated agricultural subsidies as a result of ESAP and ESAP policies.<sup>187</sup> Particularly for farmers' out-growers schemes, information access, and agro-processing, technical support is required. Even the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement on Agriculture encourages this. Therefore, since subsidies in agriculture and a number of other sectors were eliminated, the governments ought to demand credits from the WTO. The credits that were returned could be used to increase the informal

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184 Brian Raftopolous and Ian Phimister, "Zimbabwe Now: The Political Economy of Crisis and Coercion". *Historical Materialism*, 12:4, 2015, 355–382.

185 McFadden, *Becoming Postcolonial: African Women Changing the Meaning of Citizenship*, 1-22.

186 Lacaze, " 'Run after Time': The Roads of Suitcase Traders", 191-208.

187 Ian Phimister and Victor Gwande, "The State of Secondary Industry: Southern Rhodesia before and after UDI. Paper presented to the international symposium on "Africa and Asia Entanglements in Past and Present: Bridging between History and Development Studies", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 17, 3, 2015: 430-442.

cross-border trade's capacity. Muzvidziwa claims that because the ICBTs are viewed as high risk, they have also complained about not being able to obtain bank financing.<sup>188</sup> Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia, and South Africa are the only SADC members with a common currency union; the other members lack local currency exchange services. It is necessary to have monetary policies that allow traders to exchange their own currencies for the currency of the nation in which they will be transacting. Trade would be easier as a result, and demand for hard currencies would decline. Many nations have no laws in place to encourage the use of money obtained from ICBTs, which feeds the parallel market. This could be contained with prudent macroeconomic and monetary policy. The ICBTs' literacy is crucial because it will make filling out Currency/Customs Form (CD 1)<sup>189</sup> forms simpler. Better trade promotion and strategic investment decision-making would result from their increased ability to use the funds raised from their trade. This would make it easier for them to advance trade and use the money they make from it to make wise investment choices. In contrast to international trade, traders need to know about alternative investments, working capital, and capital market operations.

Finally, informal cross-border trade gives people a job and a source of income.<sup>190</sup> A large portion of the basic needs of their dependents, including housing, education, and other necessities, can be met by traders through cross-border trade. Peberdy's research revealed that, on average, cross-border traders provided for 3.2 children and 3.1 non-spouse dependants.<sup>191</sup> According to Peberdy and Rogerson, research indicated that more women than men were involved in cross-border trade, which helped to empower women in the Southern Africa Development Community. Most of them are in the 25–35 age range.<sup>192</sup> This trade has been ongoing for a number of years, albeit in extremely challenging conditions. In Zimbabwe's past, cross-border trade has roots in pre-colonial periods. Barter trade was conducted by people without official registration being required. Tariff and non-tariff barriers emerged as a result of many African states adopting the artificial borders at the time of their

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188 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities." 227.

189 Currency/ Customs Declaration Form specifying the value of exports, commissions and freight.

190 Ignatius Banda, "Zimbabwe: Informal sector lures university graduates" Retrieved from <http://www.ips.org/TV/beijing15/zimbabwe-informal-sector-lures-university-graduates>.

191 Sally Perberdy, "Hurdles to trade? South Africa's immigration Policy and Informal Sector Cross-Border Trade in a SADC", Presented at SAMP/LHR/HSRC Workshop on Regional Integration, Poverty and South Africa's Proposed Migration Policy, Pretoria.

192 Peberdy and Rogerson, "Invisible Trade, Invisible Travellers: The Maputo Corridor Spatial Development Initiative and Informal Cross-border Trading", 115 - 123.

independence. In turn, this has caused an interruption in the unofficial economy. Products were sold both domestically in Zimbabwe and internationally to neighbouring nations. Muzvidziwa conjectured that low-income earners were frequently linked to informal cross-border trade. According to Muzvidziwa, women are labelled as "prostitutes," and informal traders are perceived as "smugglers."<sup>193</sup>

### Defining a trader

A trader is a person who buys and sells assets in any financial market, either for their own account or on behalf of another individual or organization, according to Hunter and Skinner.<sup>194</sup> The length of time an individual holds an asset is the primary distinction between a trader and an investor. While traders typically hold assets for much shorter periods of time in order to profit from short-term trends, investors typically have longer time horizons. In fact, a wide range of economic and social complementarities are required for trade or exclusive reliance on trade to achieve a particular rate of growth in Gross National Product (GNP). It is also difficult to accept that trade can aid in or contribute to economic development.<sup>195</sup> Countries such as China, Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore have experienced notable growth rates in terms of GNP per capita income over the past three decades, along with technological advancements and an increase in standard of living. This can be attributed primarily to the dominance of trade in the GNP composition, which has been driven by various socio-economic changes. Understanding the relationships and interdependencies between trade and development is crucial to comprehending the workings of the trade process. The rise of cross-border trade will serve as an example of how this movement raises the standard of economic welfare for society. The principles of trade in the context of the economy and society are presented in the section below.

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193 Muzvidziwa, "Cross Border Trade: A Strategy for climbing out of poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe", 29-58.

194 Nina Hunter & Caroline Skinner, "Foreign traders working in inner city Durban: survey results and policy dilemmas", School of Development Studies (Incorporating CSDS) University of Natal, Durban. Research Report No. 49 2001: 1-46.

195 Hunter & Skinner, "Foreign traders working in inner city Durban: survey results and policy dilemmas", 35.

### Is there a difference in genders (do the challenges differ?)

By highlighting the challenges that male and female cross border traders endure, this section will highlight the gender differences in cross border trading. Muzvidziwa observed that women cross border traders had often been labelled as witches. He further reported that women cross border traders were linked to the sale of human parts.<sup>196</sup> According to Muzvidziwa's research, it was thought that female cross-border traders mixed human parts with herbs, which are thought to improve businessmen's luck in South Africa and improve their prospects. As the investigation progressed, all of these charges were shown to be unfounded. Cross-border traders in South Africa threaten to disappear their customers' private parts if they do not pay their bills.<sup>197</sup> Furthermore, it is discovered that the threats are unfounded, yet they have succeeded in inciting fear and animosity toward cross-border traders in some segments of the South African populace. Due to this, the majority of Zimbabwean cross-border traders are unable to operate freely in South Africa. Muzvidziwa went on to explain that the media's persistent depiction of transnational women as prostitutes is a characteristic of news reports from Zimbabwe.<sup>198</sup> Narratives abound of cross-border traders who spent extended periods in South Africa selling nothing but their bodies, and of others who prostituted themselves with haulage truck drivers. Cross-border trader women have frequently been held accountable for Zimbabwe's increase in HIV/AIDS cases. From the early 2000s until 2010, male cross-border traders were also associated with the MDC by Zimbabwean state propaganda.<sup>199</sup> Male cross-border traders are sometimes referred to as "*malaitshas*," or unofficial couriers, or smugglers. The *Malaitshas* are well-known for their smuggling and duty evasion. The *Malaitshas* freely assure their customers that they will not be charged duty on any goods they transport to Zimbabwe. They take advantage of the tax-paying and law-abiding public by charging outrageous fees and keeping all the money for themselves.<sup>200</sup> Challenges faced by cross border traders are a multitude from persecution to economic hardships and societal and cultural limitations and expectations.

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196 Muzvidziwa, "Cross Border Trade: A Strategy for climbing out of poverty in Masvingo", 48.

197 Muzvidziwa, "Cross Border Trade: A Strategy for climbing out of poverty in Masvingo", 37.

198 Muzvidziwa, "Cross Border Trade: A Strategy for climbing out of poverty in Masvingo", 37.

199 Norman Chilya, & Reginald Masocha, "Constraints facing Zimbabwean Cross Border Traders in South Africa", *Chinese Business Review*, 11, 2013: 564-570.

200 Musoni, "Border Jumping and Migration Control in Southern Africa", 218.

Both males and females have been subject to police brutality during their trade, either at the border or during the selling of good. According to Afrika and Ajumbo's article, Karoila claimed that travellers from Zimbabwe to South Africa were often subjected to police brutality at the Beitbridge border post.<sup>201</sup> The South African Police countered that they only use force at border posts when there are issues with crowd control, particularly during busy times of the year when lines are lengthy. The South African Police frequently use sjamboks, or whips, to manage crowds. According to *the Herald*, "no one challenges the policeman for the inhuman treatment but instead tries to please them (policemen)" at the border post.<sup>202</sup> Whilst police harassment has been noted as an obstacle for the traders in South Africa it is also an issue on the Zimbabwean side at the borders from the Zimbabwean police who have no regard for cross border traders and their goods. Hunter and Skinner made reference to the fact that police officers occasionally would sincerely attempt to enforce municipal laws, particularly for vendors who offered their wares in large cities' central business districts.<sup>203</sup> Those trading without a permit are periodically ordered to be removed by inner-city metro police. When traders operate without a permit, metro police officers have the right to seize their goods and impose fines. The goods are meant to be returned to the traders after they have paid a fine. And so, police brutality affected men and women equally.

Sexual harassment was a problem for women. According to Tay's estimation, approximately 70% of women in Zimbabwe who are of reproductive age are engaged in cross-border trade. Tay also brought up the fact that a large number of these women were compelled to have transactional sex in order to find lodging, transportation, or to pass through the borders.<sup>204</sup> Matakanye, who claimed that 10 women are raped on the South African border every day on average, bolsters the allegations of sexual harassment.<sup>205</sup> This corresponds to roughly 300 female rapes per month. Matakanye continued by emphasizing that men were also forced to rape women who were traveling with them or were sodomized. Matakanye added that the fact that some of the victims were elderly women who had been raped in front of their spouses

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201 Afrika and Ajumbo, "Informal Cross Border Trade in Africa: Implications and Policy Recommendations", 1-13.

202 <https://www.herald.co.zw/cross-border-traders-experiences/>

203 Musoni, "Border Jumping and Migration Control in Southern Africa", 200.

204 Tay, N. (2010). Women traders confronting sexual harassment at borders. Retrieved from <http://www.south-south.ipcundp.org/news/item/384-women-traders-confronting-sexual-harassment-at-borders>.

205 Matakanye, J. 10 raped on SA border daily: Officials. Retrieved from <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-5187-10%20raped%20on%20SA%20border%20daily%20officials/news.aspx> , 2011.

and children made the rape incidents traumatizing.<sup>206</sup> Cases that go unreported or are reported too late to receive proper medical attention are very concerning, particularly when there has been a transmission of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Tay believed that the majority of the sexual harassment offenses were perpetrated by border post officials, specifically customs officers, police officers, and soldiers.<sup>207</sup> Thus, unlike males, females were more likely to be subject to sexual harassment.

### Political impact on livelihoods and the Informal sector

Estimates place the percentage of informal employment in Zimbabwe at 65%. Furthermore, 40% of South Africans are unemployed. Even after accounting for differences in cost of living, the wages of skilled and semiskilled black workers are still twice as high as those of their white counterparts, despite being only 70% of the former. This is in Taiwan, South Korea, and the Philippines. It is argued that because unemployment is so high in Zimbabwe, the focus should be on increasing employment before raising wages and productivity. For certain populations, the informal economy is a cost-effective means of creating employment opportunities. In several African countries, workers who had lost their jobs in the formal economy in the late 1980s found new opportunities in the informal economy through microenterprise and self-employment. Certain jobs in Zimbabwe's informal economy—such as small enterprises, vendors, and illicit trade operations—are growing positively, while jobs in the country's formal economy—such as those in the civil service, manufacturing, export operations, and agriculture—are growing negatively. According to Shinder, it may be more difficult for the government to support jobs in the informal economy since they are harder for them to oversee and regulate.<sup>208</sup> Moreover, the majority of these companies do not file taxes, which gives the government additional justification to impede the expansion of the unofficial sector. Despite not having to pay taxes, the majority of informal sector owners and workers spend their earnings in the formal economy, as do their families. As a result, a growth in the unofficial sector of the economy might benefit employment in the formal sector. Smaller

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206 Matakanye, J. (2011). 10 raped on SA border daily: Officials. Retrieved from <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-5187-10%20raped%20on%20SA%20border%20daily%20officials/news.aspx>

207 Tay, N. (2010). Women traders confronting sexual harassment at borders. Retrieved from <http://www.south-south.ipcundp.org/news/item/384-women-traders-confronting-sexual-harassment-at-borders>.

208 Shinder, "Zimbabwe's informal sector", 1-2.

businesses in the informal economy are more labour-intensive and more likely to use equipment made locally, even though larger businesses typically use imported technology and a small labour force. Consequently, given Zimbabwe's high unemployment rate, creating jobs—especially those for the smaller, unofficial economy—might be a top priority.

Formal international trade is promoted globally by the processes of globalization and trade liberalization. Alongside the processes, there has been a renewed push to increase the formal enterprises' competitiveness abroad. Muzvidziwa claimed that in the midst of these developments, there is an increasing amount of interest in the amount of informal sector activity in developed and developing nations as a means of generating income or subsistence.<sup>209</sup> It is unclear whether trade liberalization and globalization benefit the lower echelons of the unorganized sector. It monitors what transpires to their products after they are brought into Zimbabwe. Therefore, it can be said that trade and non-trade barriers impede the growth of international trade in the informal sector by posing a number of major issues for informal traders.

#### Role of the SA and Zimbabwean governments

An important factor in the expansion of Southern African economies is cross-border trade. For many impoverished people, particularly women, cross-border trade provides a means of subsistence. Few research, nevertheless, have looked at the difficulties cross-border traders face and potential business opportunities. Makoni lists a number of the difficulties as follows: criminal activity, xenophobic harassment, stigmatization of traders as "prostitutes" or "smugglers," lodging issues, extortion and bribery by South African police and local law enforcement, delays at the border post during busy times, and early closing and Sunday closings of banks.<sup>210</sup> A non-governmental organization called the Zimbabwean Cross Border Traders Association (ZBCTA) was established in 2000 to support cross-border informal traders. In order for members to easily consult with the association in times of need and to assist with marketing information, such as the distribution of brochures showcasing Zimbabwean products sold by cross-border traders and the organization of fairs where Zimbabwean traders can display their wares, ZBCTA should establish offices in Musina and

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209 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities", 217-238.

210 Makoni, "Effects of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (1991-1993) on the Participation of Secondary School Girls in Zimbabwe" 27.



Johannesburg. In addition, incidents of harassment by law enforcement personnel ought to be looked into and handled. It is also recommended that banks that do have branches at border posts offer cross-border traders 24-hour service. Nevertheless, the governments of South Africa and Zimbabwe did not fulfill their responsibility to safeguard informal cross-border traders.

Zimbabwe's economic crisis has caused a sharp increase in cross-border trade between South Africa and Zimbabwe. Numerous linked factors, such as high unemployment, high inflation, shortages of goods and commodities, shortages of foreign currency, high levels of poverty, and food insecurity, can be blamed for this.<sup>211</sup> Many people in Zimbabwe were forced to move into the unofficial sector in 2007 due to the country's high unemployment rate of nearly 94%. Among these people are cross-border traders, who regularly travel to neighboring countries to sell their goods and return home with more goods for resale as well as some foreign currency.<sup>212</sup> Cross-border trade is further encouraged by the existence of a robust black market in light of the disparity in foreign exchange rates, unfavorable political climates, and the collapse of social sectors like health and education. Therefore, Zimbabwe's government made a larger contribution to the amount of cross-border trade that came in.

It is not uncommon to experience delays at the border post, particularly during busy times. According to Zhangazha, getting a passport stamped at the border post could take up to 12 hours. Customs officers frequently go on a go-slow strike during this time, which exacerbates the situation at the border. Zhangazha said that one can skip the line if they have between R30 and R50.<sup>213</sup> One of the officers in charge of the front queue receives the money. On the other hand, the customs officials claimed that because of the loosening of visa requirements in the wake of the 2000s, more people were able to enter South Africa than ever before and some of them were engaging in illegal activity. As a result, they were unable to handle the influx of Zimbabweans into the country. Although the visa has been relaxed, cross-border traders still believe that the 90 days that South African authorities have given them is

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211 Chani, C. "Informal cross-border trade: A Review of its impact on household poverty reduction in Zimbabwe", Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of Fort Hare. 2008

212 Mwaniki, J. (2011). The impact of informal cross border trade on regional integration in SADC and implications for wealth creation. Retrieved from <http://www.streetnet.org.za/wp-content/pdf/CORN.PDF>.

213 Norman Chilya & Reginald Masocha, "Constraints facing Zimbabwean Cross Border Traders in South Africa", *Chinese Business Review* 11. 2013: 564-570.

insufficient for conducting business in the country because they occasionally have to wait until the end of the month to get paid by their South African customers. The aforementioned has illustrated the circumstances in Zimbabwe that fostered the growth of cross-border trade as well as the efforts made by the governments of South Africa and Zimbabwe to restrict trader access.

### Killer Zivhu's contribution to Cross Border Traders

Killer Zivhu is a Zimbabwean politician who founded the Zimbabwean Cross Border Traders' Association, (ZCBTA) in 2000. He was awarded an honorary doctorate degree for his work beyond borders, specifically for the ZCBTA. He is also a former member of parliament of the Zimbabwean government in the Chivi South region and until July 2020 a member of ZANU PF. Zivhu began as a unionist advocating for equal rights for people marginalised in the informal sector. Killer Zivhu is said to have played part in the growing of informal cross-border trade as well as the protection of rights of the ICBT. According to Killer Zivhu, the founder of the Zimbabwe Cross-Border Traders' Association (ZCBTA), the Finance Ministry's fiscal policies will never be able to stabilize the out-of-control foreign exchange rate if cross-border traders are not consulted.<sup>214</sup> In a NewsDay interview, Zivhu claimed that although cross-border traders were the ones who set the foreign exchange rate, they were not consulted when monetary policy started initiatives to stabilize the economy. "We have been crying since two years ago, we have done everything we could to request for a meeting with Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe governor and the Finance minister Mthuli Ncube, to no avail".<sup>215</sup> Further, Zivhu noted that,

we wanted to assist these gentlemen to stabilise the black market rate because the main buyers of foreign currency are traders. More than three million people are surviving by buying and selling, so there is high demand for foreign currency on the streets. As an association, we have the methods that can help the government to stabilise the black market, but the unfortunate part is we are regarded as illegal informal traders and no one is intending to listen to us.<sup>216</sup>

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214 <https://www.newsday.co.zw/local-news/article/200011832/economy-has-dollarised-cross-border-traders>

215 <https://www.newsday.co.zw/thestandard/local-news/article/200011832/economy-has-dollarised-cross-border-traders>

216 <https://www.newsday.co.zw/local-news/article/200011832/economy-has-dollarised-cross-border-traders>

ZCBTA is an apolitical organization that was formed in 2000 and got registered in 2001 as a trust. The group's mission is to advance and protect the interests of its members as a representative body of small-scale traders. In April 2000, ZCBTA was established. The government and regional organizations like Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) have acknowledged it. In fact, COMESA studied ZCBTA structures and systems and decided to adopt and modify the ZCBTA model for replication in COMESA and East African Community (EAC) nations. When the South African government still issued 12-month trader visas, Zivhu and the ZCBTA successfully lobbied on behalf of their members. It is a major force behind the COMESA Simplified Trade Regime (STR) Project and was chosen to house the Regional Secretariat of the Southern African Cross Border Traders Association (SACBTA).<sup>217</sup> It is a part of the National Technical Working Group on HIV and AIDS in the Informal Economy of the National AIDS Council and the Border Efficiency Management System (BEMS). When executing different national programs, associations of the informal economy and SMEs recognize it as a valid lead/coordinating agent. Out of the 7000 members of ZCBTA, 76% are female.

### Conclusion

This chapter's goal was to talk about cross-border trade in Zimbabwe, both formal and informal. The informal economy and the economic crisis, in particular the rise of cross-border trade. The chapter focused on how rising unemployment and other financial difficulties contribute to the need for cross-border trade. In addition to being denied access to numerous advantages and opportunities, women continue to experience abuse. The following topics were covered in order for the chapter to achieve its objectives: what constitutes an informal trader in the economic and social sphere; how has informal trade evolved over time; how does it differ from cross-border trade; are there gender differences in the challenges faced by traders; and how has political change affected livelihoods? And lastly, is that what caused the unofficial sector to emerge and, with it, unofficial cross-border trade?

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217 Chivivi, Orpah Onwards, Painos Moyo and Nyasha Mapuwei. "Advertising Strategies and Tactics Applied by the Flea Market Traders to Alleviate Poverty in Zimbabwe. Case of Mupedzanhamo (Harare) and Global Flea Market (Gweru)." *European Journal of Business and Management* 6 (2014): 22-29.

## CHAPTER V

### Literature on Informal Cross Border Traders: An Analysis

#### Introduction

This chapter provides a critical analysis of the popular and scholarly debates on female cross border traders. Firstly, this chapter will discuss scholars, such as Serita Garatidye, Thubelihle Jamela, Rudo Gaidzanwa, and Victor Muzvidziwa. All Zimbabwean authors, who have discussed the plight of the cross border trader at length and detail the urgency that can be found in their studies. This study will only focus on 3 media outlets, as the basis for the popular perceptions debate. It will encompass an overview of stories and headlines from eNCA which is a South African media outlet, *The Herald* Zimbabwe and New Zimbabwe both powerful media houses in Zimbabwe. It is imperative that two Zimbabwean media outlets be discussed individually because one is state owned and, therefore, subject to censorship, while the other may provide a more independent representation of female cross border traders.

#### Garatidye's study

Garatidye's study, entitled "An exploration of the experiences of Zimbabwean women informal cross-border traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge border post", is based on interactions with eleven Zimbabwean cross border traders and sought to explore the theoretical tensions between prevailing notions of 'empowerment' and notions of 'disadvantage' arising from the traders' experiences. The study concentrated in particular on the traders' representation of their experiences at the Zimbabwe/South Africa Beitbridge border post crossing point. Garatidye offers insights into the experiences of Zimbabwean women informal cross-border traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge Border Post. Her study sought to understand the challenges, opportunities, and social dynamics faced by this specific group of individuals, particularly with reference to the unique problems faced by women engaged in cross-border trade and the development of policies and interventions to support their livelihoods. The study's focus was, firstly, on the Beitbridge Border Post and its significance in regional trade and the importance of informal cross-border trade in the Zimbabwean context. Secondly, the study focused on understanding the

experiences of Zimbabwean women involved in cross-border trade, as has been shown in previous chapters. Garatidye argues that it is essential to engage with the women traders themselves, listen to their stories, and respect their agency and that research should not only highlight the challenges they face but also recognize their resilience and the contributions they make to their families and communities. She maintains that her findings can be used to advocate for better policies, improved infrastructure, and increased support for women involved in cross-border trade at the Beitbridge Border Post and beyond.<sup>218</sup>

After an extensive review of the literature on cross-border trade in Zimbabwe, gender and cross-border trade discussing the role of women in informal trade and previous studies on the Beitbridge Border Post and its impact on traders, Garatidye concluded that the historical context of the development of the Beitbridge Border Post, profiles of Zimbabwean women informal cross-border traders and the products they trade and their trading networks were all to be profiled in order to get an understanding of what cross border traders need. She identified the following challenges faced by women ICBT border crossing procedures and documentation: harassment, bribery, and extortion by border officials, safety and security concerns, and health and hygiene issues at the border<sup>219</sup>. She argued that her study would, hopefully, result in the enhancement of the income generation and economic well-being of women traders, and greater contribution to the household and community and social support systems among traders. Garatidye also identified different coping mechanisms and strategies for the ICBTs, including how women navigate the challenges they face, collective strategies and organizations and access to information and resources.

A number of scholars, namely Ndlela and Rugube and Matshe<sup>220</sup> mentioned in Garatidye's study have noted that informal cross-border trading in Zimbabwe is a livelihood strategy for women whose house-holds have been pushed into poverty as a result of Zimbabwe's economic and political down turn. Ndlela draws attention to the fact that cross-border trading dates back to the 1980s, while Rugube and Matshe underscore the fact that women make up a larger proportion of cross-border traders in southern Africa. This illustrates how informal

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218 Garatidye, "An Exploration of the Experiences of Zimbabwean Women Informal Cross-Border Traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge Border Post", 100.

219 Garatidye, "An Exploration of the Experiences of Zimbabwean Women Informal Cross-Border Traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge Border Post", 46.

220 Garatidye, "An Exploration of the Experiences of Zimbabwean Women Informal Cross-Border Traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge Border Post", 97.

cross-border trade has changed the daily lives of women in Zimbabwe and how families there have been able to lessen their poverty through such trade.<sup>221</sup> Ndiaye concurs, pointing out how many Zimbabwean households were protected from the 2006–2007 food crisis by unofficial cross-border trade. According to him, unofficial cross-border traders represent a distinct class of migrants whose actions benefit both the sending and receiving countries. They have grown to be an essential component of both local and international trade, and they are vital to ensuring regional food security.<sup>222</sup>

The border post itself is revealed by the traders' depictions of the interaction between official corruption and the effects of economic pressure on all border-players as a complex site of micro-negotiations where survival becomes the "business" itself, according to Garatidye's further argument. This is true even though gender dynamics can be seen to offer the traders both opportunities and significant challenges. Furthermore, she illustrated how, among other reasons, economic hardships have contributed to the recent wave of Zimbabwean women emigrating to South Africa. This emigration flow is not a new phenomenon, as Ndlela<sup>223</sup> argues that informal cross-border trading has existed since the late 1980s, but that a significant portion of women were involved in it this time.

From 2000 to 2020, women's involvement in informal cross-border trade increased significantly. The nation's protracted political and economic crises from 1990 to 2010 played a role in the extraordinary rise in the number of women engaging in unofficial cross-border trade. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported in 2010 that South Africa was the most sought-after destination for Zimbabwean migrants, with a significant proportion of these migrants being women who work as cross-border traders.<sup>224</sup> Due to Zimbabwe's economic hardships brought on by hyperinflation and the breakdown of social services, a large number of people had to find other means of surviving.<sup>225</sup> According to scholars, there are many different types of emigrants, including traders, shoppers, people from the

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221 Ndiaye, "Case Study on Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade: Women Informal Traders Transcending African Border, Myths, Facts, and Way Forward", 37.

222 Ndiaye, "Case Study on Gender Dimension of Aid for Trade: Women Informal Traders Transcending African Border, Myths, Facts, and Way Forward", 39.

223 Ndlela, "Informal Cross Border Trade: The Case Study of Zimbabwe", 11.

224 Garatidye, "An Exploration of the Experiences of Zimbabwean Women Informal Cross-Border Traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge Border Post", 70.

226 Ndlela, "Informal Cross Border Trade: The Case Study of Zimbabwe", 7.

borderlands, people seeking asylum, and unaccompanied minors.<sup>226</sup> This is in contrast to Zimbabwe's previous gendered history of migration, which was predominately dominated by men. Rugube and Matshe note that a greater percentage of women migrate to South Africa as informal cross-border traders from Zimbabwe. Many studies have been conducted in an attempt to examine the complex gendered and gendering experiences of migration, spurred by the extraordinary rise in cross-border women traders.<sup>227</sup> Garatidye's study seeks to explore the experiences of Zimbabwean informal cross-border women traders at the Zimbabwean-South African border post in Beitbridge, in order to gain insights on how social constructions of gender are intertwined with migration.

I believe that there is work that is still needed especially in the legal and policy framework, such as examination of existing laws and regulations related to cross-border trade, gender-specific policies and their effectiveness (health and safety) and recommendations for policy improvements. Implications for gender-sensitive policies and interventions are necessary and the significance of this study for broader discussions on gender and trade in the region will be beneficial for a better understanding for policy and law making.

### Jamela's Study

In her paper, "Experiences and coping strategies of women informal cross-border traders in unstable political and economic conditions: The case of Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) traders",<sup>228</sup> Jamela investigates the specific challenges faced by women traders in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in the context of political and economic instability. This research provides valuable insights into how women navigate complex and adverse circumstances in their pursuit of cross-border trade. In the introduction, the author discusses the background of Bulawayo as a key trading hub in Zimbabwe and the impact of political and economic instability on informal cross-border trade. The literature review encompasses cross-border trade in unstable environments, gender dynamics in informal cross-border trade, a search for previous studies on cross-border trade in Bulawayo, and coping strategies employed by informal traders. During her research,

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226 Kiwanuka and Monson, "Zimbabwe Migration into Southern Africa; New trends and Responses", 1-95.

227 Rugube and Matshe, "Economy Livelihoods: Africa In Informal Cross-Border Traders And The Creation of the SADC Common Market", 70.

228 Garatidye, "An Exploration of the Experiences of Zimbabwean Women Informal Cross-Border Traders at the Zimbabwean/South African Beitbridge Border Post", 79.

Jamela examined the profiles of women informal cross-border traders in Bulawayo and their products, trading routes, and markets. Her research identified the political and economic challenges they faced which included the impact of political instability on cross-border trade, economic challenges, including inflation, currency fluctuations, and market dynamics as well as the role of policies and regulations in shaping the trading environment.

As with Garatidye, Jamela also analysed women traders' experiences, with a focus on the narratives of women traders' daily experiences and struggles, accounts of harassment, corruption, and informal taxation, as well their access to resources, credit, and market information. She concluded that these women had to employ coping strategies and resilience to survive the work that they were involved in. Some of the strategies related to how women traders adapted to the adverse conditions, collective strategies and networks, financial management and savings practices and the need for resilience in the face of adversity.<sup>229</sup> Both Jamela and Garatidye highlighted the social and economic impact that ICBTs have, such as economic contributions of women traders to their households and communities, social and cultural dynamics within trading networks (something only Jamela noted, by focusing on a different region of Zimbabwe) and empowerment and gender roles tailored to the specific challenges faced by women informal cross-border traders in Bulawayo.<sup>230</sup> This dissertation places a strong emphasis on the voices and experiences of the women traders, acknowledging their agency as migrants and traders. By shedding light on their experiences and coping strategies, Garatidye's research can contribute to the development of policies that better support women engaged in cross-border trade, especially in regions with unstable political and economic conditions like Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. This dissertation will analyse these scholarly and popular opinions and address how this affects how ICBTs are perceived. Garatidye emphasises evaluation of existing policies and regulations affecting cross-border traders and the effectiveness of gender-specific policies.

Jamela noted that informal cross-border trade is one of the viable informal sector activities which had become a key livelihood strategy for many Zimbabweans mainly during the period between 2007 and 2009, at the height of the economic and political crisis in Zimbabwe. That

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229 Thubelihe Jamela, "Experiences and coping strategies of women informal cross-border traders in unstable political and economic conditions: The case of Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) traders", Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg, M.A dissertation, 136.

230 Jamela, "Experiences and coping strategies of women informal cross-border traders in unstable political and economic conditions: The case of Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) traders", 100.



was a period of intense shortages of basic commodities which left the country depending mainly on donations and imports from neighbouring countries.<sup>231</sup> The study sought to understand the experiences and coping strategies of Zimbabwean women informal cross-border traders operating between Gwanda/Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and Johannesburg/Gauteng, South Africa. Jamela's study followed the whole chain of trade with focus on experiences and coping strategies of traders at the various stages of informal trade. Semi-structured in-depth interviews and life history analyses were conducted with nine women traders and some informal discussions conducted with bus drivers, artists and other suppliers of goods. Observations were also made which included travelling with informal cross-border traders across the border, "being with them when they bought their goods, and staying with them at one of the markets in South Africa where they sold curios they brought from Zimbabwe".<sup>232</sup> Jamela's study noted that informal cross-border traders were mostly motivated by the desire to support their children and see them through school, including tertiary education. Their motivation was strong enough to keep them determined to stay in business despite the many challenges they faced. These challenges included xenophobic attacks, police harassment, transport problems, bad accommodation while away from home, visa challenges and many others.<sup>233</sup> The coping strategies included finding ways of sharing costs, 'cheating' the system where some rules and regulations hindered their progress, and creating a strong social support base and connections. It was also noted that the changing economic and political environment had direct impacts on the trade and hence flexibility of goods traded and medium of exchange are a crucial character of the trade in unstable environments. Based on Jamela's study, it can be noted that major policy shifts and political developments, both in Zimbabwe and in South Africa, during the study period impacted on informal cross-border traders, leading to alterations in trade. These changes included the removal of visa requirements for Zimbabweans by South Africa and the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in Zimbabwe. These changes affected the types of goods traded and the intensity of trade. The study recommends that the trading visa that was agreed on by the Zimbabwe Informal Cross-Borders Association and South Africa be made available to all interested

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231 Jamela, "Experiences and coping strategies of women informal cross-border traders in unstable political and economic conditions: The case of Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) traders", 33.

232 Jamela, "Experiences and coping strategies of women informal cross-border traders in unstable political and economic conditions: The case of Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) traders", 90.

233 Jamela, "Experiences and coping strategies of women informal cross-border traders in unstable political and economic conditions: The case of Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) traders", 29.

informal cross-border traders and not be confined to the members of the association.<sup>234</sup> Based on this study, other researchers are encouraged to explore further the effects of a new political dispensation in Zimbabwe on informal cross-border trade as this study could not capture much of the changes that took place after the formation of the GNU in Zimbabwe.

### Muzvidziwa's Studies

Muzvidziwa, a noted scholar on the subject, has written multiple papers discussing the challenges faced by ICBTs and notes, firstly, in his “Cross-border Traders: Emerging, Multiple and Shifting Identities” that traders often straddle different cultural, social, and economic contexts, which can shape their identity. They might be mothers, businesswomen, community members, and more, all at the same time. These multiple identities can be challenging to navigate. The identities of cross-border traders can change over time and in response to various factors. Changes in the economic and political landscape, as well as shifts in personal circumstances, can impact how they perceive themselves and are perceived by others. Gender identity may also be a focal point. The article explores how gender influences the identities of women and men engaged in cross-border trade and how these identities evolve in response to gender dynamics. The research delves into the cultural and social aspects of identity. Cross-border traders often engage with diverse cultural and social environments, and this can shape their identity. The article discusses the policy implications of these shifting identities and how to understand the complexity of cross-border traders' identities is essential for creating effective policies and support systems.<sup>235</sup>

This study came to the conclusion that a significant number of Zimbabweans cross borders daily to engage in informal cross-border trade. Zimbabwean cross-border traders are a ‘cosmopolitan, footloose group of cultural and economic entrepreneurs’.<sup>236</sup> They are a highly gendered group, as they comprise mostly women. These women cross-border traders are characterised by emergent, multiple, shifting and negotiated identities. In Zimbabwe, cross-border trade as an occupation had given rise to the image of a strong, independent and mobile class of women involved in long distance transborder business. A new identity marking

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234 Jamela, “Experiences and coping strategies of women informal cross-border traders in unstable political and economic conditions: The case of Bulawayo (Zimbabwe) traders”, 74.

235 Muzvidziwa, “Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities”, 217-238.

236 Muzvidziwa, “Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities”, 217-238.

women cross-border traders from others appeared to be emerging.<sup>237</sup> Muzvidziwa's paper drew largely from the one year study by the author in 2002 in Chinhoyi, the capital of Mashonaland West Province and Harare, Zimbabwe's capital. Muzvidziwa examines how identity is formed and legitimated in the context of women cross border's lived experiences. It examines issues related to emerging, shifting and multiple identities in the context of cross border trade. Muzvidziwa focused mostly on lived experiences of Zimbabwean cross-border traders. Global domains and issues concerning home and belonging and acquired cross-border identities are also examined in the paper. Discussions led to the conclusion that anthropological perspectives are useful and do contribute to a better understanding of issues of belonging and identity among cross border traders in Zimbabwe today.<sup>238</sup>

In his other paper, "Cross-Border Trade: A Strategy for Climbing out of Poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe", Muzvidziwa accurately discusses the role of cross-border trading in poverty alleviation for female household heads in the high-density suburbs of Masvingo. It highlights how these women were able to break out of poverty through engaging in cross-border trade. The study emphasizes the importance of informal cross-border trade (ICBT) as a means for women to access business capital through informal thrift channels. It also mentions that women are motivated to participate in ICBT due to capital constraints and the potential for greater profits through tax evasion and smuggling. The article suggests the need for a policy framework that supports women's profitability while addressing custom and police corruption to ensure the long-term economic impact of ICBT.<sup>239</sup>

Muzvidziwa's study on cross-border trading demonstrated that a number of female household heads in the high density suburbs of Masvingo were able to break out of poverty through cross-border trading. Although the traders received unsympathetic treatment by press and officials, they showed themselves to be enterprising individuals.<sup>240</sup> This article, based on participant observation in Masvingo townships, describes the women and their trade. It looks at their strategies for making a good income out of the trade, their markets, and the constraints that they have to deal with, particularly from officialdom. Focus is on cross-

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237 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities", 217-238.

238 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Traders: Emerging and Multiples Identities", 217-238.

<sup>239</sup> Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Trade: A Strategy for Climbing Out Of Poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe", 28-58.

<sup>240</sup> Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Trade: A Strategy for Climbing Out Of Poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe", 28-58.

border trade as the one reasonably successful strategy for climbing out of poverty. The study on which it is based was carried out in Masvingo town, a provincial capital with a population of 52 000. Masvingo lies in the southern part of Zimbabwe and was ravaged by repeated droughts in the decade extending from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s.<sup>241</sup> Masvingo is Zimbabwe's oldest town, founded in August 1890. This study is based on urban anthropological fieldwork over a period of 14 months from early November 1994 to the end of December 1995. The results presented in this article were part of a larger project, which looked at the livelihoods of female-headed households in the Rujeko and Mucheke high density areas<sup>242</sup> Muzvidziwa's article presented a descriptive account of cross-border trade and the traders in which he found that,

For those whose primary source of income derived from cross-border trade (26% of my research sample of 50 female household heads), another 46% did commissioned knitting and crocheting jobs for the traders, which made cross-border trade the leading income-earning activity for women in the city.<sup>243</sup>

Yet a different and negative picture of cross-border female traders has been presented in the official Zimbabwean media according to the findings of this study.

Muzvidziwa's study understood that politically, cross-border traders were labelled unpatriotic. During the apartheid days, they were seen as collaborators with the oppressive regime. When compared to the many loss-making parastatals, the cross-border traders' currency-market share was very small, yet they were seen as draining off much-needed 'foreign currency. This was despite the fact that the women utilised their legitimate foreign currency holiday entitlements, when politicians, government officials and elite business people were the real 'foreign currency' consumption culprits. Even during Muzvidziwa's fieldwork, cross-border traders were still portrayed as smugglers of all sorts of wares - part of the strategies to criminalise the trade as different from legitimate, male-dominated 'business'.<sup>244</sup> Cheater, as cited by Muzvidziwa, observed that cross-border women traders were an anomalous group (possibly comparable to 'uncaptured' peasants) to be brought under

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241 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Trade: A Strategy for Climbing Out Of Poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe" 28-58.

242 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Trade: A Strategy for Climbing Out Of Poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe" 28-58.

243 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Trade: A Strategy for Climbing Out Of Poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe" 28-58.

244 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Trade: A Strategy for Climbing Out Of Poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe" 28-58.

symbolic control, particularly by resorting to ritual public denunciations and shaming as 'bad gals'.<sup>245</sup> This is in reference to ICBTs being seen as lesser beings because they cannot afford basic necessities to take care of themselves. In Cheater's argument, this has structural parallels with accusations of witchcraft prevalent in traditional societies and usually levelled against the innovative, social climbers.<sup>246</sup> In Masvingo, 64% of traders interviewed by Muzvidziwa thought that the Zimbabwean government had a negative attitude towards cross-border women traders, which explained why the media portrayal had been negative. Only 36% thought the government had recently become more accepting and had developed a positive attitude. Fifty-four percent of the traders knew about government plans to set up parallel institutions to import in bulk the type of goods they were specialising in.<sup>247</sup> For the women, these were clear intentions on the part of government to undermine the viability of their trade, and showed a very negative attitude by government. The women knew of senior government officials who had a condescending attitude towards cross-border traders, though they noted that the orchestrated campaign to defame the women had failed.<sup>248</sup> Lastly, according to Muzvidziwa cross-border traders stressed that there were no official incentives for cross-border traders, in whom government continued to show a lack of interest. Interestingly, most cross-border traders said that Beitbridge customs officers had recently developed a positive attitude towards them.<sup>249</sup>

### Gaidzanwa's Study

The last scholarly article that this paper will discuss is by Gaidzanwa in her article, "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment".<sup>250</sup> She suggests that nurses and doctors from Zimbabwe were leaving their home country to pursue better opportunities elsewhere due to the challenges

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245 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Trade: A Strategy for Climbing Out Of Poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe", 28-58.

246 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Trade: A Strategy for Climbing Out Of Poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe", 28-58.

247 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Trade: A Strategy for Climbing Out Of Poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe", 28-58.

248 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Trade: A Strategy for Climbing Out Of Poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe", 28-58.

249 Muzvidziwa, "Cross-Border Trade: A Strategy for Climbing Out Of Poverty in Masvingo, Zimbabwe", 28-58.

250 Gaidzanwa, "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment", 1-90.

posed by structural adjustment policies. The phrase "Voting with Their Feet" typically refers to people making choices or decisions by physically moving from one place to another, often to seek better opportunities or escape unfavourable conditions. During the 1990s and early 2000s, Zimbabwe implemented structural adjustment programs under the guidance of the IMF and the World Bank. These policies aimed to address economic imbalances and fiscal challenges but often had adverse effects on the healthcare system. A brief overview of the adjustments are as follows:

**Economic Structural Adjustment:** Structural adjustment programs in Zimbabwe involved policies such as privatization, reducing public spending, currency devaluation, and trade liberalization. These policies aimed to stabilize the economy but also led to reduced public funding for healthcare and social services.

**Healthcare Challenges:** The healthcare sector in Zimbabwe faced numerous difficulties as a result of structural adjustment. There were shortages of medical supplies, inadequate funding for hospitals, low salaries for healthcare workers, and a deteriorating healthcare infrastructure.

**Migration of Healthcare Professionals:** In response to these challenges, many Zimbabwean nurses and doctors chose to emigrate to other countries where they could find better working conditions, higher salaries, and more opportunities for professional development. This migration of healthcare professionals can be seen as a form of "voting with their feet" - a choice to leave their home country in search of better prospects.

**Impact on Zimbabwe's Healthcare System:** The emigration of healthcare professionals had a significant impact on Zimbabwe's healthcare system. It led to a shortage of skilled medical personnel, resulting in reduced access to healthcare services and diminished quality of care for those who remained in the country.<sup>251</sup> In response to these difficulties, many nurses and doctors chose to migrate to countries with better healthcare systems and higher wages.<sup>252</sup> The migration of skilled healthcare workers had a detrimental impact on the already struggling healthcare system in Zimbabwe. The loss of experienced professionals led to a further

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251 Gaidzanwa, "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment", 1-90.

252 Gaidzanwa, "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment", 1-90.

shortage of staff, compromising the quality and accessibility of healthcare services for the local population.<sup>253</sup>

Moreover, the departure of healthcare professionals also resulted in a brain drain, where the country lost its skilled workforce, including doctors and nurses who had received education and training at the expense of the state. This brain drain not only affected the current healthcare system but also hindered future capacity building and development in the sector. The migration of nurses and doctors from Zimbabwe to other countries also had social and economic consequences. Families were separated, and communities lost trusted healthcare providers. The loss of these professionals also had economic implications, as the country invested in their education and training, only to lose them to other nations.<sup>254</sup> To address the challenges posed by the migration of healthcare professionals, the Zimbabwean government and other stakeholders implemented various measures. These include improving working conditions, increasing salaries, and providing incentives to retain healthcare workers. Efforts were made to strengthen medical education and training programs within the country to produce more healthcare professionals. However, despite these efforts, the issue of healthcare worker migration remained a significant challenge in Zimbabwe and other developing countries. The allure of better opportunities abroad, coupled with the persistent challenges within the country's healthcare system, continues to drive nurses and doctors to seek greener pastures.<sup>255</sup>

In conclusion, the migration of Zimbabwean nurses and doctors during the era of structural adjustment had a profound impact on the healthcare system. The shortage of skilled healthcare professionals, coupled with the brain drain, compromised the quality and accessibility of healthcare services. While efforts have been made to address this issue, it remains a persistent challenge that requires long-term solutions and investment in the healthcare sector.<sup>256</sup> This phenomenon highlights the complex interplay between economic policies, healthcare systems, and the migration of skilled professionals. While structural

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253 Gaidzanwa, "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment", 1-90.

254 Gaidzanwa, "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment", 1-90.

255 Gaidzanwa, "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment", 1-90.

256 Gaidzanwa, "VOTING WITH THEIR FEET: Migrant Zimbabwean Nurses and Doctors in the Era of Structural Adjustment", 1-90.

adjustment policies were intended to address economic challenges, they had unintended consequences for the healthcare sector in Zimbabwe, ultimately prompting many nurses and doctors to "vote with their feet" by seeking opportunities abroad.

Their studies focused on the health sector in terms of its relationship to poor recipients of health services and how their access to such services can be improved. On the other hand, an important component of the health sector is the front line staff, such as nurses and junior doctors, who have to deal with the poorest sections of the health service-consuming public but whose working conditions, jobs, lifestyles and expectations may also be affected by health budget cuts in ways that have a direct impact on the quality of the health services they deliver. It is, therefore, important to note that the economic structural adjustment programmes cannot be understood solely in terms of their most obvious and immediate impact on the poorest people but also from the vantage point of their effects on the processes of production, retention and remuneration of different categories of actors in African economies and societies.

Gaidzanwa's study focused in particular on junior doctors and nurses from Zimbabwe, although passing reference was made to the experiences of some senior and middle-level doctors currently in practise in Zimbabwe. Doctors and nurses have dealt with the economic and occupationally-related problems that they face in the 1990s in different ways. Some left their professions altogether; others have stayed in their professions but split their efforts between the health profession and other professions while others had opted to stay in their professions and improve their positions from within. There is a gender dimension in this study and it derives from the fact that in Zimbabwe, nursing is predominantly a female profession while doctors are predominantly male. Thus, the health sector is segmented by gender and status, with women occupying the lower rungs of the profession where pay is relatively low and conditions of service are poor while men are concentrated in the relatively better paid niches of the health sector where their options are wider, their skills scarcer, and their relative remuneration much better than that of nurses. The nurses studied for this report have mainly migrated to Botswana while the doctors have mostly migrated to South Africa.

#### eNCA

Though ICBT is a well-known practice that is documented by the media in newspapers and live television news, the general understanding of who these people are and what they do is



not presented in a positive manner. This dissertation firstly took into account the articles and news clips that were published by the *eNCA*, which is a popular South African media house, on ICBTs. The article titled, “Beitbridge becoming a smuggler’s paradise” depicts cross border traders as people who will do anything and everything to get into South Africa to buy goods to trade in Zimbabwe, without proper documentation or planning which then undermines other ICBTs, as they are now described under one umbrella term, “smuggler”.<sup>257</sup> This term is demeaning because it takes away from their business plans, their efforts to build their lives and also their resourcefulness. Another reason why the portrayal of ICBTs is very negative in media is because they are classified as illegal because they do not have the means to have a formal visa and formal job, which means they are in and out of the country multiple times but never there to stay for extended periods of time. While some ICBTs may stay for a month to two months, the kind of businesses that they can be involved in, such as having food stalls or hair dressing, are not taxable, hence they are called illegal because the government does not benefit from them. It costs as little as R50 to smuggle goods through the porous Beitbridge border.

That is according to one smuggler who told *eNCA* that he's been plying his trade for about three years. { [SA's porous borders | Analyst says effective border management system "critically important"](#)}. The man says smuggling has become a lucrative operation for some of the migrants from Zimbabwe who are trying to support their families back home.<sup>258</sup>

When interviewed, the cross-border traders clearly state that the whole purpose behind their efforts is for a better livelihood for themselves and their children. When reading the articles published on this news outlet, one cannot help but be aware that the attitude towards these cross-border traders is that of disdain of the strain that they put on the borders and on the economy that they are trying to benefit from, “Meanwhile, the Department of Home Affairs says stabilising and securing borders remains a key priority.”<sup>259</sup> This shows where the priorities lie in terms of implementing measures that could possibly be beneficial to cross-border traders. The issue still remains that ICBTs are regarded as illegals, and the South African government is endeavouring to minimise the amount of ‘illegals’ that come through the borders.

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257 <https://www.enca.com/top-stories/sas-porous-borders-beitbridge-becoming-smugglers-paradise>

258 <https://www.enca.com/top-stories/sas-porous-borders-beitbridge-becoming-smugglers-paradise>

259 <https://www.enca.com/top-stories/sas-porous-borders-beitbridge-becoming-smugglers-paradise>

With South Africa being the focus area of business that the cross border traders that are detailed in this paper are migrating to, it is important to take note of what the Ministry of Home Affairs and the government of South Africa believe is the best course of action in dealing with the mushrooming number of migrants. The Minister details his methods to curb the movement of “illicit people and goods”.<sup>260</sup> This means that no measures will be taken in support of ICBTs and their goods because they are not recognised as contributing to the economy, with the SA government preferring to curb their access to the country all together, instead. This is not to say that the full blame is to be placed on the SA government as efforts to improve ICBTs livelihoods can also be taken by their home country, Zimbabwe.

While improving ports of entry is an admirable agenda, this is not being done in favour of cross border traders but as a means to improve trade with other countries resulting in large margins for the SA economy. ICBTs improve the SA economy especially in the retail sector, by buying items in bulk and this leads to a growth in the economy as well as creating more jobs within the retail sector. Another positive that the ICBTs provide for the host country is that Beitbridge border post is one of the busiest posts in Africa, and this is due to the movement of the traders between Musina and Joburg. This is because it is the transit point for truckers and travellers to the DRC, Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi and other countries. These movements contribute to the monies paid as toll fees which is money that can be used for the Road Accident Fund (RAF) and maintenance of the roads. Authorities should, therefore, make efforts to provide safe border passage and to enact rules and by laws that protect ICBTs and their goods which, if implemented by the respective governments, would allow for a much safer and stable trading environment for the people. Home Affairs Minister Aaron Motsoaledi says the South African government is determined to put an end to the illicit movement of people and goods through our border. He says the efforts will also allow for efficient trade with other countries.

The South African government is committed to putting the latest infrastructure and relevant technology in its effort to modernise and upgrade our approach to be on par with the current global best practices on border management," he said.<sup>261</sup>

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260 <https://www.enca.com/top-stories/sas-porous-borders-beitbridge-becoming-smugglers-paradise>

261 <https://www.enca.com/news/govt-determined-improve-ports-entry>

South African leaders stress the importance of fortifying visa adherences by ensuring that proper documentation is required and produced at all times and finding measures that could possibly help the neighbouring countries. They believe that the issue stems from the host country in that the host country fails to ensure a fair livelihood for its citizens thus resulting in an influx of illegal people in South Africa looking to make lives better.

SA leader Mmusi Maimane says what's needed is a review of visa processes for SADC nations. Maimane said that

the most crucial issue to look at is South Africa and its relationship to its neighbouring countries." "It's been one that has not been strategic, it hasn't focused on South Africa's national interests and ultimately, has allowed dictators to thrive. "Before anyone can stand up and say let's fix the border situation, let's recognise that we've allowed for Zanu PF not to do the job that they need to do..."<sup>262</sup>

### *The Herald Zimbabwe*

This study also looked at another media house that highlighted ICBTs and how they are portrayed by looking at *The Herald*, a state owned newspaper in Zimbabwe. Focus on issues that may affect the ICBTs is highlighted by the president of the Zimbabwean Cross Border Traders Association (ZCBTA), Dr Zivhu in his bid to make the government aware of some of the illegal activities happening in the country that adversely affect cross border traders. It is important to note that media outlets can have various perspectives and biases, propaganda, censorship and their portrayal of cross-border traders may differ depending on their editorial stance and the specific news story. It is very clear through the published articles in *The Herald* that it seems that Dr. Zivhu has been positioned as the spokesperson for the needs of the ICBTs, even though he has never been in that sector. This is because of his links to the government and, instead of aiding the traders, he is the only one who stands to benefit from his media exposure. Dr Zivhu benefits because he is affiliated with the ruling party, ZANU PF which then aids him in getting member of parliament votes and other governmental positions. ZANU PF also use his position as the head of the association as a means to reinforce their position with the citizens on how the government is making the country better for everyone.

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262 <https://www.enca.com/news/maimane-believes-sadc-visa-review-will-help-trade>

An example of how *The Herald* Zimbabwe promotes nationalistic propaganda through Dr Zivhu is the initiative of the reduced price of PCR tests<sup>263</sup>, for ICBTs, travelling to from their home towns to Beitbridge. This move was designed to curb the spread of the Coronavirus<sup>264</sup> (COVID-19), an airborne disease that s from the end of 2019 and early 2020.<sup>265</sup> Dr Zivhu used his platform to encourage people to get tested before travelling to Beitbridge to cross the borders because they could transmit the disease while they were still in transit to the borders. The test was priced at \$10 United States dollars<sup>266</sup>, and while this was a good, precautionary move to make, I believe that Dr Zivhu, being aware of the financial constraints that are faced by ICBTs especially during the pandemic and knowing that they could not afford the extra strain on their budgeted travel finances as well as how they had not been able to travel for their work previous quarantined in their homes ( just like the rest of the world), should have pressed for the fee to be waived because their livelihoods had been adversely affected.

This study believes that the role of a trade association is to represent the industry by voicing issues affecting the members of the industry. They also provide a platform where companies can interact and create more networks with each other since they operate in the same industry. However, it becomes clear that the agenda for ZCBTA can be twofold, if we are to highlight some of their concerns over the years, a prime example is how he mobilised votes for President Mnangagwa for his first term in office. In an article published by *The Herald*, the paper highlights how ZANU PF, mobilised the ZCBTA in their favour. The Zimbabwe Cross Border Traders Association yesterday launched a programme to mobilise its more than two million members to vote for President Mnangagwa and Zanu-PF in the July 30 harmonised elections. Speaking at a Press conference after meeting provincial heads of the association to map out the strategy in Harare yesterday, the association's president Cde Killer Zivhu said President Mnangagwa had shown an inclination towards making traders' lives easier through various programmes.<sup>267</sup>

Dr Zivhu, who has a position within the ruling party, is using his position as President of this association to publicly endorse and influence the members of the association. *The Herald* then portrays these measures as something that the association is doing to help the traders, while it is just self promotion. While addressing the public at a rally, Dr Zivhu told the people gathered that,

We want to give President Mnangagwa a chance as cross border traders by voting for him because we believe in his economic policies which are set to turn things around

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263 Tests to identify genetic material in a sample to diagnose infectious diseases and genetic changes.

264 SARS-CoV-2

265 <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus>

266 <https://www.herald.co.zw/relief-for-cross-border-traders/>

267 <https://www.herald.co.zw/cross-border-traders-to-mobilise-votes-for-ed/>

for the better, especially for us in this business... all cross border traders should be home as from July 25 to ensure they were ready on election day.<sup>268</sup>

### *New Zimbabwe*

Lastly, this chapter discusses articles from *New Zimbabwe*, an independently owned newspaper which also details the experiences and the way cross border traders are perceived. The general unsaid understanding among cross border traders is that the Zimbabwean government does not do enough to protect traders and their rights. This media outlet is different because it focuses on the people currently living as cross border traders. For example, an article published on ICBTs told the story of Hellen Mherekumombe, a single mother of three who relies on cross-border trading to support her family and highlights the challenges faced by many informal traders in Zimbabwe, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The closure of land borders due to the pandemic had a significant impact on the livelihoods of people like Hellen.<sup>269</sup>

The article focuses on 5 key elements as the rooting for its public appeal. Firstly, it addresses economic vulnerability, which is illustrated by Hellen's situation. The economic vulnerability faced by many single parents and informal traders in Zimbabwe. These individuals often have limited options for income generation, making them particularly susceptible to disruptions such as border closures. Secondly, the impact of Border Closures by addressing the closure of land borders by Zimbabwean authorities, driven by concerns about COVID-19 transmission, has had severe consequences for cross-border traders. For many, like Hellen, it means a loss of their primary source of income. Hellen expresses concerns about the potential risks associated with attempting to cross the border illegally. This highlights the difficult choices that individuals may face when their livelihoods are at stake, as they must weigh the risk of exposure to the virus against the need to provide for their families. Fourthly, it looks at the Zimbabwean government response to as articulated by Information Secretary Nick Mangwana. It reflects the government's concerns about the public health implications of reopening land borders. This emphasizes the delicate balance between public health and economic considerations during the pandemic. Lastly, the story in the article details the impact on families. Hellen's statement about being both the mother and the father in her

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268 <https://www.herald.co.zw/cross-border-traders-to-mobilise-votes-for-ed/>

269 <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/cross-border-traders-starving/>

family underlines the added responsibilities faced by single parents who are the sole breadwinners for their households. The closure of borders further compounds the challenges they encounter.

The story of Hellen Mherekumombe underscores the complex and often painful trade-offs and challenges faced by individuals and policymakers in addressing the economic and public health aspects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It also highlights the importance of considering the socioeconomic impacts when making decisions about border closures and restrictions.

Traders have blamed the Zimbabwe government for the costly congestion being experienced at the Beitbridge border post over the Christmas holidays. New Zimbabwe highlights the following issues on ICBTs, focusing on their lived struggles such as the following,

This follows reported deaths on 15 persons who include truck drivers who have waited endlessly over days to be cleared at the border post. There are long vehicular queues on either side of the busy border post with up to 14 km long ones on the South African side. Hundreds of trucks, buses, taxis and small vehicles remained queued at the Beitbridge border post between South Africa and Zimbabwe this Christmas Day, attempting to get to the port of entry which has been congested for several days.<sup>270</sup>

The congestion at border crossings can be a complex issue involving various factors, and it can have serious implications for both trade and travellers. Addressing such challenges often requires cooperation between neighbouring countries and efficient border management to facilitate the movement of people and goods. There is need for the government to employ measures that will look benefit and protect ICBTs, such as ensuring access to foreign currency and safety and protection on border posts. In this particular news bulletin, ICBTs are hailed for their initiative and their drive to make a better life for themselves, while light is shone on issues that affect them such as robberies, duties and taxes they must pay, and the Coronavirus pandemic that affected their businesses. They are not alluded to as illegals, which is a common theme in South African media or with the President of ZCBTA, Dr. Zivhu as a saviour and spokesperson for their needs. It simply details their experiences and their endeavors. Here is an example of some of the headlines and top stories that have been published so far about ICBTs in New Zimbabwe.

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<sup>270</sup> <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/traders-fume-at-zim-govt-over-border-snarl-up/>

### [Armed Robbers Strip Bus Crew, Cross Border Traders US\\$19 000](#)

By James Muonwa, Mashonaland West Correspondent POLICE are investigating an armed robbery executed by a five-man gang that boarded a CAG bus destined for Zambia pretending to be genuine passengers but later turned out to be robbers. On Tuesday, the assailants made off with US\$19 050, Rands 2 000, Kwacha 1 137, ZW\$690, and other

### [Cross Border Traders Hit Hard By Covid-19 Rules, Parly Told](#)

By James Muonwa, PARLIAMENT'S Portfolio Committee on Women's Affairs, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Community Development has been lobbied to push for a further relaxation of Covid-19 regulations to allow resumption of cross-border travel and trade. Giving oral evidence during the committee's public hearing held in Chinhoyi Thursday, SME sector players said the pandemic

### [Covid-19: Residents red flag over truck drivers, illegal cross border traders](#)

By Staff Reporter, MUTARE residents say truck drivers and illegal cross-border traders posed the biggest risk of transiting coronavirus among city dwellers because of their continued movements across into neighbouring Mozambique. For that, they have called on authorities to impose stringent measures on the movement of the two groups to avert the situation.

### [Cross border traders urge govt suspension of SI64 to allow grocery imports](#)

By Alois Vinga ,THE Zimbabwe Cross Border Traders Association (ZCBTA) has called on government to urgently consider the immediate suspension of Statutory Instrument 64/2016 to allow the importation of critical groceries which have disappeared from local supermarket shelves. The controversial policy measure banning imports was incepted by government in 2016 in attempts to protect local

### [Cross-Border Traders Starving](#)

eNCA HARARE: Cross-border traders are asking for help at the Beitbridge border post. They say they're starving as the border remains closed on the Zimbabwe side. The government says it wants to avoid the transmission of Covid-19 variants. Zimbabwe's economy is mostly informal and depends on cross-border trading, street vending and small enterprises.

### [Cross-Border Traders Crippled By Tough Zimbabwe Lockdown<sup>271</sup>](#)

## Conclusion

This chapter has clearly shown the scholarly and popular perceptions of ICBTs. While hailed as masters of their fate in scholarly publications, noting their drive and initiative to better their lives, their portrayal in local media is still largely negative with some publications still referring to them as illegals. Informal cross-border trade (ICBT) is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, and perceptions of it can vary between popular and scholarly perspectives. It's important to note that these perceptions may evolve over time and can differ depending on the specific context and the individuals or groups discussing the issue. In summary, popular perceptions of informal cross-border trade often focus on the survival and

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271 <https://www.newzimbabwe.com/?s=cross+border+traders>.

resilience of traders, while scholarly perspectives delve deeper into the economic, social, and policy implications of ICBT. The academic discourse around ICBT tends to be more nuanced and policy-oriented, recognizing both its contributions and challenges in various contexts.



## **CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION**

In summary, an exploration of the experiences of Zimbabwean women informal cross-border traders at the Beitbridge Border Post involves a multidimensional analysis of their challenges, motivations, empowerment, coping strategies, and the broader implications of their trade activities. It sheds light on the critical role these women play in the informal economy and their contributions to both their households and local communities. This study has been a literature-based study. The inclusion of both scholarly articles and popular media has allowed for a better understanding of the topic. The sources used are representative and diverse, capturing various perspectives from both the scholarly and popular perceptions.

Unlike academic research papers, news articles are generally focused on presenting information in a concise and accessible manner rather than detailing the specific methods used to gather that information. The methodology employed by journalists and reporters in news organizations typically involves standard journalistic practices, such as interviews, research, observations, and access to official statements. Journalists often conduct interviews with individuals involved in or knowledgeable about a particular event or issue. These interviews provide first hand accounts, expert opinions, and diverse perspectives. Journalists may use various sources of information, including official reports, government statements, academic research, and other reputable sources to gather background information and context for their stories. Journalists may observe events or situations directly, especially in the case of on-the-ground reporting. This can include attending events, visiting locations, or witnessing developments firsthand. Reporters often include statements or responses from relevant authorities, organizations, or individuals involved in the story. These statements are usually obtained through official press releases, press conferences, or direct communication.

It's important to note that news organizations have editorial processes and standards to ensure the accuracy and fairness of their reporting. Journalistic practices may vary, and information in news articles is typically presented for public awareness rather than as part of an academic research endeavour. By juxtaposing the scholarly discourse with popular perceptions it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of cross border trading.

Scholarly discourse tends to involve in-depth analysis, critical thinking, and rigorous research methodologies. Scholars often delve into the complexities of a topic, considering multiple perspectives and engaging with existing literature. This depth provides a comprehensive

understanding that goes beyond simplified or sensationalized popular perceptions. Scholarly work is typically peer-reviewed and undergoes a rigorous vetting process, ensuring a higher level of accuracy and reliability. Engaging with scholarly discourse allows individuals to access well-researched, evidence-based information rather than relying on potentially biased or incomplete popular perceptions. Scholarly discourse provides a contextually rich understanding of subjects. It considers historical, cultural, and social contexts, providing a more nuanced perspective that goes beyond the surface-level information often present in popular perceptions. Scholarly discussions often present a range of perspectives and acknowledge the complexities of a topic. This nuance is essential for grasping the multifaceted nature of various issues and avoiding oversimplifications or generalizations found in popular perceptions.

Bridging the gap between scholarly discourse and popular perceptions helps make academic knowledge more accessible to the public. It encourages the dissemination of research findings in a way that can be understood and appreciated by a broader audience. Understanding the interplay between scholarly discourse and popular perceptions is crucial for comprehending the cultural and social impact of academic research. It allows for a more informed analysis of how ideas circulate and influence public discourse. In summary, discussing scholarly discourse versus popular perceptions is essential for fostering a well-informed, critical, and nuanced understanding of various topics. It promotes intellectual growth, contributes to evidence-based decision-making, and helps bridge the gap between academic knowledge and public awareness.

Since the study focuses on the period between 2000 and 2020, the selected literature falls within this timeframe. It was important to note the changes happening in Zimbabwe during this time that prompts a surge in cross border trade. Cross-border trading helps diversify a country's economy by providing access to a wider range of markets and sources of revenue. This is particularly important for countries facing economic challenges, as it allows for a more resilient and adaptable economic base as Zimbabwe started having from the 2000s. Engaging in cross-border trade allows a country to earn foreign exchange, which is crucial for maintaining stable external balances, paying for imports, and servicing international debts. Foreign exchange earnings from exports can contribute to strengthening a country's overall economic position. Cross-border trade provides access to resources that may be scarce or unavailable domestically. This includes raw materials, intermediate goods, and other

inputs necessary for various industries. This contributes to the development and growth of domestic industries.

By participating in cross-border trade, Zimbabwean businesses have the opportunity to expand their market reach beyond domestic borders. Access to larger markets lead to increased sales and growth for businesses, which, in turn, can positively impact the overall economy. Zimbabwe experienced significant economic challenges during the 2000s, including hyperinflation and political instability. Engaging in cross-border trade provided a means for businesses to navigate domestic challenges by tapping into more stable or growing markets in neighboring countries. Not only does participating in cross-border trade foster regional economic integration, this leads to the development of trade agreements and partnerships with neighboring countries, contributing to political and economic stability in the region. Cross-border trade activities can generate employment opportunities, both directly in the trading sector and indirectly in supporting industries. Job creation is essential for addressing unemployment issues and fostering social and economic development and that is what happened in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 2 detailed Zimbabwe's Economic Crisis and the Informalization of the Economy by focusing firstly on the Historical Context. The chapter provided a concise historical background of the Zimbabwean economy, emphasizing key events since 1980. This was followed by a detailed discussion of the Zimbabwean economic decline with focus on the impact of ESAP and the farm invasions, specifically focusing on rising unemployment and economic hardships. In this chapter, the dissertation provides insights into how Cross-Border Trading became a viable survival strategy by exploring how the economic crisis led to the rise of the informal sector as a means of employment.

Chapter 3 focused on migration, women's empowerment, and sustainable strategies. By focusing on changes in migration, the dissertation examined how cross-border trading has influenced migration patterns. Women's Empowerment was explored by discussing the impact of cross-border trading on women's empowerment and agency as well as detailing their experiences as compared to men. The chapter also discussed sustainable strategies by investigating how informal cross-border traders cope with challenges associated with their work.

Chapter 4 dealt with the establishment of the Zimbabwean Cross Border Traders Association and its significance. This section focused on providing a clear definition of what is meant by the term "trader" within the context of informal cross-border trading. It discussed the various roles, activities, and characteristics that define individuals engaged in this economic activity. Firstly, the chapter detailed the differences between ICBTs and cross border trade by delineating the distinctions between them, then the differences in gender. The delves into gender differences within the context of informal cross-border trading. It explored how men and women participate differently in this economic activity, by considering factors like roles, challenges, and opportunities. The section finished off by discussing the impact on livelihoods, it covered economic aspects such as income generation, as well as social and cultural dimensions related to the livelihoods of traders and the roles played by both the South African and Zimbabwean governments in the context of informal cross-border trading through policies, regulations, and support mechanisms that affect or shape the activities of traders.

Chapter 5 began by introducing various scholarly perspectives on the informalization of the economy and cross-border trading. Following this, the chapter analysed how local and international media portray cross-border traders and their contributions to gender-specific roles and discussed the limitations of existing portrayals. By comparing and contrasting scholarly and popular perceptions, the study highlighted any discrepancies in the portrayal of cross border traders. The study assessed the validity of scholarly and popular perceptions through a close examination of arguments and published sources.

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